

(IV)

## THE COMMUNISTS REPLY

*Perhaps more significant than the Book Reviews of the Left was the booklet published in June 1965 as a reply to Mr. I. Leibler by the Political Committee of the Communist Party of Australia composed of Messrs E. Aarons, A. Robertson, R. Mortimer and P. Mortier. The reply attempted to forge a compromise between the Party 'dogmatists' and 'liberals'. The old line supporters made a number of fairly important concessions.*

### SOVIET JEWRY—A REPLY TO I. LEIBLER

Communists have been in the forefront in the fight against all forms of racism, in Australia and internationally.

The Communist Party opposes the White Australia policy. We have vigorously opposed discrimination against the Aborigines and New Guinea people and against migrants who have come to this country, including Jewish refugees from fascism before the war.

Anti-Semitism is a form of racism. The virulence of its poison is testified to by the gas ovens and the graves of six million European Jews who perished at the hands of Nazi Germany in World War II.

*Anti-Semitism is hatred of the Jewish people on racial grounds.*

In Australia there have been recurring outbursts of anti-Semitism, such as sacrilegious daubings on Jewish places of worship, swastikas and obscenities scrawled on Jewish people's premises, the continued circulation of anti-Semitic lies, and covert social bans which apply in some wealthy circles.

The Communist Party of Australia has always been among the first to condemn and organise opposition to such racist manifestations.

Communists have devoted great attention to these questions. One of the first actions of the Soviet revolution, for example, was a declaration giving all the peoples in the Tsarist empire full political freedom and guaranteeing each nation the right to self-determination, including secession and the right to form an independent State. Although some mistakes were made, these principles were translated into life. Like all other national minorities, the Jewish people enjoyed the fruits of this. The years following

the revolution saw a flourishing of Jewish culture which was unrivalled in any other country in the world.

The autonomous region of Birobidjan was established as a homeland for Soviet Jews who wished to settle there. Anti-Semitism was declared illegal by special legislation which has no parallel in any capitalist country except Israel.

These facts are recognised by all, friends and critics of the Soviet Union alike. Yet in recent years there have been reports that anti-Semitism continues to exist in the Soviet Union and allegations that Government policy fosters it.

These allegations have been seized on by opponents of communism as yet another weapon for use in their unceasing war against the new social system. But they have also been believed by numbers of honest people who feel goodwill toward the Soviet Union.

There have been instances, such as the publication of Kychko's "Judaism Without Embellishment" with its anti-Semitic illustrations, which indicate that anti-Semitism has not yet been entirely eliminated among all Soviet people.

Communists throughout the world have condemned such incidents and, like all Communist Parties, the Communist Party of Australia noted with satisfaction the official Soviet statement that "Judaism Without Embellishment" was withdrawn from circulation and its author punished by dismissal from his academic post. Nevertheless concern persists in many quarters.

Recently Mr. Isi Leibler published a booklet, "Soviet Jewry and Human Rights", charging widespread and officially-incited anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. For reasons elaborated below, we do not accept Mr. Leibler's conclusions nor many of his facts. However, in his booklet, as well as in other materials, there is evidence leading to the conclusion that a vigorous campaign in the Soviet Union would be valuable to eliminate all surviving remnants from the virulent anti-Semitism promoted under Tsarism and later again in the Hitler-occupied areas in World War II.

Questions of religion and of culture in the Yiddish language also require examination.

Mr. Leibler purports to make a scholarly study of some aspects of the position of Soviet Jews, divorced from anti-communism and the cold war.

*Is this claim justified?*

Mr. Leibler acknowledges that "Jews in the Soviet Union are

today still represented well in excess of their proportion in the general population in such fields as science, medicine, architecture, music, the arts, etc." (p. 27). A footnote on this same page also does not dispute figures which show Jews to be 14.7 per cent of doctors, 10.4 per cent of lawyers and judges, 9 per cent of scientists, 8.5 per cent of writers and journalists and 7 per cent of artists, although Jews number little over one per cent of the total population.

Mr. Leibler merely records and lightly dismisses these facts, but they are among the most significant data. They establish that, whatever disabilities may be alleged, Soviet Jews have achieved in the socialist era access to honoured and responsible positions in society, even to an extent greatly out of proportion to their numbers. Jews have been freed from the discriminatory restrictions of the old exploiting system and given the opportunity to play their part in the building of a socialist and communist society. Mr. Leibler makes little effort to reconcile these facts with his central thesis that Soviet Jews suffer serious official discrimination.

Mr. Leibler fails to acknowledge that not all Jewish leaders share his extreme views about discrimination, even those expressing concern over the position of Soviet Jewry.

The president of the World Jewish Congress, the world Zionist organisation, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, is very specific on this point:

"The Soviet Union is a country where equality of rights for all citizens is one of the essential characteristics of its constitution and the only country where the Jewish minority is officially recognised as a national minority. Anti-Semitism and racial incitement are punishable crimes although this provision of the law is rarely implemented.

"It cannot be denied that there are anti-Semitic feelings and tendencies in the Soviet Union, the survival of centuries of a strong anti-Semitic tradition, especially in the Ukraine and the Baltic States.

"But it would be unfair to accuse the Soviet Union of conscious anti-Semitic policies in the usual meaning of the word, namely, by denying Jews equality of rights or threatening their physical existence. Nor can it be said that the Jews in the Soviet Union are persecuted or discriminated against in a spectacular way." (article from the "Jewish Chronicle" London, reprinted from the Australian Jewish quarterly "The Bridge", January, 1965.)

Mr. Leibler's booklet leans heavily on the London publication

"Jews in Eastern Europe" which he asserts is a reputable and non-tendentious journal.

However, one example taken from this magazine will illustrate that it is not a very reliable research reference. Its November, 1964 number states:

"A survey conducted between January 1 and June 30, 1959 noted that almost one third of the feature space in some provincial Soviet newspapers was devoted to articles featuring anti-social Jews."

How many provincial newspapers were surveyed? What proportion of total Soviet newspapers did they represent? What proportion of the papers was occupied by "feature space"? Such questions would have to be answered before the above statement acquired any worthwhile significance. But this journal draws wide ranging conclusions from this and similar references, and Mr. Leibler would be advised to treat such sources with reserve.

Mr. Leibler also quotes the American Professor De Witt, who argues that the "Soviet Government is succeeding in efforts to limit the number of Jews in higher education." He claims that De Witt proves that "today a lower percentage of Jews are permitted to attend universities than was the case in Tsarist Russia."

A different picture is given by the Soviet statistical annual "The National Economy of the USSR." It shows that in the 1961-62 school year there were 77,000 Jewish students in Soviet higher schools. In 1962-63 there were 79,300. In 1963-64 the number had risen to 82,600. In short, there is a steady increase in the number of Jewish students. The proportion of Jewish students in higher schools to Jewish population (364 per 10,000) is very much higher than the proportion for the whole population (144 per 10,000).

Despite this increase in absolute figures there may be, as Professor De Witt claims, a decrease in the ratio of Jewish students to other nationalities and a decline in the proportion of Jewish students at universities. However the real significance of any possible decline cannot be appreciated without taking into account the universally recognised priority given to expansion of education in the Soviet Union. This brings an increasing number of students from previously backward areas and nationalities (some of which lacked even a written language before the revolution). A decline in the percentage of Jewish students, although the absolute number has risen, would come about as a result of the greater participation in higher education by students of all other Soviet peoples. This is not discrimination against Jewish

students; it is proof of the advance of all nationalities in the multinational Soviet state.

Uncritically accepting an "International Socialist Study Group Report", Mr. Leibler further concludes from a decline in the proportion of science students to science graduates that employment opportunities in this field are being progressively closed to Jews. But official Soviet figures show that the number of Jewish scientists continues to grow from year to year—28,966 in 1958, 33,529 in 1960, 36,173 in 1961 and 48,012 in 1963. This is a 65 per cent increase in five years. Academic integrity would surely demand an examination of these figures before drawing sweeping conclusions.

Mr. Leibler declares: "The prohibitions against baking unleavened bread required for the Passover are an inexplicable scandal . . . the Soviet Jewish community is probably the first Jewish community in history (with the exception of those held in Nazi captivity) to be officially prevented from celebrating their ancient festival of freedom." (p. 23).

This equating of a refusal to bake unleavened bread in State bakeries with official prevention of celebration of the ancient festival of freedom is, to say the least, not sound reasoning. There may be grounds for criticism over the availability of matzoh in the Soviet Union, but Mr. Leibler's conclusions far exceed what is justified by the facts.

The statement of the Jewish clergy of Moscow on February 11 this year should also be noted: "In the Soviet Union no one has ever prohibited us from observing the rituals of our religion, including of course the baking of matzoh. Last year we really did feel certain difficulties in connection with the lack of flour. There was a bad harvest in the country, as is known, and the Soviet people limited their needs in things made of flour. However, the difficulties were surmounted, and there was not a single case in all the synagogues of Moscow, when the parishioners were left without matzoh.

"This year our community began to prepare for Passover back in January. We organized the baking of matzoh in several places of Moscow and its suburbs. Thanks to the Almighty we now have enough flour. Every Jew will be able to provide himself with enough matzoh."

"In July 1956", Mr. Leibler writes, "the Soviet Government officially informed the United States of the existence of 450 synagogues in the U.S.S.R. In April, 1963 the Moscow Chief Rabbi was quoted as giving the number of existing synagogues as 96." (p. 22).

From these figures he concludes that 354 or four-fifths of synagogues in the Soviet Union had been closed down in those years and that many cities with substantial Jewish population do not have a single house of worship for believers.

Soviet spokesmen, however, have shown that the figure of 450 included some hundreds of Jewish religious societies and groups in various republics which conduct their religious services in minyans (private homes). This is still the case.

Only a few synagogues have closed in recent years, nothing like the 354 claimed by Mr. Leibler. The extent of and the justification for any Government intervention in these events is a matter for concrete investigation in each case, but certainly there is nothing like the problem Mr. Leibler makes out.

Mr. Leibler describes as "fantastic" (page 68) the claim that the Soviet Union has never pursued an anti-Semitic policy.

The Communist Party of Australia declares its conviction that this is the truth, not fantasy. Nor has Mr. Leibler offered evidence which would shake that conviction.

We have given our definition at the outset, but nowhere in his booklet does Mr. Leibler define what he means by anti-Semitism. This is a cardinal neglect in his argument. He uses the term very loosely indeed, attaching it to subjects to which it does not apply. He does not even refer to the fact that other people, not only Communists, find explanations other than anti-Semitism for such facts as he gives.

We have already quoted the head of world Jewry, Dr. Goldmann, in this respect. In the same article Dr. Goldmann continues:

"But, to sum up, it would be false and unjust to accuse the Soviet Government of an openly anti-Semitic policy, and to think that the physical and even economic existence of Jews in the U.S.S.R. is seriously threatened.

"The real problem of Soviet Jewry concerns their life as a distinct community, their right to maintain their identity and survival as a distinct Jewish entity."

Dr. Goldmann goes on then to say that the Soviet Government has a policy "of enforced assimilation which, in the long run, will bring about the complete disintegration of Soviet Jewry."

Whether assimilation be enforced or purely voluntary, it will still bring about "the complete disintegration of Soviet Jewry" in the sense meant by Dr. Goldmann. Assimilation, which is a spontaneous process, occurring in Australia, the United States, the

Soviet Union and other countries, is regarded as a tragedy by some, who want to prevent such a normal development. This is really the viewpoint of many Jewish spokesmen, including Dr. Goldmann who says: "Our generation lost six million Jews by physical extermination in the nazi period, and we cannot afford to lose three million more by spiritual disintegration." (ibid).

Dr. Goldmann's criticism is concerned only with maintaining the Jewish community in the Soviet Union as a distinct entity. In the Soviet Union there is a different opinion. Such differences and the concepts underlying them are a legitimate subject for debate but certainly do not justify accusations of anti-Semitism against the Soviet government.

The Communist Party of Australia holds the view that, like any other national minority, the Jewish people of the Soviet Union have the right to maintain their own national and cultural identity if they wish. Equally, if they wish to merge with the other nationalities of the Soviet Union, that also is their right.

Increasing numbers of Australian Jews are becoming assimilated and the same process is taking place among various migrant groups. We support the right of such groups to have their language recognised and catered for, to pursue their cultural activities and establish organisations. But there are strong trends towards assimilation among the migrant groups in Australia, particularly among the new generation born here. Encouragement of this process in appropriate forms is not, in our view, anti-Semitic, anti-Italian or anything else of the sort. It is realistic and progressive.

At the same time we oppose assimilation being brought about simply by administrative measures. We oppose this in principle, and also as self-defeating, since often such an approach keeps national exclusiveness alive.

For example, we oppose the assimilation policy of Australian governments towards the Aborigines, while fighting for full citizenship rights, equality in work and wages, education and social services. We believe that assimilation conflicts with the desires and aspirations of the Aboriginal people themselves. However if it were shown that the Aborigines wanted to merge their cultural and ethnic identity into the general Australian mainstream we would support this. Individual Aborigines who wish it, should also have this right at all times.

Mr. Leibler admits the Socialist Soviet Union has set an example to the world in the diligence with which it has cared for the linguistic and cultural rights of national minorities. But

like most of his book, his passages on Jewish culture (pp. 24-27) are larded with unsubstantiated assertions and unsound premises.

For example, he implicitly equates Jewish culture with culture in the Yiddish or Hebrew languages. This cannot be accepted. Only a minority of Jews in the Soviet Union, even fewer in Australia, speak Yiddish. Fewer still know Hebrew.

In the Soviet Union the non-Yiddish and non-Hebrew speaking Jews have access to Jewish culture in translation and contribute to it in their own language writings dealing with their heritage. This also happens in Australia and other countries.

During the past eight years, the works of Sholom Aleichem have been published in Russian in a total edition of over 3 million copies. In the same time, State publishing houses in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and Kishinev have printed translations of more than 200 books by contemporary Jewish writers. Each edition was no less than 30,000 copies.

Many other facts could be quoted to show that Jewish culture is an important part of general Soviet culture . . . facts which conflict with allegations of an anti-Semitic cultural bias.

Nevertheless, the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of Yiddish language facilities in the Soviet Union remains a controversial one.

We note with satisfaction the steps already taken in the Soviet Union since the 20th Congress to meet the cultural needs of Yiddish-speaking Jewish people. We would welcome further progress in this field to ensure that all who wish it are afforded full facilities to express and enjoy their culture in the Yiddish language.

The question of religion is an important one. In the Soviet Union as in many other countries, most Jewish people do not actively practise their religion. Even among these, many have a keen sense of their people's past and the role religion has played in their history.

The practice of religion is declining fairly rapidly in the socialist world. There is also a decline in the capitalist world; for example, a Conference of Rabbis in France in 1961 estimated that not more than 20 per cent of the world's Jews were believers.

In our view, respect for religious beliefs is important. Scrupulous care should therefore be taken to ensure that there are no legal or constitutional obstacles to the availability of premises, religious objects (special foods, prayer books, etc.), to the training of clergy to the extent adequate for the demand, and to the

right of religious organisation. But as well as freedom to support and practise religion, there should also be freedom to oppose it.

Mr. Leibler's approach, however, seems to be that any form of criticism of the Jewish religion is a form of anti-Semitism. In our view, this is quite unjustified. We believe in the right to uphold the scientific world outlook against the religious one. But crudeness in what is a matter of philosophic discussion and contention is justly resented and damages rather than assists the spread of the scientific outlook.

The Kychko book and some other publications are evidence that crudities have occurred in the Soviet Union.

In Australia the Communist Party upholds materialist philosophy and carries out appropriate educational work. We join with all who oppose the activities of individuals and groups who use religion as a cloak for reactionary political aims. Both today and for the future, we regard divisions between believers and non-believers as well as among believers as issues which are secondary to great social issues such as action for peace, national independence and socialism.

It is true that mistakes were made on the national question in the Soviet Union. These were rendered much more serious in that period of Stalin's leadership when unjustifiable acts of repression were launched against many Soviet citizens. These proceeded from incorrect policies, particularly Stalin's theory that the class struggle must intensify as socialism developed.

The Jewish people of the Soviet Union suffered from these acts, but so did all nationalities and peoples of the Soviet Union including the Russians. No objective study of the facts supports the view that Stalin's activities had their source in an "anti-Semitic mania." (p. 14). In fact in a footnote on page 12 Mr. Leibler acknowledges that Stalin was never known to make an anti-Semitic statement. Neither should it be forgotten that Stalin was head of the Soviet Government whose initiative and firmness in the United Nations played such an important role in that body's decision concerning establishment of Israel.

The self-critical struggle against wrong ideas and actions and their correction are a tremendous credit to the Soviet Union. This is a necessary continuing process.

The great historical fact about the Soviet Union is that in less than 50 years it has transformed the lot of its people, overcoming tremendous obstacles and inherited backwardness. The Jewish people have shared in this. They have been freed from the ghetto and the pogrom. They have shared in the general emancipation of the whole Soviet people from the past regime

of exploitation, semi-feudal conditions, wretched living standards and violent oppression, into a modern socialist society with fast rising material and cultural standards and with rapidly growing opportunities for all to develop their talents and their initiative.

It was the Soviet Army which, with untold sacrifice, "tore the guts out of the German armies" (Churchill), saved the lives of millions of Jews, and played the foremost part in rescuing the world from barbarous oppression.

The Soviet Union has frustrated the revanchist plans of the nazis and their backers still occupying powerful positions in West Germany. Recently, for example, Soviet pressure played a very important part in forcing the West German Government to drop its plan to end prosecutions of Nazi war criminals. In doing this, and in many other ways acting for peace, the Soviet Union stands guard over the lives of millions of Jewish people and the people of the whole world to this day. These achievements have roused the fears and hatreds of those who profit from the existing order of society. They have waged an unceasing struggle against the Soviet Union, political, diplomatic, economic and, where possible, military.

Mr. Leibler argues that questions of anti-Semitism, being matters "appertaining to human rights have no bearing on one's individual attitude to the cold war as such." (p. 12).

Mr. Leibler's claim, in so far as it affects his own motives, would have been more readily acceptable had his document not suffered from such exaggerations, unsound reasoning and lack of historical analysis as pointed out above, and had he refrained from thinly disguised attempts to conjure up divisions in the Communist Party of Australia.

It is indeed extraordinary that a booklet claiming to be a study of the position of Jews in the Soviet Union divorced from the cold war, should give only one quarter of its space (19 pages out of 78) to this subject, while devoting three quarters to charges against Communist Parties. Whatever Mr. Leibler's motives, there is no doubt that his booklet and the whole question of Soviet Jewry have been used by interests whose main concern is to engage in anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda, interests in no way concerned with the well being of the Jewish people anywhere.

Dr. Knopfmacher's "Bulletin" review of the Leibler booklet starkly confirms this fact (April 3rd, 1964).

Such treatment of the question is a serious disservice to the majority of Jewish and non-Jewish people in Australia, the

U.S.S.R. and elsewhere, who wish to hasten the elimination of remnants of anti-Semitism everywhere.

We are concerned to help create conditions in which that is possible. We believe that more exchange visits between Australia and the U.S.S.R. would be helpful. Such visits would afford greater opportunities for first-hand investigation of questions discussed in this statement.

It is perhaps significant that no such positive proposals are suggested by Mr. Leibler.

(V)

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY

*Published here for the first time is the text of the correspondence, leading to a personal confrontation, between representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia and Mr. Isi Leibler. The first five letters were written prior to these personal discussions.*

*Arising from these exchanges an interview by Mr. E. Aarons was published in Tribune, the official organ of the Communist Party of Australia, on the 15th December 1965 and in Guardian on the 16th December 1965. This together with a brief but telling exchange of correspondence with the Soviet Ambassador is also reprinted below.*

116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, S.E.7,  
VICTORIA.  
9th August, 1965.

Mr. L. Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

I have only recently returned from a lengthy overseas trip. After some consideration I have decided to write directly to the C.P.A. Central Committee with reference to the pamphlet approved by the Political Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, entitled "Soviet Jewry—a Reply to I. Leibler". I have already made a statement with regard to this pamphlet during my stay in London and it was widely reproduced throughout the Jewish press.

It is largely on the recommendation of prominent Marxists and progressives with whom I had personal discussions overseas that I am writing again—this time directly.

Let me state at the outset that as a Jew vitally concerned with the status of my three million Soviet Jewish kinsmen I believe that the C.P.A. pamphlet does contain some extremely valuable statements. It implicitly concedes and in fact condemns Soviet anti-Semitic publications, the substantial denial of Jewish cul-

tural rights, and crudities employed in the campaign for a scientific world outlook.

These aspects have been welcomed by progressives and Marxists whom I met in various parts of the world. I was surprised at their detailed knowledge of what was taking place in this particular field in Australia.

At the same time, possibly because it was prepared in haste, there are certain aspects of the statement which I feel confident no responsible Marxist would, on reflection, subscribe to.

Let me enumerate some of these matters.

(1) The definition of anti-Semitism as "hatred of the Jewish people on racial grounds" could not possibly be subscribed to by any student of anti-Semitism. It would certainly not be accepted by anyone with a Marxist world outlook. Tsarist anti-Semitism was not based on racial grounds and I have gone out of my way to emphasize that the disabilities suffered by Soviet Jewry cannot be compared with the Nazi racist genre of anti-Semitism—neither qualitatively nor quantitatively.

(2) The attempt to counterpose Dr. Goldmann to me is simply not based on facts. Dr. Goldmann publicly commended my study on Soviet Jewry at a World Jewish Conference and clearly intimated that, by and large, it reflected his views.

At the same time there are considerable differences amongst many Jewish leaders as to the best tactical means to alleviate the plight of Soviet Jewry.

I share the view of all responsible Jewish leaders that exaggerations, distortions or irresponsible descriptions of the plight of Soviet Jewry harm rather than assist the interests of Soviet Jews.

At the same time, many Marxists and friends of the Soviet Union share, with me, the view that the Soviet leaders respect militant campaigns concerning human rights so long as these are principled, based on evidence, and not connected with cold war polemics. Dr. Goldmann does not entirely share this view. Dr. Goldmann also maintains that anti-Semitic books, periodicals and newspapers freely circulating at the present time in the Soviet Union are not the responsibility of the Soviet leaders any more than the British Government is responsible for the dissemination of Nazi material in Great Britain. On this point, I strongly disagree with him. And Marxists have privately indicated to me that they also consider that this misleading analogy is based on a profound misunderstanding of the nature of a socialist state and particularly one where such material constitutes a criminal offence.

(3) The denial that even during Stalin's "Black Years" the Soviet Government was not anti-Semitic would be repudiated by most Marxists who have studied the question. True, many nationalities suffered as a result of the abrogation of legality during the Personality Cult period. But Jews were liquidated precisely because they were Jews and all Jewish cultural expression was suppressed virtually overnight in 1948. I need only refer to the Report of the British Communist Party delegation to the U.S.S.R. in 1958, the moving document written by the leading French Jewish Communist Playwright, Dr. Chaim Sloves—still today a leading member of the French CP.—and the dramatic editorial which appeared in the Polish Jewish Communist daily "Folkshtymme" entitled "Our Grief and Our Consolation". Even Yevtushenko has made it abundantly clear that Stalin was obsessed by anti-Semitic mania which permeated through to the bureaucracy during the "Black Years".

(4) Although the C.P.A. statement indirectly concedes that there are still anti-Semitic tracts circulating in the Soviet Union, the references to the punishment of Kichko are without foundation. No reference has appeared in the Soviet press to this effect. Nor have the pertinent Soviet or Ukrainian statutes relating to incitement to racial hatred been utilised against Kichko, or for that matter, any of the other authors of anti-Semitic tracts, books or newspaper articles, some of which are itemised in my study.

(5) The suggestion that by denying Jews Matzot the Soviet authorities do not prevent them from celebrating Passover confirms that the authors of the statement are understandably not well informed about the minutiae of Jewish religious ritual. For a traditional Jew to celebrate Passover without Matzot is akin to having a seminar on Marxism with the proviso that Marx and his teachings be excluded.

The closure of synagogues is based on official Soviet Government statistics. In the official Soviet statement quoted no reference was made to "minyanim" (services in private homes). Synagogues were specifically mentioned. It should also be borne in mind that it is a criminal offence in the Soviet Union for private homes to be utilised for prayer gatherings without prior government registration.

The resort to quoting Chief Rabbi Levin to bolster up the official Soviet case would be regarded by many people as unworthy.

(6) The outspoken condemnation of the failure of the Soviet authorities to restore Jewish cultural institutions and the criticism of the policy of enforced Jewish cultural assimilation are things which I warmly welcome, but it should be noted that the

translation of Sholem Aleichem into Russian is no substitute for the publication of the works of living Jews in their mother tongue. True, there have been some minor concessions in recent months, presumably largely due to interventions from progressive quarters. But the fundamentals have not yet been touched. Nearly half a million Jews designated Yiddish as their mother tongue at the last Soviet census. But in contrast to the numerically smaller German minority also scattered throughout the Soviet Union, Soviet Jews have no access to Yiddish schools, to Yiddish daily newspapers, etc. One only has to follow the anguished pleas of Western Jewish and non-Jewish Communists in recent months for confirmation of this deplorable state of affairs.

(7) There is scope for unlimited debate on the interpretation of statistics relating to social and economic discrimination against Jews in certain fields of the Soviet economy. I myself conceded that in certain sectors of Soviet society Jews play a role far greater than their numerical proportion of the general Soviet population. But the Polish Communist "Kantor" analysis as well as other surveys have demonstrated that by virtue of their concentration in urban areas many of these statistics are misleading.

No better authority to confirm discrimination against Jews can be quoted than ex-Premier Khrushchev, who on December 17, 1962 at a meeting of Soviet artists and intellectuals, rationalised the justification of an imposition of a numerus clausus against Jews, claiming that the prominence of too many Jews in top positions would create anti-Semitism. Earlier in 1956, Khrushchev warned that Jews must make way for "the indigenous inhabitants". Madame Furtseva, the Soviet Minister for Culture, also made similar statements. These were bitterly criticised by prominent Communist and progressives as smacking of "Great Russian Chauvinism" and "an unforgiveable violation of socialist democracy."

(8) The C.P.A. statement makes no reference to the economic crimes campaign and the clearly discernible anti-Semitic overtones operating here which prompted Earl Russell to protest bitterly to the Soviet authorities. In recent months even the Soviet authorities have conceded that some of the trials were abrogations of socialist justice. Yet the fact remains that even now Jews are being highlighted in these campaigns and in areas of heavy Jewish concentration such as the Ukraine 90% of those sentenced to death at the height of the campaign were Jews.

(9) The implication in the C.P.A. statement and repeated by you personally at press conferences that my study is designed to highlight charges against Communist Parties rather than appeal for an amelioration of the plight of Soviet Jews is unfair. I have

quoted at great length to demonstrate that there are prominent personalities, and even powerful voices within Western Communist Parties, who have raised their voices over the question of Soviet Jewry.

I have endeavoured to show that over the last few years there has been an evolution in the publicly expressed attitudes of Western Communist Parties including the C.P.A. with reference to this question.

I have concentrated on this because I feel that today progressives and Communists who are aware of the status of Soviet Jewry and are willing to act, can have a profound influence towards the rectification of the present position. The Soviet authorities will surely be influenced if their friends in the West insist that human rights are indivisible and that they are prepared to speak out against the deprivation of equal rights to groups in socialist countries as well as in the West.

(10) The C.P.A. statement concludes by expressing the hope that conditions can be created to hasten the elimination of remnants of anti-Semitism everywhere. This is a hope shared by all Jews and men of goodwill throughout the world.

It is suggested that exchange visits between Australia and the U.S.S.R. would be helpful and would afford great opportunities for first hand investigation of questions appertaining to Soviet Jews. This is a view I warmly commend. But to date, Soviet Jews are denied the opportunity of forming themselves into a voluntary national or religious community and freely electing their leaders and spokesmen. Mr. Vergelis, as Lord Russell has bitterly stated, is not a Jewish leader but an appointed spokesman of the Soviet authorities.

Exchange visits cannot be a one-sided traffic. Perhaps the C.P.A. could join us in our appeals to the Soviet authorities to permit Jews the right of association and also enable the reunification of Jewish families tragically separated as a result of the war against Nazism. There are ample precedents for this. Soviet Armenians appeal to Armenians in the West to return home, and Poles, Ukrainians, Greeks and Spaniards have all been granted the opportunity of uniting with their families in other countries. These facilities have also been accorded to Jews in Communist countries other than the Soviet Union.

May I finally again emphasise that all that is being asked from the Soviet authorities is equal treatment for Soviet Jews. Soviet Jews have an unparalleled history of persecution extending back to the whole Tsarist period, reaching its climax with the Hitlerite occupation, and continuing on a different level during the Stalinist Black Years. Their status has nothing to do with the

Cold War. It is a question of granting human rights to a people with an unparalleled history of persecution.

The C.P.A. and individual progressives in Australia have already taken certain steps which may in the long run prove to be extremely beneficial. As a Jew deeply concerned with this purely as a human rights question, I for one, would welcome further initiatives in this field from the C.P.A.

With this in mind, may I suggest that in pursuance of a desire to have anomalies relating to Jews in the Soviet Union rectified, arrangements be made to enable me to meet with representatives of the Central Committee, at some convenient time in the near future, with a view to further constructive discussions on this question.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

168 Day Street, Sydney,

20/8/65.

*Mr. I. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH SE7,  
VIC.*

*Dear Mr. Leibler,*

*We are in receipt of your letter of August 9. We note that this letter contains approval of some aspects of the statement of our Political Committee "Soviet Jewry . . . A Reply to I. Leibler," and requests discussions with representatives of our Central Committee.*

*We are prepared at all times to hold talks with those desirous of developing dialogue sincerely for the purpose of social and political betterment.*

*As already pointed out in our statement, those who attempt to use the question of Soviet Jewry to engage in anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda perform a grave disservice to all who desire to hasten elimination of remnants of anti-Semitism everywhere.*

*Discussions with the Communist Party would hardly be fruitful if, in them, besides seeking to improve the position of Jewish people as you conceive it, you also have other, anti-communist*

aims, as clearly intimated for example in your Bulletin article September 26, 1964, addressed to Mr. Killen M.P.

*We note that you disagree with our definition of anti-Semitism, but that you do not give your own definition either in your booklet or the letter. This is an omission we feel should be rectified to help clarify terms of reference.*

*We do not propose at this stage to refer to other points raised in your letter, except your surprising statement that "the attempt to counterpose Dr. Goldmann to me is simply not based on facts."*

*We do not claim a thorough knowledge of Dr. Goldmann's opinions; our comment in this connection was based on published statements {one of which was quoted in our document) which clearly revealed a difference of views.*

*Your claim is all the more extraordinary in view of published reports—for example in The Australian Jewish Herald of August 6, which states, inter alia: "Mr. Leibler bitterly attacked Dr. Goldmann's policy, in regard to the issue of Soviet Jewry."*

*We would also like to know whether, in requesting discussions, you are representing only yourself or are acting on behalf of any organisation.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*E. AARONS,*

*For the CENTRAL COMMITTEE.*

116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, S.E.7, VIC.  
1st September, 1965.

Mr. L. Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

I acknowledge the letter of August 20th from Mr. E. Aarons, replying on behalf of the Central Committee of the C.P.A. to my original communication of August 8th.

I regret the tone of the letter and the attempt to drag in issues in no way pertinent to the question of human rights for Soviet Jewry.

Let me reply to the specific questions raised in your letter.

(1) I find it incredible that you require a definition of the term anti-Semitism. Surely it means the expression of hostility towards Jews, by the Government, or subjects of a State. It covers any activity that incites hatred against, or tends to force into or to hold Jews in an inferior position and to limit either their economic, political or social rights. I enclose a translation from a leading Soviet daily newspaper published earlier this year which I consider is an illustration of anti-Semitism in the U.S.S.R.

(2) My differences over the question of tactics with Dr. Goldmann were clearly elaborated in my letter of August 8th. Whether you share my view or not, in this regard, is quite immaterial to me.

(3) I wrote and am writing to you in my private capacity. Your reply to my study was entitled "Soviet Jewry—a Reply to I. Leibler". Progressives and Communists both here and abroad urged me, perhaps mistakenly, to attempt to continue a dialogue with the Central Committee on the basis of this official C.P.A. statement.

(4) My polemics against racists and their fellow travellers in the Bulletin, as indeed any of my private political views and activities, have no bearing on the question of Soviet Jewry which is a humanitarian issue to be considered outside the arena of party politics. I consequently have no desire or intention to justify my activities in fields other than Soviet Jewry to you or anyone else.

(5) Your letter could easily create the impression in the minds of some people that your previously publicly expressed desire to hasten the elimination of anti-Semitism is a hollow gesture in so far as it affects the Soviet Union.

If you do not wish to discuss the question further, I will continue my close personal relations with leading Communists both in Australia and abroad who recognise the problem and are willing to participate in dialogue or play their role in helping to remedy the situation.

I would therefore appreciate a clear cut reply as to whether the Central Committee is or is not prepared to enable me to meet with some of its representatives in the near future, with a view to constructive discussions on this question.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

*Below is a translation of a complete article from "Zviadzda", the leading Bielorrussian-language daily newspaper in Minsk, February 2, 1965. This translation was enclosed with the above letter. It is typical of the genre of anti-semitism to be found in the Soviet press camouflaged as "anti-religious propaganda".*

#### THE SHADOW OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The shadow of the synagogue: It has shrunk and moved back but it still crosses our path. It is a reminder of the evil, heavy darkness that blinded thousands and thousands of people, poisoned their souls, and stunted their bright aspirations. In our day, the servitors of the synagogue strive to prove that Judaism is not an accumulation of harmful prejudices, but a "form of culture"; not dead superstition, but "living words". Thus, Aaron Bart, the Israeli sociologist-banker, in the book *Our Generation Before Eternal Problems*, asserts that the Marxist definition of religion as the opiate of the people "is not relevant to Judaism."

However, the efforts to disguise the true face of Judaism are doomed to failure. Like all other religions, Judaism is the enemy of human culture, is in contradiction to science, and is the hotbed of a code of morality hostile to us.

The synagogue is the evil, ugly shadow of the past. The Zionist bourgeoisie exploits Judaism for anti-national, utterly reactionary purposes. It seeks to poison the consciousness of the Jewish workers with the poison of bourgeois nationalism, and to hinder their participation in the united front of the class struggle against imperialism. In a book published in New York, *Current Philosophy of Judaism* (sic), it is stated that Judaism ought to play a decisive role "in defense of Western civilization and in overcoming materialism." This is self-exposure. It is a cynical confession by the servitors of the synagogue that their gods are profit and money—"the golden calf".

The center of contemporary Judaism is the U.S.A. The more than four thousand servants of this cult have in their possession all the means of propaganda—radio, press and television. They publish dozens of periodicals, among them *American Judaism* and *The Light of the Synagogue* (sic). The Jewish clergy holds in its hands almost the entire system of education and enlightenment of the Jewish population of the country. More than 2,800 schools, and dozens of colleges and universities, are under their control. At the head of the American Judaism organizations are such leaders of big business as Guggenheim and Morgenthau, Harriman and Rockefeller.

The "promised land" of Judaism is Israel. In that country, Judaism has become the state religion. The rabbis control the civic courts and the educational system. The teaching of Judaism is an established part of all the educational institutions of the country. It is particularly in Israel that the reactionary character of Judaism is most forcefully revealed as the enemy of social and scientific progress.

Judaism is also extremely harmful in our conditions. The construction of a Communist society is impossible without widespread scientific progress. Judaism, however, has in its very essence a deeply ingrained enmity to knowledge and to free, creative thought. In the age of atomic energy and cosmic conquest, Judaism keeps the consciousness of believing Jews in the prison of Stone Age, antediluvian concepts. For instance, the synagogue celebrates the "Renewal of the Moon"—a cult that is both unfitting and offensive to modern man. Religious Jews, however, pray today as did their distant forefathers. Gazing at the moon, they jump

up and down in one spot, and beseech it: "Just as I jump before you and cannot reach you, so let my enemies jump before me and not reach me." And this occurs at a time when our flag is planted on the moon and when, in the near future, a man will "land" on this satellite of the Earth . . .

Judaism defends what is dead and rotten; it erases all bright prospects from human life; and it denies man's right to struggle for a better, a truly just and humane world.

The rabbis claim that life on earth is not a real life, but merely a preparation for life after death. The harder one's life is on earth, so whisper the Pharisees, the more chance one has to go to heaven after death. This is how Judaism prevents believers from understanding the meaning of life, and deprives them of the opportunity to become masters of their own fate and to fight for their happiness.

Judaism preaches anti-Communist morality. One can say without exaggeration that there is no crime that has not been justified by the Holy Book of the Israelites—the Bible. Let us take one of the most pressing questions of the present day—the question of war and peace. Dozens of times we meet on the pages of the Bible with the orders of the Biblical god to kill all those who do not acknowledge him. This god not only orders murder, but is himself the greatest of murderers. He murders all the children in the land of Egypt and kills sixty thousand Jews for having forgotten his name. And finally, there is that most horrible of mass murders which the Bible attributes to god—the great flood. In its waters, Jehovah drowned all mankind and destroyed every living thing on earth.

Another revolting characteristic of the morality of Judaism is the preachment of national exclusivity. The Bible teaches that the Jewish people is a "God-chosen people", to whom God promised mastery over all mankind. Even in our conditions, Judaism tries to forbid marriage between Jews and non-Jews, and instills in believers feelings of distrust and contempt for people of other nationalities. This reactionary aspect of Judaism, however, reveals itself most clearly in the context of bourgeois society. In Israel, open chauvinism has flourished on this foundation.

Here is an example: A rabbi forbade a father to bury his dead son in a Jewish cemetery because the boy's mother was a Russian. The father complained to the country's parliament. Reactionary members of the parliament transformed the parliamentary forum into a loudspeaker of the most rabid chauvinism. The Deputy Minister of Culture declared that the child had been buried according to the law of the State, while Representative Katz (it is worthwhile to mention this obscurantist by name) declared that "non-Jewish wives are dangerous to the people of Israel because they breed impure Jews," and that non-Jews ought to be forbidden entry into Israel. Such concern for the "purity of blood" duplicates the Nazi doctrine of Aryan racial superiority—a doctrine that cost the Jewish people alone six million lives.

The morality of Judaism degrades man. From its point of view, man is a slave of God—a worthless creature, without rights vis-a-vis the King of the Heavens. The fate of every man, the rabbis teach, is in the hands of God. The Bible says, "He makes men poor and makes them rich, he brings man low or raises him up high." This is how Judaism inculcates social pessimism into people, and nurtures blind, uncomplaining meekness in them.

Judaism is now going through a deep, insoluble crisis. It is condemned to die out. The synagogue is shriveling up; it is becoming duller and shrinking. Jewish bourgeois organizations are doing their utmost to

revive Judaism in our circumstances. Many Israeli tourists disseminate Zionist literature. Every year the Minsk synagogue receives matzah packages from abroad. But the matter doesn't stop at these "gifts" alone. Judaism is trying to create an ideological diversion, to fill the consciousness of working Jews in our country with the poison of bourgeois ideology. Thus, the Israeli Rabbinate sent a letter to the synagogue in Nikolayev demanding that Jews be educated in the spirit of "love for Palestine." This is nothing but preaching of the reactionary idea that Israel is "the fatherland of all Jews".

But the efforts to revive a corpse are vain! Most Jews in the Soviet Union have forever severed their ties with Judaism. They have become fused into the friendly family of Soviet peoples, and all together with joint efforts, they are creating a new, Communist day. The shadow of the past cannot shut off the light of our high, bright noon.

J. Muraviev,  
Senior Lecturer,  
V. I. Lenin Bielorussian State University.

**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**  
168 Day Street, Sydney.  
6/9/65.

Mr. I. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, SE7.

Dear Mr. Leibler,

*We have received your letter of September 1. Mr. L. Aarons, our General Secretary, was on vacation when your letters were received, so he could not reply personally.*

*We feel that the matters raised in our letter are legitimate elements in a dialogue and do have relevance in discussions between us.*

*We welcome dialogue and discussion with people of all viewpoints without seeking to restrict the range of topics canvassed, and are pleased when others respond in a like spirit.*

*We propose a meeting with representatives of our Central Committee at our headquarters (1st floor at the above address) at any time between September 14 and 17, and trust that these suggestions suit your convenience.*

*Yours faithfully,*  
E. AARONS,  
For the CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, S.E.7.  
9th September, 1965.

Mr. E. Aarons,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

Thank you for your letter of the 6th September.

If it is convenient for the representatives of your Central Committee, I would come to Sydney on Wednesday, September 14th and meet you at any convenient time between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It would be preferable for me if the meeting could take place in the morning rather than the afternoon.

I take it that it is agreed that the only question under discussion is the best means to be adopted to alleviate the condition of Soviet Jewry.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

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116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, S.E.7.  
20th September, 1965.

Mr. E. Aarons,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

I am hopeful that the meeting and extensive exchange of views between representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia and myself, which took place on Wednesday, September 15th, may prove beneficial towards rectifying the disabilities now experienced by Jews in the Soviet Union.

It came as no surprise to me that Mr. Robertson, Mr. Taft and yourself did not entirely accept my evaluation of the plight of Soviet Jewry.

On the other hand, I was gratified to learn of the considerable common ground with regard to this question that we do share. It would be advantageous if I endeavour to specify those areas in which we share similar attitudes.

You expressed the view that anti-Semitism is an anathema and must be combatted wherever it occurs. You also intimated that you agreed with me that a definition of anti-Semitism limited to hatred of Jews on racial grounds is too narrow. In fact, you accepted the definition stated in my previous letter with the proviso that anti-religious propaganda and anti-Zionism (*if presented responsibly in an appropriate context*) are not anti-Semitic. At the same time, you and your colleagues insisted that anti-Semitic propaganda in the Soviet Union, whether in the form of crude anti-religious propaganda or crude anti-Zionism, must be eliminated as such published matter can only serve to fan hatred of Jews.

You expressed the view (which was supported by Mr. Robertson and Mr. Taft), that the Soviet leaders should conduct an educational campaign designed to combat anti-Semitism. In this regard, you stated that the recent Pravda editorial which included a paragraph condemning racism and anti-Semitism indicated that the Soviet authorities had begun such a campaign. I intimated that I also welcomed the Pravda editorial but pointed out that this editorial did not really affect the fundamental issues which remained unresolved. I expressed the view that a thorough review of the Jewish question by the C.P.S.U. or Soviet Government—in practice as well as theory—was an indispensable prerequisite towards rectifying the present disabilities experienced by Soviet Jews.

I also agreed that the religious and cultural concessions granted in recent months as a response to public protest were welcome. However, I emphasised that the basic question of religious and cultural rights for Soviet Jewry had yet to be faced.

As a suitable precedent, which could well be emulated with respect to Soviet Jews, I referred to the official rehabilitation of the Volga Germans by the Supreme Soviet in December 1964, and the cultural rights recently guaranteed to this minority. I emphasised that the Volga German minority was numerically half the size of the Jewish group and was also scattered throughout the Soviet Union.

I concurred with you that voluntary assimilation on the part of Soviet Jews was perfectly legitimate. What was objectionable and manifestly unjust, was assimilation brought about by administrative decrees or denial in practice to Soviet Jews of similar facilities accorded to other Soviet ethnic and religious groups. I outlined specific examples such as the failure in the process of restitution of Jewish cultural activities since the days of Stalin, the restriction of religious facilities, etc.

I welcome your assurance that on your forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union you would raise the issue of the Zviazda article and other anti-Semitic articles and publications. You intimated that you would protest at the continued circulation of such anti-Semitic material and would point out that this was inconsistent with the C.P.S.U. condemnation of the Kichko book as well as existing Soviet legislation designed to suppress incitement to racial or ethnic hatred.

You also intimated that you would make a personal investigation into the problems involved in the establishing of voluntary Jewish religious or ethnic bodies on a federal basis as is the existing position with other Soviet religious and ethnic groups.

I particularly appreciate your personal assurance that you would also make enquiries into the question of reunification with their families in other countries, of those Soviet citizens who were tragically separated from their closest kin as a result of the war. As we agreed, there are special humanitarian circumstances relating to Jews in respect to this question.

As suggested, I have forwarded you, under separate cover, a representative range of documentary material relating to many of the questions raised during our discussions. I will also endeavour to continue forwarding further pertinent material to Mr. Robertson and yourself as it comes to hand in the future.

May I, in conclusion, echo your sentiments that dialogue relating to human rights can only serve for the good if followed by constructive practical action designed to remedy injustices wherever they may exist.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

168 Day Street, Sydney.  
14/10/65.

*Mr. I. J. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD, S.E.I, VIC.*

*Dear Mr. Leibler,*

*Unfortunately your letter to Mr. Eric Aarons arrived too late to reach him before his departure for overseas. I am therefore taking the liberty of acknowledging your letter and adding a few*

*comments, with which Mr. Robertson, as a participant in the recent exchange of views with yourself, concurs.*

*In general, we agree with the points you have recapitulated, while noting that there is some difference of interpretation in some cases.*

*However, the only particular point of clarification we wish to make is that, as our delegates explained in the discussion, we express our views on the subject of Jewish people in the USSR always within the context of our position of socialist internationalism and respect for national sovereignty and the rights of self determination of nations and Communist Parties.*

*We too, consider that good can come from dialogue between different viewpoints based on goodwill, and are sure that such dialogues will in general assist to facilitate activity for progress.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*L. AARONS.*

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116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH, S.E.7, VIC.  
2nd October, 1965.

Mr. L. Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

I acknowledge with thanks your letter of October 14th.

I am writing again to draw your attention to an extremely distressing incident directly pertinent to the discussions I had on September 25th with representatives of the Central Committee of the C.P.A. It was then unanimously agreed that anti-Semitic propaganda in the form of crude anti-Zionism must be eliminated as it can only serve to fan hatred of Jews.

The incident took place last week at the U.N. General Assembly's Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. The Soviet delegate moved that a resolution calling on all States "to condemn anti-Semitism and take action for its speedy eradication in territories subject to their jurisdiction" be amended by substituting "condemn anti-Semitism, Zionism, Neo Nazism and all other forms of the policy and ideology of colonialism, national and race hatred and exclusiveness".

During the height of the Stalinist terror, anti-Semitism was frequently encouraged under the guise of anti-Zionism. However, I believe that a public equation of Zionism with the ideology which exterminated six million Jews, at an international forum is unprecedented even in Stalinist terms.

This has nothing to do with one's individual attitude towards Zionism. It fits precisely into the category of crude anti-Zionism which is indistinguishable from anti-Semitism. On the Australian scene, it is in some respects, similar to Eric Butler's fulminations on the alleged "International Zionist Capitalist Bolshevik plot".

To specifically isolate Zionism and highlight it with Nazism and anti-Semitism is an unforgiveable slur on the memories of the millions of Jews who perished as a result of Nazi anti-Semitism.

There will of course be a wave of indignation at this unprincipled move by the Soviet Union which is a contradiction of Internationalist Socialist principles, a cynical and unprincipled move to pander to the xenophobic elements within the Arab camp, and a strong bolster to anti-Semites throughout the world and in particular within the Soviet Union.

You might draw the attention of Mr. Eric Aarons to this as from our previous discussions I am sure that he will wish to make a strong protest to the Soviet authorities when in the U.S.S.R. I would also be grateful if you could draw the attention of the Central Committee to this question and give consideration to taking up the matter with the C.P.S.U., as friends of the Soviet Union.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

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**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

168 Day Street, Sydney.  
2/11/65.

*Mr. I. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH SE7,  
VICTORIA.*

*Dear Mr. Leibler,*

*Thank you for your letter of 22nd October, and please excuse the delay in replying. If convenient, I would appreciate any further information you may have on the debate at the U.N.*

*General Assembly's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee.*

*In compliance with your request, I have sent a copy of your letter to Eric, in the hope that it may intercept him before he returns home.*

*Although it is not relevant to the matter you have raised, some information has come to my attention which may be of interest to you. At a public meeting for "Captive Nations Week", held in the Trocadero, Sydney, on October 24th, a small booklet was distributed advertising extreme rightwing pamphlets and books (the John Birch Society, etc.). One of these booklets is called "A Prophecy?", and the advertising blurb leads me to believe that it is the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion". I have ordered a copy from the firm, Tidal Publications, Box 3266, G.P.O. Sydney. If it turns out to be this hoary forgery, I will let you know.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*L. AARONS.*

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8th November, 1965.

Mr. L. Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

May I take this opportunity of expressing my satisfaction with the discussion which I held yesterday with Mr. Taft and yourself.

I was gratified to learn that your views regarding the question of anti-Semitism in the U.S.S.R. are similar to those of other members of the Central Committee of the C.P.A. with whom I have been in contact.

You will no doubt recollect that after I had outlined the discriminations experienced by Soviet Jews, and in particular the most recent scandalous anti-Jewish libel by the Soviet Union at the U.N., you indicated that upon the return of your brother from the Soviet Union, you intended to take practical steps in conjunction with the Central Committee, with a view to rectifying the present disabilities experienced by Soviet Jews as well as making public the C.P.A. attitude to this question. With regard to the most recent Soviet anti-Jewish provocation, I agreed with

Mr. Taft and yourself that this could well be dealt with as an aspect of the central issue of Soviet anti-Semitism after Mr. Eric Aarons's return to Australia.

I was particularly gratified to have your confirmation, that if the gravity of the Soviet Jewry question is confirmed by your brother, the Central Committee will not be deterred from acting on this, as an independent human rights question, even if such moves could conceivably provide ammunition for anti-Soviet elements.

I trust that the additional literature concerning Soviet Jewry that I passed on will be useful.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

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**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

168 Day Street, Sydney.  
President:  
R. DIXON.  
General Secretary:  
L. AARONS.

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**  
Phone 26-2161.

Box 5275,  
G.P.O., SYDNEY.  
6th December, 1965.

Dear Mr. Leibler,

*At your request I, accompanied by Mr. Taft, had a discussion with you. I found the exchange of views interesting and helpful.*

*However I must confess I was somewhat surprised to get your letter, which is surely a very one-sided interpretation of our discussion.*

*In the letter you express your own views and descriptions of some of the problems in such terms as "scandalous anti-Jewish libel by the Soviet Union at the United Nations" and "anti-Jewish provocation."*

*You are, of course, entitled to these views, though we, for our part, feel they are exaggerated. However, your letter is written in such a way that the impression is given, at least, that Mr. Taft and I joined with you in these descriptions. You know that this is not so. You will recall that I questioned you specifically about the details of the Soviet resolution at the United Nations and that you expressed the view that they may have felt*

*themselves provoked by the attitude of the U.S. delegation. I should add in fairness that you also stated that this did not excuse the Soviet resolution.*

*Yours faithfully,  
(signed)  
L. AARONS.*

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10th December, 1965.

Mr. L. Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

I must confess that I was extremely surprised to read the contents of your letter of 6th December.

In view of the preceding exchange of correspondence with yourself, as well as previous discussions with Mr. Taft, I believed that a direct personal discussion with yourself could be advantageous. It was on this basis that I initiated our recent meeting when Mr. Taft informed me that you were visiting Melbourne.

I make no apology for the expressions used in my previous letter with reference to the monstrous Soviet stunt at the United Nations. My sentiments in this regard would be shared by the overwhelming majority of Jews living in countries in which they have freedom of expression. I regret that my impression that you shared these views was unfounded. I am also somewhat surprised that you take objection to the manner in which I phrased my letter. The day after our conference prior to despatching my letter, I went to the trouble of telephoning and reading it to you in full. I specifically asked you then, whether you had any objection to my summary of our discussions. Perhaps you did not grasp the details in a telephone conversation but you must appreciate that I received no indication that you disagreed with the substance of my letter.

I must also go on record in rejecting your suggestion that I expressed the view that the Soviet representatives at the U.N. "may have felt themselves provoked by the attitude of the U.S. delegation". If I could refresh your memory, I expressed the view that there was a tendency on the part of the Soviet Government to dismiss anything relating to human rights which emanated

from the United States as a cold war provocation. You will, I am sure, agree that this interpretation of our conversation has different implications from that expressed in your letter.

Your letter and my failure hitherto to achieve meaningful results could have prompted me to reach certain conclusions regarding our dialogue. However, in view of the meeting which took place between myself, your brother Mr. Eric Aarons, and Mr. Alec Robertson on Tuesday, 7th December, I do not consider pursuing this matter now would be advantageous.

I say this because Mr. Eric Aarons intimated to me that a statement would be made relating to the question of Soviet Jewry which would encompass the question of anti-semitic literature still circulating within the Soviet Union; the attempt by the Soviet delegate to bracket Zionism and Nazism at the United Nations; the question of the State of Israel's right to self-determination; and the support for the reunification on humanitarian grounds of Jews in the Soviet Union separated as a result of war from their kinsmen in other countries.

In anticipation of this statement I agree with you that our exchange of views may indeed prove to have been truly helpful and constructive.

Yours faithfully,

I. J. LEIBLER.

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**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

168 Day Street, Sydney.

Phone 26-2161

President:

R. DIXON.

General Secretary:

L. AARONS.

13/12/65.

Mr. I. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH SE7,  
VICTORIA.

Dear Mr. Leibler,

Thank you for your letter of December 10th.

Firstly, on a question of fact, when you 'phoned me and read out your letter, I made the comment "You are stretching it a

little" {or words to that effect) and agreed to reply on receipt and consideration of the letter.

*It seems to me that the value of personal discussions {or "dialogue") between people of differing philosophical and political views, on issues of joint concern or in general, is surely to exchange information, ideas and opinions. Neither side should try to gain any narrow or ephemeral advantage, particularly not by one side interpreting and formulating the other's viewpoints.*

*The difficulty this leads to is easily seen from the different interpretation I made of your comments on the Soviet Union's reaction to the United States' support of the resolution at the United Nations. I accept your differentiation of your position from the way I phrased it in my letter. I mention it by way of recognising how easy it is to misinterpret expressions of opinion, particularly when one has a strong opinion oneself. It is certainly my desire that on both sides we can avoid making any implications of lack of good faith which would inhibit any dialogue or useful co-operation on issues of common concern.*

*As a Communist and an individual of Jewish descent, I am concerned with anti-semitism. I am studying the documents you gave me, and am prepared to study and discuss any further material and views you may wish to send or express. This does not mean I accept your views as a correct interpretation of the Soviet Union's policy towards its Jewish citizens. Indeed, on several fundamental questions, I differ with you, along the lines of the statement our Party has already issued.*

*At the same time, should we reach views which lead us to the belief that there are mistakes or weaknesses in the policy of any fraternal Communist Party, we will express our opinions in what we consider the most useful and appropriate ways. This applies to the issue with which you are primarily concerned.*

*I enclose for your information a copy of the statement which will appear in next Wednesday's "Tribune" {December 15th), asking that you not release it before "Tribune" appears {Wed. afternoon).*

*Yours sincerely,  
{signed)*

*L. AARONS.*

*THE FOLLOWING TEXT WAS PUBLISHED IN "TRIBUNE" OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ON WEDNESDAY \5th DECEMBER, 1965 AND "GUARDIAN" THURSDAY, \6th DECEMBER, 1965.*

During their overseas visit Mr. Eric Aarons, a member of the political committee of the Communist Party of Australia, and Mr. Pete Thomas had discussions with representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the position of Jews in the Soviet Union. Mr. Aarons gave the following interview to the national communist weekly "Tribune":

*Question:* What is your view of recent developments in this field in the Soviet Union?

*Answer:* We informed the representatives of the CPSU that Communists and others in Australia warmly welcome a number of measures announced over the last few months.

These measures include the proposed publication of Hebrew prayer books, expansion of a religious study centre for training of Jewish youths, an increase in the amount of cultural material published in Yiddish, criticism of anti-semitism in Pravda and the decision of the Kiev city authorities to erect at Babi Yar a monument to Soviet citizens who perished during the war.

*Question:* What do you think is the attitude of Jewish people to assimilation?

*Answer:* We gained a strong impression that the process of assimilation of Jewish people had gone very far, was continuing at a fast pace, and was what the great majority wanted.

Fewer and fewer observe the Jewish religion. Virtually all Soviet Citizens speak and read Russian, and the vast majority of Jews wish to share in the general culture.

One fact which came to our notice was that all magazines and papers had, by decision taken in 1964, been freed from restrictions on circulation which had existed before due to limitation of paper supplies.

The monthly Yiddish language cultural magazine "Soviet Homeland" was therefore now available to all who wanted it, yet the circulation up to recently was stated to be only 25,000. A campaign to boost the circulation of the magazine was recently launched by a conference of readers.

This, in my opinion, must be taken as one objective measure of the existing demand which is often the subject of unsubstantiated assertion and speculation.

*Question:* Is it true, as is sometimes stated, that few Jewish

people are able to leave the Soviet Union, even to join their relatives in other countries?

*Answer:* We were informed by the representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that all nationalities were treated alike, that there was certainly no discrimination against Jews who wish to emigrate to join their kinsmen in other countries, and that there has recently been a considerable liberalisation in handling such applications. We welcome this on humanitarian and general grounds.

*Question:* What about reports of continued publication and circulation of articles with an anti-semitic effect?

*Answer:* I told the representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that we condemned such articles and would welcome a more vigorous campaign against them. We raised specifically the case of such an article which appeared in the Byelorussian paper *Zvezda* in February.

We were informed that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shared our view as to the nature of such articles, and had taken up the case of the *Zvezda* article with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia.

It was also pointed out that not all articles appearing in the vast number of papers, magazines and books published in the Soviet Union could possibly be taken as representing the views of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

As a further example of this a recent article in a Soviet magazine circulating internationally was quoted. The article tacitly supported the Arab position on the Jordan waters. This did not accord with the position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which recognised the right of national existence of Israel, and the question had been taken up with the author of the article.

*Question:* What is your opinion of the report of a Soviet delegate at the United Nations supporting a proposal grouping Zionism with Nazism?

*Answer:* I heard of this on my return to Australia, and understand that this incident took place in a U.N. Commission discussing racial discrimination.

I have not of course had the opportunity to examine the details, but in my opinion it is certainly wrong to link Zionism with Nazism in such a connection.

The fact that the U.S.A. has been attacking the Soviet Union in pursuance of the cold war does not alter the fact that the

formulation was wrong and appropriate steps by the Soviet Union to prevent the possibility of such a mistake in future would be beneficial to the communist movement.

*Question:* How do you think the statement of the Political Committee of the Communist Party of Australia of June last stands up now?

*Answer:* We believe that what has happened and what I have seen and heard confirms the substantial correctness of the principles and views expressed in that statement.

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20th December, 1965.

Mr. Laurie Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Aarons,

Thank you for your letter of December 13th. I am afraid that there is little point in carrying on a protracted discussion with regard to what each of us alleges we said or did not say. I cannot recollect you having made any comments qualifying my letter of the 8th November after I read it to you on the telephone. I am sure you will agree that there would have been no advantage on my part in sending you a letter which I anticipated you would repudiate.

May I also state that I agree with you that there is nothing to gain if we try to take advantage of one another by implying one-sided interpretations regarding summaries of discussions. My main purpose in having conducted this correspondence and participated in discussions with yourself and other members of the Central Committee of the C.P.A. has been to present documented evidence and draw your attention to what I consider is the desperate plight of my kinsmen in the Soviet Union.

I have been quite frank in informing you that despite my opposition to Communism, I felt that the plight of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union could be substantially ameliorated if Western Communist parties were to take up with the C.P.S.U. the present disabilities and discriminations experienced by Jews in the U.S.S.R. We have therefore exchanged views on the question of Soviet Jewry on the basis of this being exclusively a question concerning human rights.

I must confess that I am somewhat disappointed that you have not gone further in conceding the objections enumerated in my letter of 9th August in connection with the C.P.A. Political Committee statement replying to my study on Soviet Jewry. Whilst I appreciate that there must be differences in our approach and evaluation to this question, I still feel that on re-reading my first letter, you might even at this stage reconsider those sections of the Political Committee statement which I, at any rate, believe are based on false premises and incorrect. My main purpose over these last six months has in effect been to present documented material to substantiate this view.

To take only a small example. In your most recent letter you state that "as a Communist and an individual of Jewish descent. I am concerned with anti-semitism". You have of course emphasised to me in personal discussions that your Jewish origins have had little bearing on your political activity and that you consider yourself an assimilated Jew, conscious of your descent but largely uninformed concerning Jewish culture and religion. However, in view of the strong condemnations of Stalinist anti-semitism made by prominent Western Jewish and non-Jewish Communists as well as Soviet intellectuals like Yevtushenko, I would have hoped that you might have gone on record dissociating yourself from the C.P.A. Political Committee's denial that Stalin was motivated by anti-semitism. Surely the fact that Stalin committed excesses against many nationalities does not clear him of the charge of having wilfully conducted a vicious anti-semitic policy. Without implying any wider generalisations or innuendoes, I am sure that no-one would deny that Hitler was anti-semitic because he also liquidated gypsies and many other nationalities including Soviet citizens of non-Jewish descent.

Thank you for letting me see the advance copy of the statement by Mr. Eric Aarons which has since appeared in Tribune (December 15th). May I say at the outset that I appreciate the fact that as promised during our discussions, Mr. Aarons did take the trouble of raising the question of Soviet Jewry with representatives of the C.P.S.U. I would like to take the opportunity of commenting on Mr. Aarons' statement in detail.

1. At the end of his interview, Mr. Aarons states that he still "confirms the substantial correctness of the principles and views expressed in the June 1965 C.P.A. Political Committee statement". In view of what was covered in our discussions and correspondence, and even in the light of what Mr. Aarons states in the same interview, I find it difficult to understand how he could still hold this view.

2. With regard to the concessions granted by the Soviet

authorities in recent months, I have already commented to the effect that I do not consider that these deal with the basic question of Soviet Jewry which requires a complete re-evaluation in Marxist terms rather than minor concessions granted from time to time as a result of external protests.

Whilst welcoming the Pravda editorial which quoted a sentence from Lenin condemning anti-semitism, I still feel that in view of the continued circulation of anti-semitic materials in the Soviet press, in journals and in books which carry the approval of C.P.S.U. sponsored academic and scientific institutes, such criticisms are somewhat hollow gestures.

3. Mr. Aarons' comments relating to Jewish culture and his implied suggestion that the only problem with Yiddish culture is the fact that Jews themselves are not interested is incorrect and even more dogmatic than the position taken up in the C.P.A. Political Committee statement. On page 17 of the C.P.A. booklet it is stated "We would welcome further progress in the field of Yiddish culture to ensure that all who wish it are afforded full facilities to express and enjoy their culture in the Yiddish language". On page 15 appears the sentence "At the same time, we oppose assimilation being brought about simply by administrative measures. We oppose this in principle, and also as self-defeating, as often such an approach keeps national exclusiveness alive". Yet this is precisely the issue confronting Soviet Jews. There is no objection on the part of anyone to voluntary assimilation. It is the failure of the Soviet authorities to bring about restitution of Jewish cultural life which was ruthlessly destroyed by Stalinist central decree which is so manifestly unjust. As you yourselves imply in the Political Committee statement, there is in fact evidence that the Soviet Government does not promote voluntary assimilation but carries over its policy of anti-Jewish discrimination even against assimilated Jews (e.g. the resort to unearthing of Jewish sounding patronymics and former names in cases of trials of Soviet citizens who regard themselves as fully Russian but who happen to be of Jewish origin; the innuendoes about the passport in the case of the trial of J. Brodski).

As I mentioned previously, the Supreme Soviet saw fit to grant cultural restitution and official rehabilitation to the Volga Germans. Why could not the Jews receive similar treatment? There are more Jews than Germans in the Soviet Union and their record in Soviet life and during the Second World War is undeniably a better one than that of the German minority.

Leading Western Jewish Communists, including men like the editor of the American Communist daily "Morgen Freiheit", Paul Novick, the leading French Communist playwright Chaim Sloves

and many others have publicly been making anguished appeals to the Soviet authorities to change their present policy of assimilation by administrative decree. Surely the views of such men cannot be dismissed lightly.

4. With regard to Jewish religion, I do not quarrel with Mr. Eric Aarons when he states that the majority of Jews in the Soviet Union would no longer be practising religious Jews. But I regret that Mr. Aarons could not protest against the degradation imposed on those who are practising religious Jews. Jewish religion, as I have demonstrated in documentation based on Soviet sources, is assailed in the Soviet press as subversive, synagogues are being forcibly closed and religious devotional articles denied to those Jews desiring to practice their religion. In contrast to other Soviet religious denominations, Jews are denied the right of setting up a central religious body and of maintaining contact with their co-religionists abroad.

In the C.P.A. Political Committee booklet, it is stated on page 18 "In our view, respect for religious beliefs is important. Scrupulous care should therefore be taken to ensure that there are no legal or constitutional obstacles to the availability of premises, religious objects ( special foods, prayer books, etc.), to the training of clergy to the extent adequate for the demand, and to the right of religious organisation . . .". On the same page you state "Mr. Leibler's approach, however, seems to be that any form of criticism of the Jewish religion is a form of anti-semitism. In our view this is quite unjustified. We believe in the right to uphold the scientific world outlook against the religious one. But crudeness in what is a matter of philosophic discussion and contention is justly resented and damages rather than assists the spread of the scientific outlook".

Although Mr. Aarons refers to anti-semitic articles, I regret that he could not make some reference in his statement to the fact that anti-Jewish religious propaganda is having the effect of fanning anti-semitism precisely because of its crude nature. I also regret that Mr. Aarons did not protest at the failure of the Soviet authorities to enable religious Jews to form themselves into a central body as is the case with other religious groups.

5. Mr. Aarons' remarks concerning the continued "publication and circulation of articles with an anti-semitic effect" are welcome. The fact that he specifically raised the "Zviazda" article to which I had drawn your attention in a previous letter is also appreciated. On the other hand, I emphasised that the "Zviazda" article was not exceptional and that there were many other publications and so-called scientific books denigrating Jews and Judaism still circulating freely within the Soviet Union.

It is impossible for me to accept as a fact that the C.P.S.U. have no responsibility for anti-semitic articles of this nature. What is particularly disheartening is that despite all the assurances that are given every time there are external protests concerning specific articles, nothing is done to neutralise the impact of such articles. Surely Mr. Eric Aarons could have suggested to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. that in the case of the venomous "Zviabda" article it would not have been unreasonable to expect a repudiation to appear in the same paper. It is because of this atmosphere that many of us believe that the Soviet authorities and the C.P.S.U. are telling untruths when they claim that they are doing everything possible to prevent the dissemination of race hatred of this nature.

6. Mr. Aarons' statement condemning the monstrous act of the Soviet representative at the United Nations in Unking up Zionism with Nazism is appreciated, especially as with the exception of Jewish communists, no Western Communist party other than the C.P.A. has to date officially gone on record in condemning this despicable tactical stunt which successfully sabotaged a United Nations resolution condemning anti-semitism.

In this context, I must confess that I am extremely surprised at the fact that the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. informed Mr. Aarons that they had reprimanded the author of an article in a Soviet international journal which supported the Arab position on the Jordan waters. Until now the Soviet policy with regard to this question can only be described as one which consistently identified the Soviet Government with the Arab position. If the Soviet Communist Party representatives were telling the truth, it implies that there has been a substantial change in policy on the part of the Soviet Union towards the State of Israel. Such a change by the Soviet Government would be welcomed by all those concerned with the question of peace between the State of Israel and her Arab neighbours.

7. The most important section of Mr. Aarons' statement as far as I am concerned is his support on humanitarian grounds for a liberalisation in handling of applications of Jews who wish to emigrate to join their kinsmen in other countries. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that any Communist party has gone on record in enunciating this as their official policy. This is very important and will be particularly welcomed by all Jewish people. However, I must emphasise that at this stage I am unaware of any liberalisation having taken place with regard to emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. I can only hope that the C.P.S.U. officials were not telling Mr. Aarons lies. It would not be the first time that they have deliberately told untruths with regard to matters appertaining to Soviet Jewry.

May I summarise, therefore, by stating that despite the sections in Mr. Aarons' statement which I regard as dogmatic and in some cases largely propagandist, I do welcome what I regard as the positive passages in his statement.

I can only express the hope that the lead set by the C.P.A. on the question of Jewish emigration will be followed by other Western Communist parties and ultimately become practical policy on the part of the Soviet Government. I will certainly draw your attention to any individual cases in Australia which might indicate that the C.P.S.U. assurances in this regard were insincere. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter I am forwarding to the Soviet Embassy with regard to the assurances received by Mr. Aarons from the C.P.S.U. and I will advise you when I receive a reply.

I am hopeful that in the months to come the C.P.A. will use their good efforts to ensure that the promises received from the Soviet authorities do not remain words but are translated into deeds.

Yours faithfully,  
I. J. LEIBLER.

Enc. c.c. of letter forwarded to His Excellency Mr. V. Loginov,  
Ambassador of the U.S.S.R.

20th December, 1965.

His Excellency,  
Mr. V. Loginov,  
Ambassador,  
Embassy of the U.S.S.R.,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Your Excellency,

Over the last six months I have been carrying on extensive correspondence and direct discussions with the General Secretary and members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia concerning the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union.

Arising from these discussions, Mr. Eric Aarons, the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and a member of the Political Committee of the C.P.A. discussed the question of Soviet Jewry with representatives of the C.P.S.U. during his recent visit to the Soviet Union.

On his return, Mr. Aarons made a number of statements appertaining to Soviet Jews which were published on December 15th in "Tribune", the official organ of the C.P.A.

I would respectfully appreciate information regarding four matters referred to by Mr. Aarons.

1. Mr. Aarons states that he was informed by representatives of the C.P.S.U. that the C.P.S.U. does not support the Arab position with regard to the Jordan waters. Was Mr. Aarons correctly informed?

2. On behalf of the C.P.A., Mr. Aarons condemned the act of the Soviet United Nations delegate bracketing Zionism together with Nazism in an effort to prevent the passage of a resolution condemning anti-semitism at the United Nations. I am still unaware of any official Soviet repudiation of this act by its U.N. representative. Does the Soviet Government therefore still remain on record in bracketing Zionism a national humanistic Jewish movement together with Nazism, a genocidal ideology responsible for the extermination of six million Jews?

3. Mr. Aarons was told by the representatives of the C.P.S.U. that the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. were taking up the case of a particularly vicious anti-semitic article which appeared in "Zviazda", the leading Minsk daily on February 2nd, 1965, with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia. I would be extremely grateful if you could advise me of any article which might appear in "Zviazda" repudiating the anti-semitic sentiments expressed by Mr. J. Muraviev in his original article.

4. Mr. Aarons states categorically that he was informed by representatives of the C.P.S.U. that Jews wishing to emigrate to join their kinsmen in other countries could do so and that there has recently been a considerable liberalisation in handling such applications by the authorities. I am not aware to date of any meaningful liberalisation in the field of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could advise me and perhaps elaborate a little on the information Mr. Aarons received from the C.P.S.U. with regard to this question.

Yours respectfully,

I. J. LEIBLER.

c.c. Mr. Laurie Aarons,  
General Secretary,  
Communist Party of Australia,  
168 Day Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

**COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

168 Day Street, Sydney.

Phone 26-2161.

Box 5275,

G.P.O., SYDNEY.

13th January, 1966.

Mr. I. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
CAVLFIELD NORTH, SE7.

Dear Mr. Leibler,

*This is the first opportunity I have had to reply to your letter of December 20th. It seems to me that a lengthy reply would serve little purpose since from our discussions, which were useful, your views are known to us and ours to you. Further, a continuing exchange of letters of increasing length would make your aim of publication more difficult.*

*As you already know, and as our Political Committee statement clearly indicates, we reject your contention that the Government of the U.S.S.R. pursues an anti-Semitic policy. We consider that some of your views on the question of Soviet Jewry are taken far beyond the point justified by the facts. In our opinion, you tend to dismiss lightly facts which do not fit in with your preconceived views on the subject and are disposed to minimise the positive steps taken in the Soviet Union.*

*Our differences here however, have not prevented and will not prevent, as far as we are concerned, the holding of further discussions.*

*As you know, when we considered the facts justified a public expression of our opinions, we did so; further we have presented our views to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(signed)*

L. AARONS,

For CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

EMBASSY OF  
THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST  
REPUBLICS  
78 CANBERRA AVENUE, CANBERRA, A.C.T.  
TELEPHONE X1033.

Ref: 00-15.

10th February, 1966.

Mr. I. J. Leibler,  
116 Kooyong Road,  
Caulfield North, S.E.7,  
Vic.

Dear Mr. Leibler,

*In connection with your letter of 20th December, 1965 I advise you that it is beyond my scope as an official representative of the Soviet Government and not of the CPSU Central Committee to comment the interview of the Australian citizen E. Aarons about his discussions with representatives of the CPSU Central Committee during his visit to the Soviet Union.*

*As to the position of the Soviet Jews and their emigration you must be aware that there is no discrimination against Jews in the Soviet Union. Equality of their rights with other nationalities and races in my country is safeguarded by the Constitution of the USSR in accordance with which "any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, are punishable by law".*

*Yours faithfully,  
(signed)*

*V. LOGINOV,  
Ambassador of the USSR to  
Australia.*