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National Jewish Conference Center 250W57 Suite216 NYC 10019

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212-582-8118

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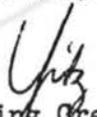
Dear Friends:

Because of your commitment to N.J.C.C. I know that you will find all aspects of our growth gratifying. In September, 1978, our special project, ZACHOR: The Holocaust Resource Center, was made operational here at N.J.C.C. The foundation and implementation of this project was one of our high priorities since our own beginning.

The attached newsletter was sent originally to ZACHOR'S Council of Zochrim (Guardians) but I thought that you would be interested to read it also. Your support of N.J.C.C. makes possible the development and scope of ZACHOR. In a way, it is amazing that although this is our largest single project, it is less than 40% of our programming. This certainly dramatizes the growth of our total program.

We are proud of ZACHOR'S work and, again, are grateful for your support.

Best wishes,


Irving Greenberg
Director

IG:mp

Enc.



ZACHOR

THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER

Elie Wiesel, Honorary Chairman
Irvin Frank, Chairman
Irving Greenberg, Director

Shevat, 5739
February 7, 1979



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Dear Friends;

One of the by-products of growth and development in an organization is the strain on connections. In the beginning process, when the idea, the vision, the service is brand new the connection between and among the interested parties is almost organic. The effort is so communal and also limited by its very newness that a glance or a smile could say it all.

But we grow, and what was tacit must perforce become explicit and what was informal must become more structured because connections are instruments of survival. At ZACHOR we have been growing, the number and variety of services we have been offering have increased by an almost geometrical progression. In an attempt to keep our connections solid and firm, we are initiating this newsletter.

This is the first, rather informal, issue and we look forward to reaction and comment from our friends. This is a six month review. Hereafter the newsletter will appear every four to six weeks. We suppose that there are worse things in life than missing connections, perhaps having no connections to miss. But since the latter is not the case among us, we hope this communication will help prevent the former. This is rather a long letter, but we wanted to bring you up to date on our progress. In the future we expect to send out a few pages of news with a think piece of comparable length.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Greenberg, Director
ZACHOR: The Holocaust Resource Center

ZACHOR: The Holocaust Resource Centers:
Activities, September, 1978 - February, 1979

Since its formal establishment on September 1, 1978, ZACHOR has been engaged in a broad variety of activities, including:

SHOAH: A Review of Holocaust Studies and Commemorations

Supported by a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council and published by ZACHOR in conjunction with the University of Bridgeport, SHOAH is the only English-language periodical devoted to Holocaust studies and commemorations, written for both academics and laypersons. SHOAH appears quarterly and the first issue was published last May. It is edited by Jane Gerber, professor of Jewish history at Lehman College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and a Vice-President of the Association of Jewish Studies.

The second issue, which appeared in December, featured articles on "The New York City Holocaust Curriculum" by Perry Davis, special assistant to the Chancellor of the New York Board of Education, "The Use of Music as a Means of Education in Terezin" by Joza Karas, a violinist with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and author of The Holocaust in Music, "Concentration Camp Art and Artists" by Leo Baeck Institute archivist Sybil Milton, and Irving Greenberg's "The State of Israel and the Challenge of Power to Jewish and Christian Theology."

The third issue, which will appear around March 1, features such diverse articles as "The Place and Contributions of Yad VaShem," "The Disease of Hunger in the Warsaw Ghetto," "Survivor Children" and "Vignettes of a Survivor."

Holocaust Studies Faculty Seminar

Since the early Fall, ZACHOR has sponsored the first interdisciplinary Holocaust Studies Faculty Seminar for scholars from a variety of disciplines in the Boston-Washington "corridor." The Seminar is held monthly at the City University of New York Graduate Center and usually involves 25-30 scholars. It is chaired by Henry Feingold, Professor of modern American and Jewish history at Baruch College and the City University of New York, and author of the acclaimed The Politics of Rescue. Each meeting of the Seminar consists of a 30-60 minute presentation, followed by an hour or more of discussion. The proceedings, which are taped, will be collected and published by ZACHOR in the Fall of this year.

At the Seminar's third and most recent meeting, on January 23rd, Lawrence Langer, Professor of English at Simmons College and the author of The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination and the recently-published The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature, spoke on "The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps." Three excerpts from his paper, which is part of a forthcoming book entitled Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit, are included in this newsletter. Following the discussion, Professor Langer indicated that many of the comments, questions and suggestions which his paper provoked would influence his work-in-progress.

The Seminar was inaugurated in October with a presentation on "The Destruction Process and the Jewish Response: Reconsiderations" by Raul Hilberg, Professor of political science at the University of Vermont and the author of the pioneering of The Destruction of European Jewry.

At the Seminar's second meeting in December, Henry Feingold spoke on "The Holocaust Witness as a Problem in Holocaust Historiography: The Case for Revision." His presentation evoked a great deal of comment and spirited discussion, among the 35 or so scholars present.

At the next meeting of the Seminar on February 28, the distinguished Canadian-Jewish philosopher Emil L. Fackenheim will speak on "The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz... and the Centrality of Israel: Reconsiderations and Developments."

Task Force on Holocaust Liturgy

As indicated in its name, the raison d'etre of ZACHOR is to "Remember." One of the most important and challenging ways of remembering/commemorating a communal event is through liturgy - prayers and other kinds of human religious expression which become part of the cycle of feast and fast, festival and repentance. Because liturgy is also a privileged path into communal consciousness, ZACHOR has established a Task Force on Holocaust Liturgy. The Task Force is currently examining ways the Holocaust is commemorated in existing Jewish liturgy, and will discuss ways of giving voice to the pain, questioning, anger, faith and doubt arising from this seminal event.

At its third and most recent meeting in January, Rabbis Chaim Stern, editor of Gates of Repentance, (the Reform Mahzor, or High Holiday prayer book) and Yehiel Poupko, author of an article on the Holocaust and Jewish observance in the forthcoming Third Jewish Catalogue, led a discussion on Poupko's thesis that the Holocaust must be injected into, and to some extent, transform all Jewish observances.

Other members of the task force include:

Rabbi Jules Harlow, editor of the (Conservative) High Holiday Prayer Book;

Rabbi Jack Reimer, Scholar-in-Residence at Congregation B'nai Emunah, St. Louis, and editor of Jewish Reflections on Death;

Professor David Roskies, a scholar on modern Yiddish literature and East European Jewish history and culture at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and author of Night Words;

Professor Byron Sherwin, a scholar in modern Jewish history at the Spertus College of Judaica (Chicago) and author of several study guides and teaching aides to the TV-special "Holocaust" published by the Jewish Welfare Board;

Michael Strassfeld, a co-editor of The Jewish Catalog and The Second Jewish Catalog, and editor of a new Haggadah commissioned by the Rabbinical Assembly.

ZACHOR Director Irving Greenberg, Associate Director Michael Berenbaum, and staff members Mary T. Glynn and David M. Szonyi are also part of the Task Force. The next meeting, on March 7, will focus on Roskies' "Modern Midrash," Night Words.

Staff and Board Notes

ZACHOR is playing a very prominent part on the President's Commission on the Holocaust, whose composition was announced by President Carter in November. ZACHOR Honorary Chairman Elie Wiesel is the Chairman of the Commission. Director Irving Greenberg and Associate Director Michael Berenbaum are respectively, Director and Deputy Director of the Commission. In this capacity, Greenberg will commute to Washington one day a week, while Berenbaum has been granted a six-month leave from ZACHOR to work full-time for the Presidential Commission, although he will be in New York to work with ZACHOR's staff.

Joining the staff on a full-time basis, is Dr. Mary T. Glynn. Dr. Glynn holds a Ph.D. in Religion and Culture from Florida State University, an M.A. in English and another M.A. in Religious Studies. While studying in Tübingen, Germany in 1969, she became interested in Holocaust studies and became convinced that the whole area was and must become more of a subject for Christian concern and dialogue. She was freed by her religious community, the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Union, to take a position on our staff. We are seeking additional staff for ZACHOR to take up some of Michael Berenbaum's work.

Also serving on the President's Commission is Sigmund Strochlitz, while Benjamin Meed is Chairman of the Advisory Board and Miles Lerman, along with Franklin Littell of Temple University are co-Chairmen. Sylvia Becker is also a member of the Advisory Board.

David Szonyi, who has been with ZACHOR since March, 1978, is now working three full days a week at the Holocaust Resource Center, while also continuing to do research on a Ph.D. dissertation on the German-Jewish Zionist leaders and editor Robert Weltsch. David who is a doctoral candidate in modern European and modern Jewish history at Stanford University, is also a Contributing Editor of the Baltimore Jewish Times, and a member of the Synagogue Council of America's Domestic Affairs Committee.

New Board Members

We are happy to welcome as a ZACHOR Vice-Chairperson: Warren Finn from Houston, Rhoda Goldman from San Francisco, Sol Goldstein from Skokie, Paula Kaufman from San Antonio, William Konar from Pittsford, and Bertram and Harriet Trobman from Phoenix.

Conferences

ZACHOR was consulted on and served as a co-sponsor of three major conferences on the Holocaust held in the Fall of 1978:

1. International Scholars Conference on "Western Civilization After the Holocaust," Seattle, November 7-11, co-sponsored with the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Social Problems of the University of Washington. Associate Director Michael Berenbaum organized and participated in a panel on "Jewish Theology After the Holocaust."

2. "Teaching the Holocaust," Miami, November 19-21, co-sponsored by the University of Miami, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and Jewish Federation of Miami.

3. "The Moral Implications of the Holocaust," Pittsburgh, December 4-5, co-sponsored by the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, University of Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh Jewish Federation. Following this Conference, ZACHOR served as a consultant to both public and parochial school teachers in the Pittsburgh area who are planning to introduce a unit on the Holocaust in their schools. In addition, the Pittsburgh Federation has decided to establish a Holocaust Studies Center (modeled on St. Louis) and will join the network of community Holocaust Studies Centers being guided by ZACHOR.

Michael Berenbaum and Henry Feingold, Chairman of the Holocaust Studies Faculty Seminar, also participated in the "International Conference on the Teaching of the Holocaust," held in Philadelphia in October under the auspices of the National Institute on the Holocaust (whose Director, Franklin Littell, is a member of the SHOAH Editorial Board).

Publishing Notes

The papers presented at the National Jewish Conference Center's September, 1976 conference on the works of Elie Wiesel have now been published in Confronting the Holocaust: The Impact of Elie Wiesel (Indiana University Press, 1978), edited by Irving Greenberg and Alvin Rosenfeld (Rosenfeld, a professor of English and Chairman of the Judaic Studies program at Indiana University, is a member of the SHOAH Editorial Board).

The Vision of the Void by Michael Berenbaum, to be published by Wesleyan University Press this Spring, is a major new study of post-Holocaust theological issues.

Consulting

ZACHOR offers ongoing consulting services to the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (Los Angeles), St. Louis Center for Holocaust Studies, and Holocaust Centers in New Haven and Montreal. ZACHOR recommends individuals to staff these centers, advises on programming and fundraising, and supplies resource material.

Since August, 1978, ZACHOR staff member David M. Szonyi has been the organization's consultant to a Holocaust Commemoration Day committee in East Windsor, New Jersey, a small community near Princeton which will be holding its first Holocaust commemoration on April 22, 1979. Associate Director Michael Berenbaum and Sister Rose Thiering will be the keynote speakers at this commemoration, which will also feature a musical presentation, library exhibit, slides of "The Life that Was" and a candle-lighting memorial ceremony.

Within the past month, ZACHOR has entered into the following two additional consulting relationships:

Rochester: Michael Berenbaum and Neil Norry, the Chairman of the NJCC Board, met during January with Daryl Friedman, Director of the Jewish Community Federation of Rochester to discuss Rochester's plans for a Holocaust memorial. ZACHOR has agreed to be a consultant to the Rochester Federation Holocaust Committee.

Baltimore: After a meeting in January among Michael Berenbaum, Richard Manekin and Ruth Horwitz of the Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund of Baltimore, and Daniel Kahn, the architect of the proposed Baltimore Holocaust memorial, ZACHOR agreed to serve as a consultant for this project.

Detroit: The Holocaust commemoration is now being established in Detroit. Subject to joining with the Federation, it will also join the ZACHOR network. Irving Greenberg will meet with its leadership on April 25th.

Other Services

Besides its consulting to the East Windsor Holocaust Commemoration Committee, ZACHOR has, on a gratis basis to communities and groups with limited financial resources:

--developed, at the request of the North American Jewish Students Network (an umbrella group whose constituent organizations service the estimated 500,000 Jewish university students in the U.S. and Canada) a basic resource unit for college students interested in studying the Holocaust.

--developed a model, one-day adult education institute on the Holocaust for the Manchester, Connecticut Council of Churches and Synagogues.

--advised the Connecticut Librarians Association on the purchase of Holocaust books, films, records and arts.

--worked with a number of universities, including Bradley University, Central Connecticut College, and Ohio State University on the development of their Holocaust curricula.

Holocaust Education in Informal Settings

In December, Leonard Rubin, Project Director of the joint Jewish Welfare Board-American Association of Jewish Education project on "Holocaust Education in Informal Settings" invited ZACHOR to serve on the project's Advisory Committee. Made possible by a grant from the memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, the Project will help develop model programs on the Holocaust at four Jewish resident camps in the Summer of 1979 for both older (14-16 years) and younger (12-13) adolescents. It is hoped that the demonstration projects will become models for other kinds of informal education on the Holocaust.

David Szonyi is representing ZACHOR on this Advisory Committee. After the Advisory Committee's initial meeting, he was invited by Mr. Rubin to join a smaller "working group" on the Project.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS, SPRING-SUMMER, 1979

Second Generation Conference

The first planning meeting for the ZACHOR Conference on "The Second Generation - Children of Holocaust Survivors," which will take place in the late Spring, was held on February 7. Among those present were Lucy Steinitz, co-editor with David Szonyi on Living After the Holocaust: Reflections of the Post-War Generation in America, (Bloch, 1976) Helen Epstein, author of an article on children of survivors which appeared in the New York Times Magazine in 1977 and which has been expanded into a book, which will appear shortly, and Eva Fogelman, a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based social worker who has been a pioneer in running groups for children of survivors (Ms. Fogelman's article on such groups appeared in the premiere issue of SHOAH).

Holocaust Seminar Trip

ZACHOR is sponsoring an intensive seminar-trip to Eastern Europe and Israel from June 17 to July 3, 1979. This trip will be conducted by ZACHOR's staff, led by Irving Greenberg, and will include the participation of outstanding scholars and Holocaust survivors in the U.S., Europe and Israel.

The tentative itinerary includes Munich (Dachau), Prague (Theresienstadt), Warsaw, Cracow (Auschwitz), Vienna (Mattausen) and Jerusalem.

The Planning Committee, which is headed by ZACHOR Vice-Chairperson Sylvia Becker, last met on February 14th.

Update

Total cost of Zachor's Holocaust Seminar to Eastern Europe and Israel is \$2,160.00 all inclusive with the exception of a few lunches.

Because of conflicting commitments of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, it is highly doubtful that Dr. Greenberg will be free to lead the trip. We are in contact with other top Holocaust scholars, equally as brilliant and as sensitive as Dr. Greenberg, in the event that he cannot join us.

Please send your deposit of \$200 per person to reserve your space as the trip is limited to 70 participants, including staff and scholars. Send deposit to Age of Travel, 3349 Piedmont Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30305. Mark it, "Zachor Trip."

THE DILEMMA OF CHOICE IN THE DEATHCAMPS

by

Lawrence L. Langer

[What follows are three excerpts from a paper presented to the third meeting of the ZACHOR Holocaust Studies Faculty Seminar on January 23, 1979.]

Do you know how one says "never" in camp slang?
'Morgen früh,' tomorrow morning. -- Primo Levi

Suppose Dante's pilgrim in the Divine Comedy had arrived at the exit from the Inferno to find the way barred by an electrified barbed wire fence, posted with warnings reading "No trespassing: Violators will be annihilated." When the spiritual and psychological equivalents of Purgatory and Paradise are excluded from human possibility, to be replaced by the daily threat of death in the gas chamber, then we have a glimpse of the negative implications of survival, especially for the Jews, in the Nazi extermination camps. After we peel the veneer of respectable behavior, cooperation, hope, mutual support and inner determination from the surface of the survivor ordeal, we often find beneath a raw and quivering anatomy of human existence resembling no society we have ever encountered before. When necessity transforms the life instinct and forces men and women who would stay alive to suspend the golden rule and embrace in its place the iron one of "do unto others before they do unto you," we must expect some moral rust to flake from the individual soul. We are left with a spectacle of reality that few would choose to celebrate, if they could tolerate a world where words like "future" and "dignity" and "love" had temporarily lost their meaning because Nazi brutality had eliminated the human supports that sustain them. But such a world so threatens our sense of spiritual continuity that it is agonizing to imagine or consent to its features without introducing some affirmative values to mitigate the gloom.

If we pursue the proposition that some stains on the soul of history are indelible, where will it lead us? It will lead us certainly to an unfamiliar version of survival, to the conclusion that after Auschwitz, after the Holocaust, the idea of human dignity could never be the same again. It will force us to reexamine the language of value that we used before the event, and to admit that at least when describing the Holocaust, if not its consequences, such language may betray the spirit and the facts of the ordeal. Perhaps this is what Primo Levi, himself a survivor, was trying to say in Survival in Auschwitz when he wrote:

Lawrence L. Langer, Professor of English at Simmons College, Boston, and a member of the SHOAH Editorial Board, is the author the The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination (Yale University Press, 1976) and the recently-published The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature (Beacon Press, 1978). "The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps" is part of a longer work-in-progress entitled Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit.

Just as our hunger is not that feeling of missing a meal, so our way of being cold has need of a new word. We say "hunger," we say "tiredness," "fear," "pain," we say "Winter" and they are different things. They are free words, created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the Lager's [camps] had lasted longer a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind, with the temperature below freezing, and wearing only a shirt, underpants, cloth jacket and trousers, and in one's body nothing but weakness, hunger and knowledge of the end drawing near.

This crucial observation leaves us with a profound dilemma, since no one has yet invented a vocabulary of annihilation, though the Nazis created a long list of euphemisms to deflect the imagination from their brutal purposes. For this reason, we must bring to every "reading" of the Holocaust experience, an intense consciousness of the way in which "free words" and euphemisms can distort the facts or alter them into more manageable events.

* * * * *

Evidence can probably be found in one document or another to support almost any interpretation of inmate behavior in the deathcamps; hence those who speak of the survivor as if he or she were a representative type, falsify the experience by the very (literal) singularity of their view. In an extermination camp like Belzec, almost no one survived, and in Treblinka very few, because the purpose of those places was to exterminate Jews, and the conditions that supported survival in a complex camp like Auschwitz simply did not exist there. In Auschwitz, with its main camp (chiefly for "political" prisoners), its gas chambers and crematoria at Birkenau, and its factories at Buna-Monowitz, to say nothing of its smaller scattered subcamps, the sheer size of the operation, created numerous posts that had to be filled by inmates--in the kitchens, in the crude infirmaries, in the various building Kommandos that were needed to support constant expansion. Those lucky enough to obtain and keep these posts--through chance, through influence, through the accident of their past training--were in a better position to endure the hardships of camp life than those who were assigned to exhausting labor details, whose members quickly grew vulnerable to disease and malnutrition, and hence to selection for the gas chamber. The attrition of humane feelings and the waning sense of choice in one's own destiny should come as no surprise to those who can imagine what it must be like to lose the ability to mobilize hope and to lapse into a state of what some psychologists call learned helplessness.

One can perhaps imagine it, one can even try to describe it, but how faithful to the experience of victims are our attempts to reconstruct from this nadir of despair those attitudes and actions which allegedly support survival? "As the solitary hunted creature," wrote Ella Lingens-Reiner, "felt the threat come nearer to her and had to fight more strenuously, day after day, to stave it off,

she would consider it increasingly as a personal, individual fate which she tried to evade, and would become more and more indifferent to the anguish of others." This is a world we do not like to recognize, because we do not want it to be established as a precedent for the one we inhabit now. But the "solitary hunted creature" in Auschwitz longed to survive until the next day, not until the world of normal expectations was restored. Primo Levi is not the only survivor to insist that those who behaved in the camps as they had behaved outside, by following all orders, eating only their own rations, and observing the discipline of work, rarely lasted more than three months. According to his darker vision, which, he says, is a result of observation, not cynicism, there was always someone who would agree to betray a natural solidarity with his comrades in exchange for a position of privilege. Discounting the romanticism of oppression inherited from an earlier age, Levi argues that the phenomenon of totalitarianism, which reached its supreme form of expression in the deathcamps, liberates in the individual asocial impulses too fragmentary and destructive to be harmonized into a unified theory of survival:

We are aware that this is very distant from the picture that is usually given of the oppressed who unite, if not in resistance, at least in suffering. We do not deny that this may be possible when the oppression does not pass a certain limit, or perhaps when the oppressor, through inexperience or magnanimity, tolerates or favours it. But we state that in our days, in all countries in which a foreign people have set foot as invaders, an analogous position of rivalry and hatred among the subjected has been brought about; and this, like many other human characteristics, could be experienced in the Lager in the light of particularly cruel evidence.

Any theory of survival which ignores this evidence is too abstract to merit unqualified endorsement.

* * * * *

Ever since the time of classical antiquity, the tragic vision has left us room to balance physical suffering with moral grandeur. The hero has a voice, up to the moment of his death, and through noble resignation or defiance can transcend the limits of his mortality. Hamlet's dying words to Horatio assure him of a future:

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

And indeed, we still have Hamlet's noble story before us. But what narrative can tell the story of six million anonymous victims, who left no voice behind?

And how is a child, who saw his parents "shoved into the oven," to play Horatio in a world far harsher than any dreamt of in Hamlet's philosophy?

Heroic defiance, growing into tragic insight, needs a vision of moral order to nourish it, and this is precisely what the Holocaust universe lacks. The Holocaust is a saga without a controlling myth, opening out into an unending vista of chaos. Sporadic gestures of compassion or support within the death-camps, which often saved one life at the cost of another, cannot change this. Clearly the usual notion of tragedy, with the hero or heroine caught between difficult choices, but free to embrace an attitude toward the consequences, and hence to preserve his or her moral stature, does not apply to men and women dying in the gas chambers or struggling for life in their vicinity. Agamemnon's dilemma as father and warrior, Clytemnestra's grief and later her rage, Iphigenia's very helplessness as the victim of a greater struggle, all achieve grandeur of expression by the controlling myth that lifts them into a timeless statement about human destiny and divine will. But how are we to portray the Greek Jewish mother of three children who was told by the Nazis that she might save one of them from execution? She was free to "choose," but what civilized mind could consider this an example of moral choice, or discover in modern history or Jewish tradition a myth to dignify her dilemma? The alternatives are not difficult, they are impossible, and we are left with the revelation of a terrifying question posed by a universe that lacks a vision to contain it. How is a character to survive any decision in such a situation, and retain a semblance of human dignity? What can one do but echo the weary refrain of the young girl who survived her family: "But, here I am and I have to live; what for?"

There are many answers to this question, but none of them transfigures the victim or survivor of the Holocaust into a creature of heroic dimensions, despite our longing for a moral miracle to ease the pain of our perceptions.

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Elie Wiesel, Honorary Chairman

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Dr. Irving Greenberg, Director

212-582-8116

4 Nisan, 5739

April 1, 1979

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

ABOUT NJCC'S PROGRAM

One experimental activity of the National Jewish Conference Center was the Rabbinical Student Seminar, held March 23-25, at Ramat Shalom, a havurah-style synagogue in Spring Valley, New York. The Seminar brought together approximately fifteen rabbinical students from the three movements for fellowship, study and consideration of issues of common concern. Much of the discussion centered on the role of the Rabbi in creating and sustaining havurot, a topic too new to be incorporated into seminary curricula. This Seminar drew much attention among seminary students, for they rarely have an opportunity to come together across denominational lines.

The Rabbinical Student Seminar is a pilot project which furthers N.J.C.C.'s goal of promoting new inter-organization and inter-movement ties for mutual enrichment and Jewish growth. It is the inaugural activity of a more extensive program involving Jewish religious unity and renewal which we will be developing in the near future.

ABOUT THIS PAPER

You probably have read a number of articles in recent years on the efforts of Soviet Jews to emigrate but relatively little on Soviet Jewish culture. To help bridge this information gap, the Conference Center is pleased to send you, as the third of its "Policy Studies '79," Zvi Gitelman's "What Future for Jewish Culture in the Soviet Union?" Professor Gitelman, who teaches modern Russian history at the University of Michigan, has written extensively on Soviet Jewish history, demography and culture.

Gitelman first briefly surveys four kinds of Soviet Jewish culture (religious, secular Jewish, Hebraic, and Russian language). After noting that "Demographic trends (have the effect of) diminishing Jewish cultural resources," he calls for a coordinated approach among Jewish organizations for nurturing and aiding Jewish culture, both within the U.S.S.R. and for Soviet Jews abroad. I believe you will find Professor Gitelman's analysis and programmatic suggestions stimulating and compelling. We believe that promoting Jewish culture in Russia must become a major thrust of the Soviet Jewry movement.

With best wishes for a very happy Passover.

National Jewish Conference Center
POLICY STUDIES '79

250W57 Suite 216 NYC 10019 (212) 582-6116

April, 1979

WHAT FUTURE FOR JEWISH CULTURE IN THE SOVIET UNION?

BY

ZVI GITELMAN

The University of Michigan

Efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry have been focussed for about a decade on the struggle for emigration. Clearly this strategy is correct; it has borne fruit. But with increasing frequency the question being raised is, "What about those left behind?" Implicit in this question is another one: What is the future, not only of the Jewish people, but also of Jewish culture, in the USSR? Because emigration is so welcome, external observers have been reluctant to discuss some of its problematic aspects. For example, might it be that the departure of some 160,000 Jews confirms the Soviet suspicion that the Jews are a disloyal element?

There are quite tangible and visible reactions to emigration. Since the 1970-71 academic year, there has been a forty per cent decline in the number of Jewish university students in the Soviet Union and an exactly parallel decline in the number of Jewish graduate students and in those enrolled in the higher educational institutions of Moscow, which are the most prestigious in the country. As Pravda might put it, "This is not accidental." No doubt Soviet leaders have decided that if Jews are going to emigrate, there is no reason to educate them. Of course such a policy only leads to further emigration since many who had never thought of leaving now do so in order to guarantee themselves and their children access to higher education. This, by the way, is a likely reason for the high and increasing proportion of emigrants choosing the United States over Israel as a country of immigration. Motivated by educational or vocational considerations rather than by Jewish national or religious ones, they are more attracted to the 'land of opportunity.'

Another effect of emigration is the departure of the most nationally conscious Jews, including Jewish cultural figures and religious leaders. At least four prominent Yiddish writers formerly associated with Sovetish haimland, several actors and actresses, a number of Jewish historians and scholars, quite a few rabbis, and other religious functionaries have left the USSR for Israel, further diminishing the already depleted reserves of Jewish cultural and religious leadership. Needless to say, Soviet conditions make it impossible to replace these people and their knowledge.

Finally, the struggle for emigration has diverted attention from some issues that used to occupy external advocates of the Soviet Jewry cause--Yiddish and Hebrew culture, the provision of religious artifacts, making possible the practice of Judaism, curbing popular and official anti-semitism. This shift in emphasis is natural and, from a tactical point of view, wholly appropriate. However the question of culture is highly relevant from a strategic perspective because significant numbers of Jews will be left in the USSR even if emigration proceeds apace. This essay examines the prospects for Jewish culture in the USSR and offers some suggestions for possible external influences on its propagation and development.

Types of Jewish Culture in the USSR

From the late nineteenth century until about 1930, there were four broad types of Jewish culture in Russia and the Soviet Union. Religious culture was the longest established and most pervasive, at least until the early 1920's. A secular Jewish culture with roots in the earlier haskalah and the Jewish labor movement began to flourish just after the turn of the century but never attained the popularity of traditional Judaism. The Hebraic culture linked to political Zionism grew up alongside Zionism, which emerged as the most powerful political tendency in Russian Jewry at the time of the Revolution. By the late nineteenth century a fourth variant of Jewish culture had emerged. This was distinctly a 'high culture,' as was Hebraic culture to a great extent. Its medium was the Russian language, which could be used easily only by a thin stratum of Jews who had managed to acquire a general education. Under the patronage of privileged Jewish industrialists and merchants, the fields of Jewish history, ethnography, folklore, music and art developed rapidly in the tradition of West European Wissenschaft des Judentums. Jewish newspapers and periodicals were published in Russian, and the number of both producers and consumers of Russian-Jewish culture grew rapidly.

After the Revolution, religious and Zionist culture were vigorously persecuted. Russian-Jewish culture was curtailed and pretty much eliminated by the mid-1930's, and only secular culture was actively promoted. Its content became militantly Bolshevik and its previously democratic-socialist tinge was declared inadmissible and removed. After the abolition of the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party (Evseksiia) in 1930, even Bolshevik culture in Yiddish form dwindled, as it was vulnerable to charges of 'petit bourgeois nationalist deviation.' By 1948 Yiddish culture came to be regarded as downright pernicious. Even the typeface of the sole surviving Yiddish publishing house was melted down lest the very letters remain as roots of counterrevolution and deviance. Only in the late 1950's with the publication of a few Yiddish books followed by Sovetish haimland (1961) was Yiddish secular culture partially rehabilitated, but the previous disappearance of all Yiddish schools, the closing of all institutions (newspapers, magazines, theaters, research institutes), and the physical elimination of most of the Yiddish cultural elite insured that this partial revival would be largely formal. At present the government tolerates but severely constrains religious culture; it links Hebraic culture to Zionism and treats it as illegitimate; it approves Yiddish culture; and it treats Russian-Jewish culture as if it were nonexistent.

Religion is generally tolerated in the USSR as a 'survival of the capitalist past,' something that will disappear with the passage of time and the conscious efforts of anti-religious propaganda. In the Jewish case, time may be more effective than propaganda by this point. But the Soviets continue to treat Judaism as a real threat to the minds of Soviet people, possibly because of its presumed links to Zionism. Judaism occupies a place in anti-religious literature all out of

proportion to its actual strength or even to the number of its potential practitioners. (One study has shown that nine per cent of all anti-religious publications were directed against Judaism in the 1960's, when Jews made up only about one per cent of the population.) At present there are fewer than ten rabbis in the country, probably less than fifty operating synagogues, and no real facilities for training clergy (the 'yeshiva' in Moscow exists only so that it can be said to exist; two Soviet students have been receiving rabbinical training in Budapest for several years, but there is no knowing when and if they will return to the USSR). Despite official hints and assurances to visiting clergymen, Soviet policy toward Judaism has undergone no significant change since 1965, when Khrushchev's militant atheistic campaign was curtailed, as was the linkage between the synagogue and the campaign against economic misdeeds.

Unofficial developments are more interesting. While one cannot speak of a religious revival in the USSR, the population has not been totally immune to the infection of trends, influences and even fads in the West. At the same time as Western youth began to experiment with exotic religious forms, usually imported from the East, some young Soviet intelligentsia began to search for alternatives to the official materialistic doctrine. By and large they looked neither East nor West, but back. Russian Orthodoxy, one of the more mystical varieties of Christianity, evangelical Protestantism, and, in the Baltic states, Catholicism were re-examined by some, including Jews. Some of the latter even converted to Christianity during the 1960's. With the rise of the Jewish national movement in the latter part of the decade, this interest was channeled toward Judaism. Some of the activists of the national movement discovered that historically Jewish culture and religion, the Jewish people and Judaism, have been inextricably intertwined. Even when imprisoned or serving sentences in labor camps, some of these people have refused to work on Saturday, have eaten only kosher foods, and have tried, to the best of their abilities, to learn about Jewish tradition. While this may be heartening to some, we should bear in mind that this is a marginal social phenomenon and that Soviet conditions make it nearly impossible for it to become otherwise. Moreover religious Jews are generally the first to try to emigrate, so even if more people should become committed to Judaism, they would be highly likely to leave the country.

At the same time, the synagogue plays a unique role. Since it is the only physical manifestation of a Jewish cultural presence in the country--there are no Jewish clubs, organizations, cultural institutions--it serves not only as a symbol of Jewish culture but as a place where Jews meet to discuss matters of mutual interest, to exchange information, to make contact with foreigners, or simply--to meet. It is truly a beit haknesset. It also serves as a beit midrash for small groups of elderly Jews who continue to study Torah. Therefore much as in the West the functions of the synagogue have expanded beyond the strictly religious. Since it is the only institution performing these functions, it has great importance. Fighting to keep synagogues operating should therefore be the concern not only of the religious but of all who are interested in the preservation of a Jewish community in the USSR, however informal and unstructured it must be.

'Official' Culture

By any objective standard, Sovetish haimland must rank as a serious journal. It includes poetry, prose, literary criticism, historical memoirs, bibliographical essays, political polemics (almost always directed against Zionism or Western concern for Soviet Jewry), and regular features such as short items about Jews in other lands and life in Birobidzhan, works of Soviet Jewish artists, rare photographs of Soviet Yiddish cultural figures, and a few pages of self-instruction in

Yiddish. The technical level of the journal is very high, especially considering that it appears every month in an edition of some 200 closely printed pages. The journal is often the target of ridicule, derision and hatred by Soviet and non-Soviet Jews because it hews closely to the official line, but it does make available serious literature and scholarship (the latter including ancient and rabbinic history, Soviet Jewish cultural history and bibliography, works on the Second World War, the origin of Jewish family names, etc.). To whom is the journal being made available? Though the number of copies printed is not known at present (it used to be 25,000), the existence of English (and Russian) summaries and the easy availability of the journal abroad suggest that it may have as many readers outside the USSR as in it. Within the country it is apparently read mainly by older people--though there are frequent letters to the editor by twenty and thirty year-olds who tell how they came to learn Yiddish.

In 1970 only 17.7 per cent of the Soviet Jews gave Yiddish as their mother tongue (which does not mean that they can, or wish to, read the language). More than a quarter of the Jewish population indicated that they either considered a Jewish language their mother tongue or knew such a language well. However it is precisely from those cities where large proportions of Jews gave Yiddish as their mother tongue--e.g., Vilnius, Chernovtsy, Kishinev--that very substantial emigration has taken place. Moreover it is among those over sixty that one finds the highest percentage of Jewish-language speakers (45%) and among the 16-19 age group that one finds the lowest percentage (2.2%). These two factors indicate an even more precipitous future decline in the knowledge of Jewish languages.

It should be stressed that this does not mean a commensurate assimilation of Soviet Jews. While the acculturation of Soviet Jews to Russian and other non-Jewish languages is nearly complete, their assimilation--loss of identity as Jews in their own minds and acceptance as non-Jews by others--is very slow indeed. Not even the Soviets assume that a Jew ceases to be one when he stops using a Jewish language. As a Soviet scholar notes, "Even while losing the mother tongue and even cultural characteristics, national consciousness is often preserved (Russian Germans, Jews, and Tatarified Bashkirs)."

Russian-Jewish Culture

In most Western countries Judaic cultural expression takes place increasingly in the local vernacular. Some might question its general level and the extent of its authentic Jewish content, but most would agree that there has evolved an Anglo-Jewish culture including literature and drama, social, religious and philosophical thought, and culture in the broader sense--a way of life, mores, and even uniquely Anglo-Jewish traditions derivative of earlier ones. In many significant ways Soviet Jewry has developed like Western Jewry, having undergone large-scale migration, urbanization, secularization, and professionalization, as well as linguistic assimilation. It therefore seems logical that the best alternative for Soviet Jewry is the development of a Jewish culture in the Russian language, especially since such a culture was developing rapidly in the first quarter of this century. However there are strong ideological-political barriers to such an alternative.

Lenin's thinking on the national question evolved until in 1913 he conceded that compactly settled ethnic groups could have cultural autonomy within their respective regions. This is the basis of Soviet federalism today. It discriminates

against territorially scattered nationalities or ethnic groups and against members of territorially compact nationalities who happen to live outside their national regions. Thus, for example, while there are Ukrainian-language schools in the Ukrainian republic, there are none in the other republics. This means that about 5.5 million Ukrainians have no access to schools in their language, while the other 35 million do. Largely because of the efforts of the Evsekttsiia, the Bolsheviks decided by the early 1920's that Yiddish was the language of Soviet Jews, that Hebrew was the language of the class enemy--clergymen and the middle class--and of the Zionists, and that since Yiddish was the language used by Jewish workers, proletarian Jewish culture could be expressed only in that medium. While Hebrew was the immediate target of this decision, Russian as a means of Jewish cultural expression also was ruled out. Russian, while the lingua franca of the entire country, is considered the cultural language only of the Russians themselves. It is true that from 1927 to 1937 there appeared the Russian-language magazine, Tribuna, dealing with Jewish agricultural colonization. However the magazine was the organ of OZET, an organization promoting colonization which was not officially 'Jewish' and which included prominent non-Jews in its leadership. At present the only way in which Jewish culture is expressed in Russian is through Yiddish books translated into Russian, including some of the classics but concentrating on contemporary Soviet Yiddish authors. Stretching a point considerably, one might also mention anti-religious propaganda and writings on Israel as Russian language materials dealing with Jewish themes, though few would call this 'Jewish culture.'

'Unofficial' Jewish Culture

In recent years we have become increasingly aware of unsanctioned and informal attempts by Soviet Jews to pursue varieties of Jewish culture. All along there have been Hebrew and Yiddish writers who wrote 'for the drawer' and amateur historians who could be seen in the Lenin and Saltykov-Shchedrin libraries researching ancient, medieval and even contemporary Jewish history but who only rarely published the results. In recent years two changes have made unofficial Jewish cultural activity more socially meaningful: It has become the work of groups rather than of isolated and insecure individuals, and it has become at least semi-public. Beginning, perhaps, with the Jewish choir in Riga, nationally conscious Jews have organized study groups, courses, and even an international symposium (which was not allowed to take place). Like Yiddish official culture, this variant appeals to a limited audience though the constraints are political rather than linguistic. Given the extraordinarily high educational level of Soviet Jews, the potential audience for this kind of activity when conducted in Russian (aside from Hebrew ulpanim) is very large indeed. As far as one can tell, it has been limited to the very largest cities, but it fits in well with the current Soviet mode of informal education and discussion among circles of friends or employees of a scientific institute (on whose premises these discussions are sometimes held). In other words, it can be assimilated rather easily into the social and intellectual styles of Soviet intelligentsia. On the other hand, this activity is impeded not only by political and social harassment but also by a dearth of qualified transmitters of knowledge, of study materials, and of access to systematic knowledge as it has developed outside the country. It exposes participants to charges of 'anti-Soviet activity' because it is not separate from political dissidence in the Soviet official mind. Thus to become involved in such activity implies a political commitment, and that may prevent many who are curious about Jewish culture but unwilling to engage in politically dubious activity from taking part in it.

Demography, External Activity, and the Future of Jewish Culture in the USSR

Demographic trends influence cultural ones. In the case of Soviet Jewry, the influence is wholly in the direction of diminishing Jewish cultural resources. Emigration, intermarriage, a very low birth rate, and an age structure skewed heavily toward the older cohorts all point to the decline of the Jewish population and to the disappearance of the minority which can still rely on memory and pre-Soviet training in order to supply cultural resources to others. Moreover the closing of educational opportunities may force Jews to disperse further as they seek admission to more obscure provincial institutions of higher learning or of scientific-technological research. Should this occur, intermarriage will become more likely; a sense of Jewish community will be further weakened; and the availability of people who can serve as instructors and leaders, further diminished.

Nevertheless outsiders may be able to push along some of the cultural trends noted here. Clearly there is an eager audience for Jewish culture in all its manifestations among the intelligentsia, which in general seeks out unofficial information sources. Rather than proceeding from the primitive and erroneous assumption that 'the worse the better,' (i.e. that improving the cultural situation would be to the detriment of aliyah since people would suddenly find Jewish life viable in the USSR), we should realize that encouraging Jewish learning and culture will benefit the cause of aliyah. It will give people positive incentives to leave for Israel, while the negative aspects of being Jewish--official and social discrimination--will continue to drive people out of the country, no matter what the Jewish cultural situation. Zionists, including Israeli officials, who believe that improvements in the condition of Jewish life in the USSR harm their cause only betray their insecurity and poor judgment and play into the hands of Soviet propagandists, who often charge the Zionists with being the 'objective allies' of anti-semites. We know that the most nationally conscious emigres have gone to Israel, while those whose Jewish interests are minimal tend to come to this country. The Soviets will no doubt see to it that conditions conducive to emigration will continue to exist; if there is a desire to see that emigration head for Israel, this can best be encouraged not by threatening immoral and impractical administrative coercion but by giving Soviet Jews positive reasons for going to the Jewish state.

Efforts have been made in Israel, Canada, and the United States to provide educational materials for Soviet immigrants. These efforts have been only loosely coordinated, and there is a crying need for a well thought out program which would include carefully chosen materials rather than those which happen to be available; for the development of materials specifically suited to those whose education has been in the USSR; for formats designed for people at various age and educational levels which would be most effective in conveying the messages. If such a curriculum of Jewish studies for Soviet Jews were developed, it could easily serve several purposes, especially if it were built around a core to which several variants could be attached. Some variants would be appropriate to Soviet immigrants in Israel, some to immigrants elsewhere, and some to Jews still in the USSR. Such a program would be highly 'cost-effective' since it would be specifically designed with a Soviet background in mind, and it would serve several purposes at once. The problems should not be minimized, but at this time there do exist means of transmitting such material and programs to the USSR where they could be of immense value to those engaged in unofficial Jewish culture. If organizations can overcome institutional rivalries, a group composed of educators, Judaica scholars, and those familiar with the Soviet mentality can be created to take the lead in developing such a program and to detail how it would be implemented in the different settings for which it would be designed. It is particularly important that immigrants from the USSR be consulted so that the program conforms to the needs and abilities of its

intended audience. The responsibility for implementation would then devolve to appropriate local, national, and international agencies.

Perhaps several organizations involved in adult Jewish education--e.g. the American Jewish Committee, B'nai Brith, the National Jewish Conference Center, the three major synagogal bodies--can pool their resources and experience to set up the kind of administrative body and program outlined here. A simpler alternative would be for the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, already funding educational efforts among Soviet immigrants in Israel, to establish a committee including Israelis active among Soviet olim, Soviet emigres, specialists in adult education, specialists in Soviet Jewish affairs, and some resettlement workers in the U.S. This committee should include representatives of the different ideological streams within the Soviet emigration and Western Jewry and, perhaps building on existing materials, develop the kind of curriculum described above and the means for its transmittal. For example, the Memorial Foundation has funded the publication of Sifriat Aliyah, an extensive series of paperback volumes consisting of translations into Russian of Jewish classics, contemporary popular books, and other works. There is no visible pattern or plan in the series, and one wonders about the value of some of the works translated for the Soviet emigre or the Soviet Jew in the USSR (e.g. the poetry of Shaul Tshernikhovski or Natan Alterman). Such a 'library' should be expanded, but the selection of titles must be more purposive and systematic, and it must be made available to all Soviet emigres through the resettlement agencies in all countries. Ways exist for transmitting this material to the USSR as well. The work of the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, both as a producer and as a transmitter of educational materials, should be considered as an example of this process.

Audio-visual materials (tapes, films, exhibitions) can supplement the written word if distributed along with books. It should be possible to produce standardized programs on specific subjects. This would make possible the distribution of such programs to communities which do not have extensive resources for Soviet Jewish adult education. Thus a group in a small city in the USSR (or in the U.S.) which receives materials designed to require only a minimum of active input from people on the spot could make the program available to all interested parties. With proper materials, the most committed students might be able to become active teachers in the program.

In sum, it is not enough to engage in the humanitarian effort of helping Soviet Jews become new Israelis or new Americans. We should also be helping them to become active, committed, knowledgeable Jews. They have special needs, and only by serving them can we hope to retain them as members of the Jewish community.

Conclusion

Demographic and social-political trends make the outlook for Jewish culture in the USSR bleak but not hopeless. Only certain forms of Jewish culture could ever be permitted, but since there exists a significant clientele for all forms--religious, Yiddishist-secularist, Hebraic-Zionist, Russian-Jewish--efforts on behalf of all of them are legitimate and worthwhile. The recent burgeoning of unofficial Jewish culture presents opportunities hitherto not fully exploited, including the development of an educational program which could simultaneously serve Soviet Jews, olim from the USSR, and Soviet immigrants in Western countries.

Finally, it should be noted that 'culture' has been used here only in its most restrictive sense. If we think of culture as involving mores, styles of life, val-

ues and preferences, then we should realize that, at least to this point, even the most acculturated Jews in the USSR retain a distinctive culture recognized by their neighbors. Their urbanity and education, their general cultural preferences and social habits separate them from other groups and help maintain a separate identity if not necessarily a meaningful Jewish consciousness. This can be little influenced from outside the USSR, but it should be noted because its importance is greater in a society where Jewish culture in the narrow sense is not very visible. Neither in the narrow nor in the broad sense of the term has Jewish culture disappeared in the USSR, nor need it do so even though it will never be any more free to develop than is Soviet culture generally. In fact because of its religious and Hebraic components, it will be less so. Still, it can be nurtured and aided from outside. This can only help to promote the other goals set by Westerners committed to the cause of Soviet Jewry.





Los Angeles Chapter

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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July 17, 1979

Letters to the Editor
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

To the Editor:

Ernest Conine's column on Soviet persecution of evangelical Christians (July 9) leaves the overall impression that the organized Jewish community is not deeply concerned with the denial of religious freedom to other faith groups in the U.S.S.R. That erroneous impression is challenged by the record of Jewish leadership in the cause of human rights in the U.S.S.R. and throughout the world.

The American Jewish Committee has been keenly interested in religious liberty for all oppressed groups in the Soviet Union. In November 1976, for example, the AJC cosponsored the National Interreligious Consultation on the Helsinki Accords, which included major sessions on the disabilities suffered by Mennonites and Lithuanian Catholics. In April 1977, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the AJC and Sister Ann Gillen, Executive Director of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, presented evidence on Soviet persecution of the Latvian Lutherans, Ukrainian Orthodox, and Roman Catholic communities to the U.S. House of Representatives Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In November 1977 in Belgrade, AJC's Rabbi James Rudin and American Christian leaders met with religious leaders from Hungary, the Netherlands, England, Spain, and the Vatican to express concern with Soviet violations of the Helsinki Accords for all groups in the U.S.S.R.

AJC action has focused on particular individuals as well as the general plight of oppressed faith groups in the Soviet Union. The Baptist leader Georgi Vins was the subject of outspoken concern by Jewish groups for three years before his release earlier this year. Rabbi Tanenbaum called attention to his case at Baptist-Jewish Conferences in Raleigh, N.C., and Richmond, Va., in the weeks and months before the release of Vins. The AJC has supported the Pentecostal family which in November 1978 claimed sanctuary in the U.S. embassy in Moscow and has lived there ever since. And Jews have continued to call for the freedom of Yuri Federov, a Christian prisoner of conscience jailed since 1970, even though his Jewish cellmate, Edward Kuznetzov, has been released and resettled in Israel.

July 17, 1979

The laws in the Soviet Union are the same for Jews and Christians, though the application of those laws against religious groups has been more harsh toward Jews than toward members of other faiths. Jewish organizations and the Jewish community-at-large are painfully aware of human rights violations analogous to our own particularistic concerns. The rapid and energetic response of American Jews to the "boat people" of Indochina is only the most recent example of Jewish understanding that the rights of all people are imperilled whenever tyranny, no matter who its victims may be, goes unchallenged.

Janis Plotkin
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American Jewish Committee

bcc: Rabbi James Rubin
Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum ✓



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NEWS BULLETIN



Sept. 14, 1979

FROM THE USSR:

GUBERMAN ARRESTED ON TRUMPED-UP CHARGE

Moscow refusenik Igor GUBERMAN, 43, has been arrested by Soviet authorities and charged with trafficking in stolen icons. According to a story by Los Angeles Times reporter Dan Fisher, friends and relatives of the science writer believe he was set up and that the real intent of the arrest is to crack down on him and other editors of the samizdat journal, "Jews in the USSR".

Guberman, who applied to emigrate to Israel late last year, was arrested after he had twice refused to inform for Soviet secret police about the journal, according to prominent Jewish activist Viktor BRAILOVSKY, who is another of the journal's editors.

Referring to last summer's widely publicized trials of prominent dissidents and Jewish activists in the Soviet capital, Brailovsky said, "Now, after the experience of last year, they don't want to have a pure political trial. But their aims are the same - to stop any independent thought, to stop all kinds of manifestations of Jewish culture. So they are continuing under the guise of criminal prosecutions."

While Brailovsky and others have been interrogated and their apartments searched periodically since 1975, when the authorities first showed interest in the journal, Guberman's is the first arrest of anyone linked to the publication.

Guberman is an acknowledged expert on icons and old religious art and at one time owned 30-40 icons. His wife, Tatyana, says that when authorities began selective crackdowns on icon black-marketeering, about three or four years ago, her husband ended his dealings.

Mrs. Guberman also reports that Soviet authorities told her the charges against her husband may be changed. If found guilty of the existing charge, Guberman can receive a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment and five years internal exile.

"We are absolutely certain this is a pretext," Brailovsky said, adding that Guberman's

ULANOVSKY GETS VISA

Long-term Moscow refusenik Lev ULANOVSKY reported on September 12th that he had received an exit permit, valid until October 5th. A well-known spokesman for Jewish activists, the 29-year-old physicist received his first refusal in 1974.

relatives were approached by a friend recently who said the authorities had offered to pay him if he helped put together a case against Guberman.

Brailovsky says he is concerned that Guberman's may be only the first in a series of arrests in connection with the journal.

KISLIK APPEALS FOR HELP

With the heavy-handed surveillance of former scientist Vladimir KISLIK continuing, the father of the Kiev refusenik has appealed directly to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) to help him obtain a visa to Israel.

The 43-year-old candidate of physico-mathematical sciences, who first applied to emigrate in 1973, is now bedridden with a serious heart condition. Yet his illness did not prevent the KGB from forcing him to accompany them to their headquarters for a three-hour interrogation last month. The agents arrived at his apartment late at night and, despite his protestations that he was not well, forced him to come with them before he could change out of his bedclothes.

Kislik, who will soon undergo tests for his heart condition, was too weak to come to the telephone and speak with the National Conference in person. But his father pleaded, "Please help him. He doesn't know what he is being persecuted for. Why is he under constant surveillance? They follow his every step."

The surprise raid coincided with the visit to Kiev of the delegates who attended the Political Science Congress. Moscow activists presume that the KGB was determined to prevent any meeting between Kislik and Western visitors.

POLTINNIKOV WIFE AND DAUGHTER ARE DEAD; THEY WERE CONVINCED PERMIT WAS KGB PLOT

The daughter of Isaak POLTINNIKOV committed suicide on August 30th, four weeks after her mother died in their barricaded Novosibirsk apartment.

The two women were so frightened and confused by seven years of KGB harassment that they refused to believe the family had finally been granted exit visas for Israel. Poltinnikov had tried for five months to convince his wife, Irma, and daughter, Victoria, that the permits were legitimate, finally emigrating to Israel in May. After he left, the women locked themselves in their apartment, refusing to leave or accept outside food.

When Mrs. Poltinnikov died of malnutrition on August 6th, Victoria was taken to a hospital for observation. After she was released from the facility she returned to the empty apartment and hung herself.

In January, when an emigration permit was finally granted, Poltinnikov pleaded with his family to leave the country with him. Poltinnikov, who is a physician, certified that his wife and daughter had become mentally disturbed and asked Soviet authorities to expel them from the country. Referring to his request in a recent letter, he wrote, "I was ready to make a public statement in any form desirable for the Soviet authorities explaining that the forcible sending out is a humanitarian act which is being done at my request. However, this request of mine was denied."

YAKIR FACES CONSCRIPTION THREAT

Aleksandr YAKIR, 21, failed to report to the Moscow conscription center by August 28th and authorities have told his father that a criminal file will soon be opened against him.

His parents fear that Aleksandr may be forceably inducted into the Soviet army soon, despite the fact that he refuses to serve. He claims he is an Israeli citizen and should not serve in the Soviet army.

Generally, all Soviet citizens are required to serve two years in the army, and then they must wait a minimum of five years for "security clearance" before submitting their emigration applications. If Yakir is inducted, he most likely will not be allowed to emigrate for at least seven years.

Presently, Simon SHNIRMAN, Aleksandr VILIG and Boris KALENDARIOV are all interred in Soviet labor camps for refusing to serve in the army.

The Yakir family first applied for exit visas in October 1973. They have received numerous refusals since then, on the grounds that the father performed "secret work".

NEW MONTHLY EMIGRATION RECORD SET

Soviet Jewish emigration set a monthly record in August with 4,711 reaching Vienna and 1,526 arriving in Israel.

The percentage of those who choose to settle in countries other than Israel was 67.7.

The total number of emigrants for the first eight months of the year now stands at 33,575. The annual record of 34,933 was set in 1974.

KALENDARIOV MOVED TO PERMANENT LABOR CAMP

Prisoner of Conscience (POC) Boris KALENDARIOV, 22, who is serving two years for draft evasion, has been moved to his permanent labor camp. His parents, however, have not been told its location.

They also say that their son, a Leningrad student, has been promised another review of his case by the USSR Supreme Court in about a month.

MOSCOW BOOK FAIR A SUCCESS

Although figures have not been released concerning how many titles were returned, Soviet authorities initially confiscated about 50 books by American publishers at the Moscow International Book Fair at the beginning of the month. Many of the books were by Jewish, emigrant or dissident authors and dealt with the Holocaust and the Nazi era or the socio-political situation of the USSR. The fair was attended by 2,000 publishers from 70 countries.

Of the approximately 500 titles on Jewish themes, only four books were banned from the fair. They were "The Holocaust Years", by Chertokh and Spencer, Bantam; "Modern Jewish History", by Chazen Chechen; "To Dance", by Valery Panov, Knopf; and "My Country", by Abba Eban, Random House.

The fair gave foreign publishers the opportunity to distribute the largest quantity of Jewish educational materials since World War II. Although most of the materials took an elementary approach to the Jewish themes, there were 9,000 copies of the

official catalogue of annotated books. The catalogue contained Jewish educational and religious materials, such as a calendar.

Also distributed were 4,000 copies of a record prepared for the fair which included songs in Yiddish and Hebrew. At times, attendance at the American Jewish Book Publishers booth was so great (by Jews who came from all over the Soviet Union) that the distributors had to close it temporarily.

IN ISRAEL:

OLYMPIC TEAM PROMISED FAIR TREATMENT

Chaim Glovinsky, treasurer of the Israel Olympic Committee, returned to Tel Aviv last week from a three-day meeting with Soviet officials in Moscow and reported that from all indications the Israeli Olympic contingent at the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980 will be accorded all honors and treated with the utmost respect.

According to a Jewish Telegraphic Agency story by Haskell Cohen, Glovinsky said, "My meeting, together with the international Olympic representatives from other countries, with Vice President Vitaly Smirnov of the Soviet Olympic organizing committee, indicates we have nothing to fear. Since we have no diplomatic relations with Russia, we shall be represented by the Finnish Embassy."

Glovinsky said that Smirnov "took us on a tour of the playing venues and showed us around the Olympic village. We have a slight problem in the food department which should not cause too much difficulty," Glovinsky noted. "There is no way we can get kosher meat for our athletes. There isn't any available to the Soviet organizing committee and they have asked us not to import meat products for fear it may become tainted. However, the menu will be changed every five days and we shall have a big selection of fish products, vegetables and fruits."

The synagogue in the Olympic village will be available to all members of the Jewish faith participating for the various countries entered in the 1980 Olympiade, he said.

"All Israeli athletes will enter and leave the Soviet Union without requiring visas," Glovinsky stated. "Of course, the 170 Israeli visitors will have to secure the necessary visas before they enter the country and these will be obtained through the good services of the Finnish Consulate in Tel Aviv."

A Tel Aviv source indicated that it will cost each Israeli a minimum of \$3,000 to spend 15 days in the USSR.

"On my trip I was accorded every courtesy, including the use of a car, guided tours and splendid social hospitality," Glovinsky concluded. However, Israeli observers are less enthusiastic over the reception the Israeli team will receive, remembering the hardships encountered by the athletes in the Soviet Union during the University Games conducted in the summer of 1973.

MORE FROM THE USSR:

HURDLES IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The OVIR office in Tashkent has recently introduced a policy of refusing to accept applications for emigration unless the applicant has a visov (letter of invitation) from a first degree relative - father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister.

In Moscow this summer the same rule appears to have been in effect. Activists there say most of the new refusals given to applicants were on the grounds of "relation not close enough."

SOVIET DISSIDENT YURI ORLOV says in a report smuggled out of a Soviet prison that at least 5 million of his fellow citizens are serving time in forced labor camps, the Belgian newspaper La Libre Belgique reported September 14. The paper quoted ORLOV as saying the population of Soviet prison camps is about 20 times the number of prisoners in the United States, and makes up two per cent of the people in the Soviet Union.

ORLOV who was sentenced last year to seven years' forced labor and five years' internal exile after he was found guilty of agitation against the Soviet Union, is in a camp near Perm in the Ural Mountains, 900 miles east of Moscow.

The newspaper said his 20-page report will be published soon in Brussels.

WASHINGTON POST 5/19/78
"SO MUCH FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
NOW, WHAT ELSE WAS THERE?"

Orlov

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES



WRITE YURI AT:
USSR RSFSR
PERMSKAYA OBLAST 618801
TCHUSOVSKOI RAYON
STANTSIYA POLOVINKA
UTCH. V.S. 389/-37
ORLOV, YURI



THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

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The Orlov case is hurting detente

BORIS KALENDAROV, 22, the newest Jewish Prisoner of Conscience, has been transferred from Butyrskay Prison to a temporary labor camp near Leningrad. In a telephone conversation with a prominent Leningrad activist/refusenik, the NCSJ has learned that Boris will soon be moved to another labor camp where he will serve his 2-year sentence for draft evasion and begin work on a large industrial project

While in Butyrskay Prison a large number of cables was sent to Boris at his parents' address, the senders have been informed that the cables could not be delivered, because Boris was not at that address! How thoughtful of the Soviet authorities to be so correct! Fortunately, his parents were informed about the undelivered messages and were able to tell Boris when they visited him.

Until we have an address for Boris, write messages of support to:
 MICHAEL AND EVGENIA KALENDAREV
 USSR RSFSR
 LENINGRAD 196070
 BASSEINAYA 12/81

NCSJ #142/35'S #39

NOTES FROM EXILE

IDA NUDEL ---

Friends who have visisted IDA, one of the best known of all women refuseniks, at Krivoshieno have done their best to lighten the burden of her isolation. Each of them has brought some present or knick-knack to make her life more tolerable. Two of them spent their summer visit digging out and building for her her own lavatory. EVGENY TSIRLIN is still there "putting the final touches". Another, NELLY SHPEIZMAN, has prepared a vegetable patch where IDA can grow potatoes and, with luck, cabbages. "IDA is naturally grateful", one of her visitors reported on his return to Moscow, "but she cannot help thinking of the winter months ahead when the roads will be impassable and she will once more be totally alone".

MARIA AND VLADIMIR SLEPAK

Maria is this week returning to her husband Vladimir in Tsokgto-Khangil in the Chita region of the Soviet East. "VOLODYA is keeping his spirits up" she said before she left, "but it's his physical condition which is worrying. The harsh climate is affecting his gums and causing his hair to fall out. The locals, Buryats, have become used to the lack of fresh food and the loss of certain vitamins. But VOLODYA and another Russian family are already badly affected".

What a life.

THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
 1307 SOUTH WABASH, ROOM 221, CHICAGO, ILL. 60605
 SR. ANN GILLEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (312) 922-1983

JOSIF BEGUN

Dr. Alla Drugova has just returned from a four month stay at Susman where her husband JOSIF BEGUN is serving his second term of exile. Their two children returned with her.

DR. DRUGOVA was full of praise for the courage and tenacity with which JOSIF is facing the daily difficulties which beset him; the fact that too often he is given the toughest, dirtiest jobs; that every now and then his days off are cancelled and that - as we have reported - he is not allowed outside the boundary of the town as a special punishment.

"The four months - the only real family life we've had - passed only too quickly" Dr. Drugova told. She talked of the walks they'd taken together, the chess games JOSIF had played with his son, and of the three kittens and a dog that they'd adopted.

-- 35's #36

ROITBURD, LEV

A year has passed since LEV was released but he has received several refusals because the authorities say: he learned additional secrets whilst a prisoner. His case is an example of promises made to visiting VIPs, LEV's name was on the so-called EDWARD KENNEDY list in September 1978.

LEV's address is: USSR
UKRAINIAN SSR
ODESSA
GENERALA POTROVA 23/1 APT. 36
ROITBURD, LEV.

35's #39

POC IOSIF MENDELEVICH

IOSIF who was sentenced to 12 years in prison at the First Leningrad Trial in 1970, has not had a visitor since 1975. It seems likely he will not have another visitor for the duration of his stay in Chistopol Prison.

At first, prison authorities punished him by cancelling visits with his parents. Then Mendelevich's father, who suffered from heart disease, became too weak to travel to the prison and died last year without seeing his son. Prison authorities even refused to allow Mendelevich's stepmother to see him last August, before she left for Israel.

Iosif, an Orthodox Jew, has since been "adopted" by GRIGORY and NATALYA ROSENSHTEIN from Moscow, also Orthodox Jews. Now the Rosenshteins have been told by authorities that since they are not relatives they will be forbidden to see IOSIF.

35's #39

VLADIMIR KISLIK

Following reports that VLADIMIR was unable to attend an interview at the Kiev KGB because of ill health, we now hear that VLADIMIR is suffering from high blood pressure and pain in the heart region. He was due to go into hospital for a medical test.

ELIAS ZAKS

THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ELIAS OF TASHKENT WHO ALLEGEDLY PRIVATELY BAKED MATZOT in contravention of Soviet law, has been released from prison with a two year suspended sentence. His wife and married daughter were allowed to emigrate to Israel.

35's #39

PROFILES IN HEROISMA

Dr. Berenstein—Poltinnikov's application resulted in dismissal from her post at the Scientific Institute of Novosibirsk. Dr. Isaac Poltinnikov, who had served thirty years as a colonel in the Soviet Army, was stripped of his rank and military pension. Both daughters also lost their jobs.

Eleanora was allowed to emigrate to Israel, November 1972, with her husband Mark and her 84 year old grandfather, Dr. Boris Berenstein, who died in March, 1973 without being able to see his daughter again. Permission to attend the funeral was also denied to the family.

In December 1972, Dr. Berenstein—Poltinnikov and her older daughter, Victoria, were sentenced to a half year in prison for attempting to submit a petition to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. They were released,

however, after ten days, when Dr. Berenstein—Poltinnikov suffered a heart attack in prison. She has been suffering from chronic heart disease for several years.

The family has been refused permission to emigrate nine times.

PROFILES IN HEROISMA

Irma Berenstein—Poltinnikov

Dr. Irma Berenstein—Poltinnikov, 51, is a cardiologist now residing in Novosibirsk. The wife of Dr Isaac Poltinnikov, a noted Soviet ophthalmologist, she first applied for permission to emigrate in June 1972, together with her husband and daughters Victoria, a radiologist, and Eleanora Yampolsky, an English teacher.

Irma Berenstein Poltinnikov
Cardiologist
Novosibirsk

POLTINNIKOV FAMILY --- DOUBLE TRAGEDY

The Soviet authorities are directly responsible for the deaths of IRMA BENJAMIN POLTINNIKOV and VICTORIA POLTINNIKOV. VICTORIA was declared fit and discharged from hospital (not a psychiatric one) on Tuesday. She went home and hanged herself the same day.

If these two women doctors had been permitted to emigrate in 1971 when the family first applied this catastrophe would not have happened. Even had the authorities acceded to DR. ISAK POLTINNIKOV's request and forcibly placed both ladies on the plane to Vienna, they would have received medical treatment immediately and recovered their balance in Israel. The cruelty of the Soviet regime destroyed these two women and has robbed DR. ISAK POLTINNIKOV of his wife and daughter.

SEND MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY TO;
DR. ISAAK POLTINNIKOV &
MRS. ELEANORA SHIFRIN AT:
4 HATEENA STR.
ZIKHRON YA'AKOV
ISRAEL

Of Adversity

7515

THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
1307 SOUTH WABASH AVENUE #221
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

Signs of the Times

The Vashchenkos

Every once in awhile a story comes along so bitter in its ironies that shame and anger are the only reactions possible.

Such an article is "Down and Out in the American Embassy," in a recent (August 31) issue of National Review Magazine. We urge our friends to find a copy of the issue and read it and re-read it, and re-read it until their tempers cool enough to do something tangible about the injustice described in its pages.

Briefly, the American embassy in Moscow is now the unwilling host to a group of Soviet Pentecostal Christians who, having gained entry, refuse to leave. In fact, they have refused to leave for more than a year, despite Soviet intimidation directed against their families outside the embassy, and an astonishingly bald program of harassment and isolation carried out by the American embassy itself on the orders of Malcolm Toon, U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

The drama began June 27 of last year, when Peter and Augustina Vashchenko and four of their children, as well as Maria Petrovna Chmykhalova and her son Timofei approached the U.S. embassy for assistance in acquiring exit visas.

Like Soviet Jews, Soviet Christians and Moslems have been the target of a massive anti-religious campaign for years. Unlike their Jewish brothers, they've received little attention in the Western press and correspondingly less material and political support in their struggle with Soviet authorities. Refugee sources claim that over thirty thousand Pentecostals have applied for emigration — and not one visa has been granted. If we add to this number the persecuted Moslems, Seventh Day Adventists, Lutherans, Russian Orthodox, and Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and other Eastern Rite Catholics, the potential refugee tally moves well into the hundreds of thousands.

None of this is surprising; on the contrary, it is so thoroughly "business as usual" in the twen-

tieth century that we try not to dwell on it. In a secularized American culture that no longer takes religion seriously, the gravity of religious persecution is incomprehensible. So we have become, at least on this issue, morally ignorant, and it's interesting that our sympathy with Soviet Jews has been mobilized on racial and ethnic grounds, not religious. But while the memory of the Holocaust is still fresh in our nostrils, the other persecuted minorities of the Soviet Union have no such easy access to the conscience of the world community, and they are therefore forgotten.

The new wrinkle in all this however, is the degree of American collusion with the Vashchenkos' persecutors, because the Vashchenkos refuse to leave the embassy. They have spent time in Soviet prisons and they know what awaits them if they leave their sanctuary. One of their sons is now in a Soviet labor camp for refusing to serve in the Soviet army, another of their sons was intercepted by Soviet police as the rest of the family scurried into the embassy a year ago. He was beaten up and returned to the family home in Chernogorsk, Siberia, where the remaining Vashchenkos have been subjected to relentless official harassment.

Ambassador Toon's reaction has been to shunt the family into a basement room and make them as uncomfortable as possible. They are not allowed embassy food, though they do not starve because an embassy staffer generously buys them foodstuffs on the Moscow market. Aside from the Protestant and Catholic chaplains, Toon has cut the families off from virtually all outside contact. Press photographs are forbidden. Press interviews are discouraged and when they occur, they must be conducted *outside* in the embassy courtyard, even in the dead of winter. The White House refuses to forward mail to the Vashchenkos sent in care of President Carter. Toon will not accept mail for them via diplomatic pouch. The only mail allowed comes through the Soviet postal service, where thousands

of letters have mysteriously disappeared. Until recently they had no radio and no winter clothing; their health is poor and the psychological and physical strain of their ordeal is gradually wearing them down. Most recently, the Vashchenkos' request to attend Mass in the embassy chapel was refused, then finally granted only after strenuous objections by the Catholic chaplain.

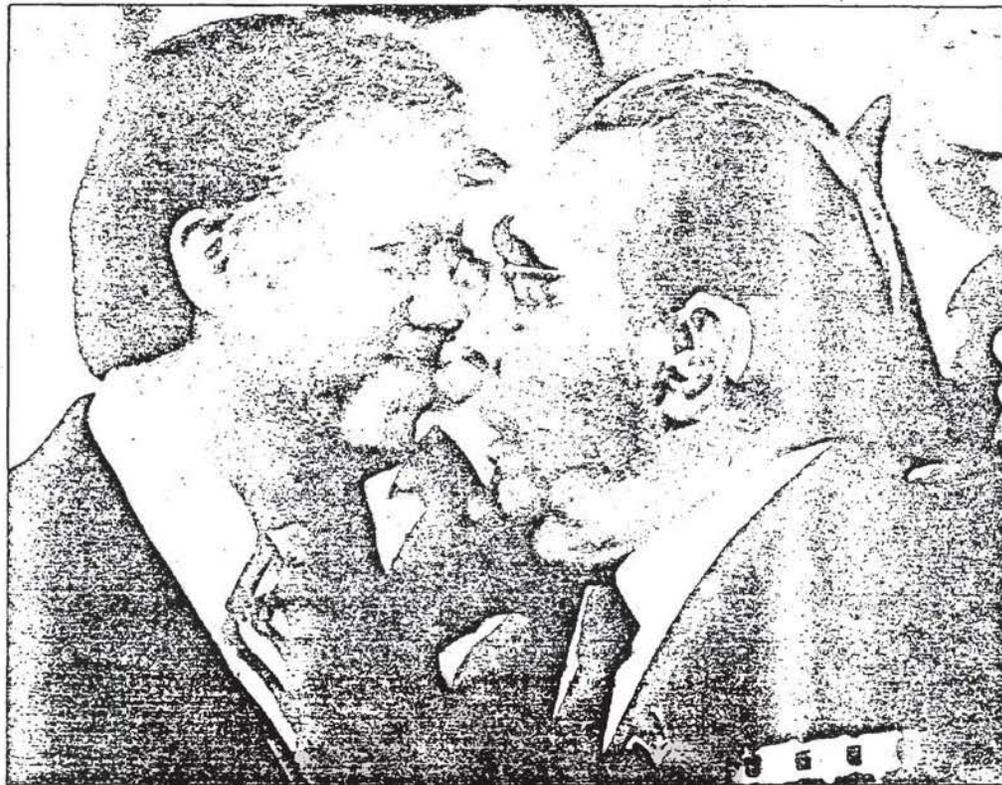
As exiled Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky has pointed out, the Vashchenkos are only the tip of the iceberg: every day between ten and fifteen Soviet citizens are arrested trying to reach the safety of the American embassy — in direct contravention of consular treaties between the US and USSR which provide for free access. American embassy staffers watch, and do nothing.

Worse, refugee contacts in this country complain that federal officials have begun a quiet but tough campaign to hush up the Vashchenko affair and the plight of Soviet Christians in general. The reason: bad domestic and international press regarding the Vashchenkos and others like them may threaten two pieces of legislation regarded as crucial to détente: SALT II, and the granting of "most favored nation" status to the Soviet Union as a trading partner.

Over the next few weeks the Register will present a detailed investigation of the Vashchenko tragedy and the plight of religious believers throughout the Soviet Union. In the meantime, we urge our readers to write their Senators and Congressmen, President Carter, Ambassador Toon and the Soviet ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Dobrynin, protesting the illegal and immoral treatment of the Vashchenkos and urging that SALT II ratification and "most favored nation" status be withheld until such time as the Soviets honor the Helsinki Accords which they themselves signed, and allow the Vashchenkos and others persecuted for their religious beliefs to emigrate.

If we are unwilling to help these, the least of our brothers, then it's time we asked ourselves, what — in the name of God — have we become?

— fx



SALT II TREATY signing led to a comradely embrace by President Jimmy Carter and Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. The continuing Vashchenko affair, however, has led critics to demand that the treaty not be ratified until human rights are extended to Soviet Christians.

A Religious News Service Photo.

ARCHIVES
National Catholic Register
September 16, 1979

September 16, 1979

Embassy Life: Golgotha for a Soviet Family

By Karen Platt
Special to the Register

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — "If you walked down the street here, I'd say nine out of ten people would know who the Vashchenkos are, but if you go outside a 200-mile radius of here, I'm not sure most people have even heard Christians are persecuted in the Soviet Union," says Jane Drake of Montgomery, Alabama, director of SAVE — the Society of Americans for Vashchenko Emigration.

SAVE, and the local Committee to Save Soviet Jewry, work together in Alabama to promote emigration of religious dissidents from the Soviet Union. Mrs. Drake is also in close contact with the Research Center for Religion and Human Rights in Closed Societies, formed 18 years ago by Rev. Bladislav Hruby and his wife, Olga.

Peter and Augustina Vashchenko, as well as three of their children and Maria Petrovna Chmykhalova and her son, have been living in a 12-by-20 foot room in the basement of the U.S. embassy in Moscow since June 27, 1978. On that day, as the families made their sixth visit to the embassy in an attempt to secure exit visas from the Soviet Union, one of the Vashchenkos' sons, Ioan, was apprehended by the Soviet police. The Vashchenkos and the Chmykhalovas stayed on at the embassy to insure Ioan's safe return. Thirteen days later, the Soviet police returned Ioan, badly beaten, to the Vashchenko home in Siberia. Peter and Augustina's children at home then called their parents and begged them to remain in the embassy until they either received a firm guarantee that neither family would suffer reprisals, or that all would be

permitted to emigrate. No such guarantees have been forthcoming.

Approximately 30,000 "Christians for the Evangelical Faith" (Pentecostal Christians) and an estimated 400,000 other religious believers including Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, Moslems, and Lithuanian and Ukrainian Catholics, wish to leave the Soviet Union. Religious belief is considered a psychological disturbance by the Soviet govern-

(Please turn to page 3)

Continued on
Page attached

Vashchenko En 'gration Et 'orts

(Continued from page 1)

ment. Peter Vashchenko has spent two years in a mental hospital for his Christian faith.

U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Malcolm Toon has refused to talk to reporters, but in an official statement issued by the State Department press office, Toon responded to an article about the Vashchenkos which ran in National Review Magazine (August 31, 1979) entitled, "Down and Out at the American Embassy." The State Department denied allegations that embassy officials attempted on several occasions to pressure the Vashchenkos into leaving the embassy, even as KGB autos pulled up outside the embassy doors. The ambassador also denied ever having "suggested to the Pentecostals that American Christians have not intervened to help them because they are considered fanatics." He

Additionally, several key allegations in the National Review story were not denied by the State Department press release. Among these is the assertion that Ambassador Toon has forbidden all press photographs of the two families inside their quarters.

"An unidentified person called us at our headquarters," says Mrs. Hruby. "She said she was from Time Magazine and wanted to know if we had, and where we got, a certain photograph of the Vashchenkos and Chmykhalovas taken indoors. I told her it was available if she wanted it, but she never called back and I was never able to find anyone by that name working at Time."

Press interviews are also disallowed the Pentecostals, except outdoors — even in mid-winter.

"We were notified that last winter, after an interview which

Vashchenkos." Mrs. Drake continued. "We have a letter from Senator Baker of Tennessee saying he was 'reluctantly persuaded' by Malcolm Toon not to see the Vashchenkos."

Mrs. Drake has also encountered personal difficulties in her efforts to help the Vashchenkos.

"I remember the first phone call I made to the Moscow embassy. I talked to a Marine embassy guard. I said, 'I can't believe that you don't know about those people,' and he kept saying 'I have no one by that name on the register.' I said, 'Of course they're not on the register. They don't work in the embassy. They're in the basement room.' He never lost his cool, he stayed totally calm.

"We later realized this man had been instructed to say just what he said. He actually never lied to me. He just continued to go back to that same statement, 'They are not on the register.'"

Late last year, President Carter sent Olin Robinson, president of Middleburg College in Vermont, to study the situation. Mrs. Hruby calls Robinson's visit "a half-hearted attempt at best."

"He asked the Russian Orthodox Church to intervene. Asking an official, state-controlled church to intervene in Soviet affairs is like asking the New York Sanitation Department to intervene in the Middle East."

Carter Unhelpful

She adds: "Carter has his excuse that he's tried to help, but he hasn't... He hasn't forwarded even one letter to the Vashchenkos sent 'care of President Carter.'"

In Montgomery, the combined efforts of SAVE and the local Committee to Save Soviet Jewry have not gone unnoticed by the local media. Last June, just prior to the first anniversary of the Vashchenkos' stay at the U.S. embassy, all three national television networks were given permission to enter the embassy to photograph the family and tell their story. The film was flown back immediately to the United States, but someone "pulled the plug." Only WSOV — a local network affiliate — has a copy of that video tape today.

"There is a virtual press blackout on the entire subject of Christian dissidents in the Soviet Union, because our government chooses to ignore it completely," says Mrs. Hruby.

noted that the U.S. has given these Soviet citizens a room at the embassy even though "housing space at the embassy is very tight because of the general lack of housing in Moscow."

Mail 'Lost'

Toon acknowledged that literally thousands of pieces of American mail addressed to the Vashchenkos have been lost permanently in the Soviet mails but said, "We cannot permit mail to be sent to them through the diplomatic pouch. To do so," he said, "would be a violation of our own regulations as well as of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Practices."

According to government sources in Washington however, the State Department has lodged no formal complaint with the Soviets regarding the sabotage of American mail to the Vashchenkos.

took place in the embassy compound because of this rule; that the Vashchenkos were ill for several weeks because they stood out in the below-freezing weather with only light sweaters and thin shoes, because that's all they had."

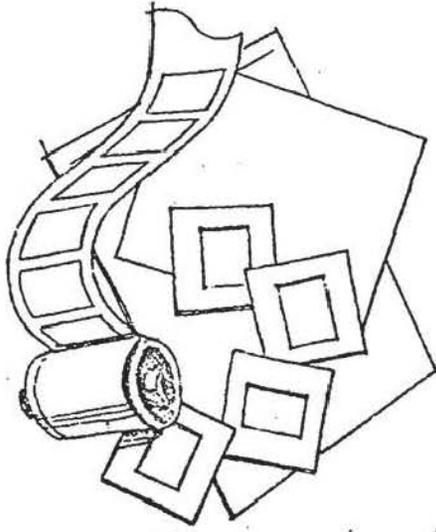
"The State Department wanted to keep this thing quiet," said Jane Drake. "They made it very difficult, initially, for the news media to interview these people. And even Congressman Richard C. Shelby (D.-Ala.) who went over there this Easter week had trouble seeing them. Mr. Shelby even had a letter from our governor requesting the congressman be given permission to see these people on behalf of the people of Alabama."

'Reluctantly Persuaded'

"Six senators had already gone to Moscow last January but were not able to see the

September 16, 1979

National Catholic Register



National Catholic Register

"Although the local Alabama station pulled a few strings and got the whole tape down here for us," says Mrs. Drake. "evidently the entire report was shown no where else in the country; in fact, only portions of it were aired, and in only a few cities across the nation."

Supporters of the Vashchenko family agree that the number one difficulty is that the American Christian community lacks proper information about what is going on in Russia.

Virtual Blackout

"There is a virtual press blackout on the entire subject of Christian dissidents in the Soviet Union, because our government chooses to ignore it completely," says Mrs. Hruby. "They cannot articulate the Jewish situation because of the pressure of an articulate Jewish lobby which Christians, unfortunately, haven't developed."

Rabbi Seymour Siegal, professor at the Jewish Theological

Seminary in New York agrees. A member of the Council on Religious and International Affairs at the seminary and a dedicated human rights and pro-life activist, Siegal says that, "Obviously, religious oppression of Jews and Christians - Catholics, Evangelicals, Baptists and Adventists - exists in the Soviet Union, and there are several avenues interested American citizens can explore."

"One is information. All interested parties should constantly keep the public informed of what the real situation is in the USSR. The other more active alternative is to put pressure on the Soviet government through our elected representatives and other public officials. Interested groups and individuals must express their viewpoint that concessions to the Soviet Union by the United States should be made contingent upon the granting of human rights to all Soviet citizens."

"Two examples that immediately come to mind are the Jackson-Vanik Amendment [which bars most-favored-nation trading status to the Soviets] and SALT II ratification. We should not give the USSR what they want, until they are willing to allow freedom."

"The Jewish community has been agitating for over 10 years now, and although there is much to be done, it has been successful to the extent that the Soviet gov-

ernment has permitted 150,000 Jews to leave the Soviet Union," adds Rabbi Siegal. At the same time, almost no Christian dissidents have been allowed to emigrate from the USSR.

Christians Unorganized

"We Christians desperately need a lobby," says Jane Drake of SAVE. "We're just not organized with persecution, and the Soviet Christians are so spiritual. It's

really uplifting to have any association with them. Two years ago, I didn't know there were any Christians in the Soviet Union. Now, next to my husband and children, it's my whole life." (In the coming weeks: reports on how government officials and the Church hierarchy have responded to the Vashchenko-Chirmykhalova controversy, and the overall plight of religious believers in the Soviet Union.)

URGE YOUR LOCAL TV STATION TO SHOW THE REPORT ON THE PENTECOSTALS IN YOUR AREA

I WONDERED WHY SOMEBODY DIDN'T DO SOMETHING THEN I REALIZED THAT I AM SOMEBODY

HELP

What Next For Soviet Jews?

A tale circulating in Moscow tells of a Jewish prisoner sentenced to fifteen years. Indignant and upset, he proclaims his innocence to the other prisoners. "What did you do?" asks one. "Nothing," he insists. "Nonsense," says the first prisoner. "For nothing, you get only ten years."

Apocryphal or not, the story epitomizes both the Jewish dilemma in the USSR and the present time of troubles.

For Jews in the USSR who want to leave the country, this has been a momentous year—a year of dramatic trials, of unrelenting harassment of dissidents, of vicious official anti-Semitism.

As 1979 draws to a close, what are the prospects for would-be emigres and for those who remain behind?

The future is murky indeed. The number of those allowed to leave each month has risen and fallen. In October 1973 it stood at its highest, 4,000 a month; in 1976 it fell to 1,100, and in recent months there has been a significant rise to over 4,500 a month.

Observers must turn to the ways Jewish activists in general have been treated for a clue to where the road ahead will lead. The summer trials and severe sentences of Anatoly Shcharansky and others constituted a dramatic turning point. For the first time since the Stalinist 1930s, a Soviet citizen—and a Jew who, not incidentally, had been refused permission to leave—was tried on treason charges. Under constant surveillance by the KGB in recent years as an activist-refusnik, Shcharansky had become a member of a small group which monitored Soviet compliance—or the lack of it—with the Helsinki Agreement on Human Rights, and publicized their findings. His conviction and sentence were ominous signals. With Shcharansky and through him, Moscow has tried to link dissidents, Jews and treason inextricably in the public mind. Referring to the Shcharansky case, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* charged, "It is the Zionists, who initiated this Devil's Sabbath."

Possibly the USSR decided to ignore world opinion and to reject high-level intercessions such as that of President

Carter in Shcharansky's case—secure, no doubt, in the knowledge that US-USSR trade and other relationships will continue and that such exchanges as the SALT talks cannot halt. It may also be a signal by Soviet officials that they are willing to violate the principles of Helsinki, where they deem any action "interference" in their internal affairs, including criticism of their treatment of Jews.

Meanwhile, an increasingly ugly campaign, designed to revive latent anti-Semitism and to incite such feelings where they did not exist before, has been under way. Crude Sturmer-like cartoons are published. Vitriolic denunciations of Israel.

Zionism and Judaism appear. "In their vile pernicious chattering like regiments of mice the Yids, the sneering Israelites..." begins a widely circulated poem by Sergei Vasiliev. Television programs depict Jews as untrustworthy and unpatriotic. Since 1975, twenty-seven anti-Semitic books have been published in editions of hundreds of thousands. Indeed, the USSR has become the world's leading producer and distributor of anti-Semitic materials.

Moreover, victims of a rigid quota, Jews find university doors closed to them in increasing numbers. Those already educated and trained have great

For the myriad Jews outside the USSR who want to help them, this is a time of soul-searching.

difficulty finding suitable employment. For many, despair is deepened by the plight of family members and friends who applied for exit visas long ago, were fired from jobs and are struggling to subsist.

For the myriad Jews outside the USSR who want to help them, this is a time of soul-searching. Ways must be devised to give further support to those who want to leave for Israel or elsewhere. The path, however, contains pitfalls. For example, the relationship of Israel and the USSR in the "new" Middle East must be taken into consideration. Then, too, US-USSR relations must be weighed carefully, taking into account American trade

unions and farm groups who may believe their jobs and well-being are at stake if Soviet-American trade is obstructed. And there is always the vexing problem—after Brezhnev, what then?

The long-standing debate about the use of either quiet or public diplomacy with Soviet authorities continues. Also to be considered is the crucial question of how to help the more than two million Jews still inside the Soviet Union to remain Jewish—and in some cases, to "become" Jewish because they want to return to their ancestral faith.

Meanwhile, Jews throughout the world are prepared to carry on a massive program of assistance to help revive cultural and religious educational institutions in the USSR. Whether that will be possible under present circumstances remains a question mark. According to an overwhelming number of Jews who have left the Soviet Union, as well as activists still there, this alternative is a virtual impossibility. All the same, Jews and others engaged in this struggle believe that insistence on the same rights accorded all other national and religious groups is legitimate and worth pursuing.

Since the early 1950s, when AJC sponsored the pioneering *Jews in the Soviet Union* by Solomon M. Schwarz (Syracuse University Press), we have been deeply involved in this issue. AJC President Richard Maass was the former chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry—which the AJC helped to develop and staff. In addition, we have published educational materials, organized consultations of scholars and specialists, and disseminated information in Spanish through our Latin American office. Sergio Nudelstejer, director of AJC's Mexican and Central American office, has for two years chaired the Latin American Conference on Soviet Jewry. We have also been extremely active in sensitizing Christian religious and academic groups.

The struggle on behalf of our Soviet Russian brethren will continue with undiminished fervor until they are free to live as Jews or leave.

David Geller is AJC's director of European and Latin American affairs.

reprinted from

NEWS and VIEWS

The American Jewish Committee

CATHOLIC HERALD

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ACTION IN ENGLAND

Nun offers to take prisoner's place

by Christopher Howse

An American nun has offered to exchange herself in ransom for the release of a Jewish rights activist held in a Siberian labour camp.

Sister Ann Gillen, of the Society of the Holy Child, handed in a letter to the Soviet ambassador in London on Tuesday, begging for the release of Ida Nudel and asking to be allowed to take her place.

Sr Ann is in England to promote the aims of the American National Inter-religious Task Force on Soviet Jewry. She has been its executive director since 1972 and this year set up a sisterhood of conscience which is devoting prayer and publicity to the imprisoned Jewess Ida Nudel and to Sr Valeriya Makeeva, an Orthodox nun held in a psychiatric hospital for selling belts embroidered with religious texts.

Sr Ann was joined at the Soviet embassy by Mrs Margaret Rigal who handed in a letter appealing

for Sr Makeeva's release. It said: "I am asking for your help as a Jewish housewife, concerned for a fellow woman of another religion and nationality because I believe in the freedom of every individual."

Sr Ann wrote: "In the Middle Ages, there was a religious order whose members volunteered to take the places of prisoners on slave ships. It is in that spirit that I make my offer." She admitted there was little hope of her offer being taken up.

Sr Ann and Mrs Rigal found the Soviet embassy gates barred against them. Eventually an embassy servant was persuaded to take the letters into the building.

Sr Ann recently presented the Soviet ambassador in Washington with a petition from 6,000 supporters in Alabama who had offered to help settle evangelicals detained in Russia.

Ida Nudel, the woman she hopes to free, was sentenced to four years internal exile in Siberia on charges of malicious hooliganism. She had been in

contact with Jews imprisoned for applying to leave the country.

Ida Nudel has served one year. She lives in a hut, the only woman among 60 men who spend their days cutting peat and their nights in drunken quarrelling, according to Sander Levinson who visited her in March. She is suffering from heart and kidney problems and a stomach ulcer, but can get no medical treatment. She has helped other prisoners in the past with food and medicines.

The Orthodox nun, Valeriya Makeeva, whom Mrs Rigal is trying to help, was arrested in July 1978. The belts she made had: "Lord thou hast been our dwelling place," embroidered on them. They sold for 75p, and the proceeds went to support homeless nuns. No time limit has been set for her time at a psychiatric hospital at Kazan in the Tartar region.

For information write to The National Inter-religious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1307 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

CATHOLIC HERALD, Friday, October 12, 1979



Mrs Margaret Rigal and Sister Ann Gillen outside the Soviet embassy.

THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
1307 S. WABASH AVENUE #221
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605



National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry

1307 SOUTH WABASH, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

SISTER ANN GILLEN
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312-922-1983

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The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry was organized by the American Jewish Committee and the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice in 1972. Leaders of the Protestant, Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish communities as well as representatives of voluntary agencies and civic and communal groups were among the founding sponsors.

Sister Ann Gillen has been the Task Force's Executive Director since its inception, and under her direction it has become the major force in rallying a broad spectrum of Christian and Jewish support for the human rights struggle in the Soviet Union. The Task Force has undertaken many significant programs and it has built a strong coalition throughout America. There are currently 20 local and regional Task Forces in the United States that work in behalf of Soviet Jewry and other oppressed people in the USSR.

In 1977 the Task Force sent a high level interreligious delegation to the Belgrade Conference on compliance with the Helsinki Final Act to press the cause of religious liberty, voicing support for the release of Jewish activist Anatoly Scharansky, Pastor Georgi Vins, and the Lithuanian Roman Catholic nun, Nijole Sadunaite. Later the Task Force delegation met with Vatican officials and participated in the Sakharov human rights hearings in Rome.

Through its Project Co-Adoption in which churches and synagogues cooperate in programs of support for Jewish and Christian Prisoners of Conscience, the Task Force was the only group to express public concern for all five of the Soviet human rights activists who were released from the Soviet Union in April 1979.

In 1975 during the Brussels International Conference on Soviet Jewry, the Task Force issued a "Christian Call to Conscience" which has had strong impact within the American and European religious communities.

The Task Force continues to meet regularly with Administration officials and Congressional leaders who are shaping America's human rights policies.

10/14/79
79-700-76

INTERRELIGIOUS VIGIL AT THE ISAIAH WALL, OCTOBER 30, 1979 AT THE U.N., NEW YORK CITY
AT 5:00 PM SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

SISTER ANN GILLEN,
PRESIDING:

Executive Director,
National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry
Chicago, Illinois

REV. ALEXANDER KARLOUTSOS, Director of Church and Society
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North
and South America, New York City

OPENING PRAYER:

Psalm 79:11

Let the groaning of the prisoner
come before Thee;
According to the greatness of Thy
power set free those that are
appointed to death;

Psalm 102:19-23

This shall be written for the gen-
eration to come;
And a people which shall be
created shall praise the LORD.
For He hath looked down from
the height of His sanctuary;
From heaven did the LORD be-
hold the earth;
To hear the groaning of the pris-
oner;
To loose those that are appointed
to death;
That men may tell of the name of
the LORD in Zion,
And His praise in Jerusalem;
When the peoples are gathered
together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the
LORD.

Psalm 146:5-8

Happy is he whose help is the
God of Jacob,
Whose hope is in the LORD his
God,
Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that in them is;
Who keepeth truth for ever;
Who executeth justice for the op-
pressed;
Who giveth bread to the hungry.

The LORD looseth the prisoners;
The LORD openeth the eyes of the
blind;
The LORD raiseth up them that
are bowed down;
The LORD loveth the righteous.

SONG: LET MY PEOPLE GO

When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!

(CHORUS)

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt's land;
Tell ol' Pharaoh
Let my people go!

No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let my people go;
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let my people go;

(CHORUS)

We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go;
And wear these slav'ry chains forlorn,
Let my people go!

(CHORUS)

RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN, Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun, New York City, and
Associate Chairman,
The Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry
New York City

Anatoly Shcharansky's Statement in Moscow Courtroom, July 1978

In March and April, during interrogation, the chief investigators warned me that in the position I have taken during investigation, and held to here in court, I would be threatened with execution by firing squad, or at least 15 years. If I would agree to cooperate with the investigation for the purpose of destroying the Jewish emigration movement, they promised me early freedom and a quick reunion with my wife.

Five years ago, I submitted my application for exit to Israel. Now I'm further than ever from my dream. It would seem to be cause for regret. But it is absolutely otherwise. I am happy. I am happy that I lived honestly, in peace with my conscience. I never compromised my soul, even under the threat of death.

I am happy that I helped people. I am proud that I knew and worked with such honest, brave and courageous people as Sakharov, Orlov, Ginzburg, who are carrying on the traditions of the Russian intelligentsia. I am fortunate to have been witness to the process of the liberation of Jews of the U.S.S.R.

I hope that the absurd accusation against me and the entire Jewish emigration movement will not hinder the liberation of my people. My near ones and friends know how I wanted to exchange activity in the emigration movement for a life with my wife, Avital, in Israel.

For more than 2,000 years the Jewish people, my people, have been dispersed. But wherever they are, wherever Jews are found, every year they have repeated, "Next year in Jerusalem," Now, when I am further than ever from my people, from Avital, facing many arduous years of imprisonment, I say, turning to my people, my Avital: Next year in Jerusalem.

Now I turn to you, the court, who were required to confirm a predetermined sentence: to you I have nothing to say.

REV. JOHN PAWLIKOWSKI, Professor of Social Ethics,
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois - and
Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations,
Washington, D. C.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
BABI YAR
by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

No gravestone stands on Babi Yar --
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on the gash
Such dread comes over me; I feel so old,
Old as the Jews. Today I am a Jew....
Now I go wandering, an Egyptian slave;
And now I perish, splayed across the cross --
The marks of nails are still upon my flesh.

And I am Dreyfus, whom the gentry hound;
I am behind the bars, caught in a ring,
Belied, denounced and spat upon as I stand,
While dainty ladies in their lacy frills,
Squealing, poke parasols into my face....

I am that little boy in Bialystok
Whose blood flows, spreading darkly on the floor.
The rowdy lords of the saloon make sport,
Reeking alike of vodka and of leek.
Booted aside, weak, helpless, I, the child,
Who begs in vain while the pogrom mob
Guffaws and shouts, "Save Russian, beat the Jews."
The shopman's blows fall on my mother's back.
O my people, my own Russian folk,
But often those unclean of hand have dared
To brandish your most pure and lofty name.
I know the goodness of my native land.
How vile that anti-Semites shamelessly
Preen themselves in the title they defile
"The Russian People's Union."

Now, in this moment I am Anne Frank,
 Frail and transparent as an April twig.
 I love as she; I need no ready phrases....
 Only to look into each other's eyes.
 How little we can smell, how little see....
 Leaves are forbidden us, the sky forbidden....
 Yet how much still remains; how strangely sweet
 To hold each other close in the dark room.
 They come? No, do not fear. These are the gales
 Of Spring; she bursts into this gloom.
 Come to me; quickly, let me kiss your lips....
 They break the door? No, no, the ice is breaking.

On Babi Yar weeds rustle; the tall trees
 Like judges loom and threaten....
 All screams in silence; I take off my cap
 And feel that I am slowly turning gray.
 And I, too, have become a soundless cry
 Over the thousands that lie buried here.
 I am each old man slaughtered, each child shot;
 None of me will forget.

Let the glad "Internationale" blare forth
 When earth's last anti-Semite lies in earth.
 No drop of Jewish blood flows in my veins,
 But anti-Semites, with a dull, gnarled hate
 Detest me like a Jew.
 O know me truly Russian through their hate!

DR. ROBERT L. PRUITT, Pastor
 Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church
 Washington, D. C.

Isaiah 61:1

The spirit of the Lord God
 is upon me;
 Because the LORD hath anointed
 me
 To bring good tidings unto the
 humble;
 He hath sent me to bind up the
 broken-hearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the cap-
 tives,
 And the opening of the eyes to
 them that are bound;

Isaiah 42:6-7

I the LORD have called thee in
 righteousness,
 And have taken hold of thy hand,
 And kept thee, and set thee for a
 covenant of the people,
 For a light of the nations;
 To open the blind eyes,
 To bring out the prisoners from
 the dungeon,
 And them that sit in darkness out
 of the prison-house.

Lamentations 3:31-36

For the LORD will not cast off
 For ever.
 For though He cause grief, yet
 will He have compassion
 According to the multitude of His
 mercies.
 For He doth not afflict willingly,
 Nor grieve the children of men.
 To crush under foot
 All the prisoners of the earth,
 To turn aside the right of a man
 Before the face of the Most High,
 To subvert a man in his cause,
 The LORD approveth not.

Exodus 5:1-2

And afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said
 unto Pharaoh: 'Thus saith the LORD, the God
 of Israel: Let My people go, that they may
 hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.' And
 Pharaoh said: 'Who is the LORD, that I should
 hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I
 know not the LORD, and moreover I will not
 let Israel go.'

SONG: WE SHALL OVERCOME

*We shall overcome,
 We shall overcome,
 We shall overcome,
 Some day!
 Deep in my heart,
 I do believe,
 We shall overcome some day.*

We'll walk hand in hand (CHORUS)

Black and white together (CHORUS)

We are not afraid (CHORUS)

The people shall be free (CHORUS)

We shall live in peace (CHORUS)

We shall overcome!

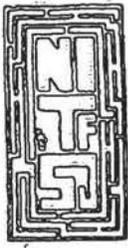
CLOSING PRAYER

Compiled by: Rabbi A. James Rudin
 Assistant National Director
 Interreligious Affairs
 American Jewish Committee

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
October 30, 1979

Church Center for the United Nations - 777 UN Plaza, New York City

- 9:00 AM Registration and coffee
- 9:30 Presiding: Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, Executive Director
Institute of Women Today, Chicago, Illinois
- Address: Honorable Robert F. Drinan, Member of Congress
Fourth Congressional District, Massachusetts
- 10:30 Coffee break
- 10:45 Address: Soviet Jewry: An Update
Jerry Goodman, Executive Director
National Conference on Soviet Jewry, New York City
- Address: Religious Liberty in the USSR
Professor Thomas E. Bird, Chairman
Slavic Languages Department
Queens College, City University of New York
- 11:45 Discussion
- 12:30 PM Luncheon
- Presiding: Dr. Andre Lacocque, Professor of Old Testament
Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois
- Address: Honorable Matthew Nimetz
Counselor, United States Department of State
Washington, D. C.
- 2:00 Task Force Report: Sister Ann Gillen, Executive Director
National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry
Chicago, Illinois
- Rabbi A. James Rudin
Assistant National Director, Interreligious Affairs
American Jewish Committee, New York City
- 2:30 Task Force Open Forum
- 3:30 Leadership Conference Action Recommendations:
David Geller, U. S. Director
European and Latin American Affairs
American Jewish Committee, New York City
- 4:00 A Look at the Future
- Presiding: The Rev. William H. Harter, Pastor
The Presbyterian Church of Falling Spring
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania - and
Secretary-Treasurer
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel
Washington, D. C.
- Closing Addresses:
- Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director
Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee, New York City
- Bayard Rustin, Executive Director
A. Phillip Randolph Institute, New York City
- 5:00 Interreligious Vigil at the Isaiah Wall at the United Nations



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SISTER ANN GILLEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Oct. 30...A key U.S. State Department official announced today, that the Administration will press for further implementation of the security provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, at the Madrid Conference, scheduled for November, 1980.

Matthew Nimetz, U.S. State Department Counselor, in a luncheon address before the Leadership Conference, of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, said that while the United States retains its overriding interest in the human rights and humanitarian affairs provisions of the Final Act, the U.S. delegation to the review meeting in Madrid will seek to enhance the implementation of the security area, in order to achieve a "balanced basis" that would enhance all provisions of the document.

The Helsinki Final Act, which is a political statement of intent and was signed by the leaders of the United States, Canada and 33 European nations, including the Soviet Union, on August 1, 1975, recognized the interrelationship of security in Europe and security in the rest of the world and the necessity of general disarmament under effective international controls.

Speaking before more than 100 religious leaders representing Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish communities from across the United States, Mr. Nimetz said that the Administration was well aware of the great importance of the interest shown by private groups in the Helsinki review process and "encourages their participation and deeper commitment to this process, especially in the human rights area."

In a message prepared for the Conference, Congressman Robert F. Drinan (D-Mass.), noted that activists in the Soviet Union seeking Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of the Act, "remain behind bars or are substantially denied due process of Soviet law. Among them: Anatoly Shcharansky, Yuri Orlov, Vladimir Slepak, Ida Nudel and Nahum Meiman."

"Though the number of exit visas granted to Soviet Jews has risen, Soviet officials are presently conducting a systematic campaign of harassment against those seeking to leave the Soviet Union," Congressman Drinan said. "Mail and telephone communications are censored or cut off completely, job security is threatened and some activists are being forced into the Soviet armed forces upon application to leave."

"The demands now being made by Soviet Jews and other minorities are crucial in the event that during the upcoming 1980 Moscow Olympics, the Soviet Union may take every opportunity to silence the dissident community," Congressman Drinan reported. "If SALT II is ratified, the Most Favored Nation status granted the Soviets, once the Olympics have passed, we could lose our leverage in influencing Soviet behavior."

A supporter of SALT II, Congressman Drinan said that the United States and private groups must continue to insure that Soviet Jews will be allowed to leave the Soviet Union in accordance with internationally accepted standards of emigration and family reunification.

Closing the conference, prior to an interreligious vigil at the Isaiah Wall across from the United Nations, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, American Jewish Committee Director for Interreligious Affairs, said "as long as the Soviet Union routinely denies religious liberty in their proletarian Utopia, men and women of conscience must continue to fight, to insure religious minorities in the Soviet Union their basic human rights."

Other speakers were Sister Ann Gillen, Executive Director, National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry; Rabbi A. James Rudin, Assistant National Director, Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee; David Geller, Director of European and Latin American Affairs, American Jewish Committee; Jerry Goodman, Executive Director, National Conference on Soviet Jewry and Professor Thomas E. Bird, Chairman, Slavic Languages Department, Queens College, CUNY.

Founded in 1972, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry rallies a broad spectrum of Christian and Jewish supporters for the human rights struggle in the USSR. Currently there are 20 local and regional Task Forces in the United States that work on behalf of Soviet Jewry and other oppressed people in the Soviet Union.

10/19/79

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