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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 57, Folder 9, Cuba, 1985.



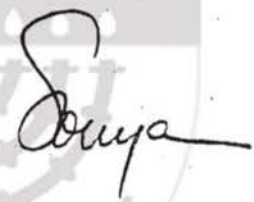
memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 7, 1985  
**to** Area Directors  
**from** Sonya F. Kaufer  
**subject**

The attached op-ed puts the decision by Fidel Castro to permit visiting Jewish tourists to conduct religious services into a proper context.

Regards.



sfk/dr  
att:  
85-965-27



# THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE **VIEWPOINT**

INFORMATION AND OPINION TO PONDER AND SHARE  
PUBLICATIONS SERVICE  
SONYA KAUFER, Director

## A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR CUBA

The Jewish community of Cuba, which numbered 14,000 at the time of the Castro revolution but is now down to about 800, suffers no special discrimination or disabilities (beyond the Marxist regime's general discouragement of religious life). Though they have no trained rabbis, they have three functioning synagogues; they slaughter their meat according to religious ritual; and each year they receive matzohs and other Passover foods from the Canadian Jewish community -- all without harassment by the Castro regime.

On the other hand, the government has pursued a relentless anti-Zionist and anti-Israel stance since 1973, when Castro responded to the Arab-inspired "Zionism is racism" campaign by breaking off relations with Israel and barring any cultural or religious ties with the Jewish state.

Now that Fidel is casting about for ways to improve U.S.-Cuban relations, Cuba is moving to make life easier for some of its own citizens, in order to demonstrate its devotion to democracy. Just recently, for example, the government announced that it would allow rabbis and other Jewish religious leaders visiting the island to conduct religious services and perform circumcisions.

This move is welcome, but it is hardly enough. A more impressive step, among others, would be for Cuba to allow its Jewish community to reestablish spiritual and cultural ties with their coreligionists in Israel, and for Castro to moderate his anti-Zionist and anti-Israel rhetoric at home and abroad.

It is deeds, not words, that will speak for Fidel in this country and elsewhere.

