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American Jewish Committee, 1953-1963.

**THE**



**AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

386 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y. *Cable Address, "WISHCOM, NEW YORK"*

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April 28, 1953

Dear Rabbi Silver:

As you will recall during our pleasant tea together, I promised to send you material on two aspects of our discussion. I am enclosing items pertaining to manifestations of Neo-Nazism in Germany. Shortly, I will send you material, as promised, which will serve as evidence of Russian anti-Semitism.

Thank you very much for your courtesy in giving Mr. Engel and me the time to discuss the McCarran-Walter Act. Since our discussion a number of important developments have taken place which I believe are in conformity with Senator Taft's statement to Mr. Engel. Both Mr. Engel and I hope that you will speak to the Senator at an early opportunity.

My best regards.

Sincerely yours,

John Slawson

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
East 105 St. and Ansel Rd.  
Cleveland, Ohio

JS/ss  
Enc.

c.c. to Irving M. Engel

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June 11, 1953

Dear Rabbi Silver:

If you will recall, at our tea some time ago at which you, Mr. Engel and I were present, I promised to send you two sets of material - one on publications of the American Jewish Committee on the neo-Nazism situation in Germany, and two, a memorandum with respect to the acts and attitudes on the part of the Soviet Union that have led us to conclude that there is anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. I mailed the material with respect to the first item on April 28th. I trust that it has arrived and that you have had the opportunity to examine it.

I am now attaching a memorandum with respect to the second item, with reference to which a great deal of thought was given by our staff, particularly on the part of one person who, in my judgment, qualifies as an outstanding scholar on the Communist issue especially as it relates to the international scene. This memorandum has been contracted from a much larger document to a few pages, and I trust that it will be possible for you to read it and to give us your views.

I assure you that we wish to consider this important subject purely on an objective level, and with the sole concern of arriving as near the truth as it is possible with as complicated a problem as this.

I trust to hear from you at your convenience.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

John Slawson

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,  
The Temple  
East 105 St. and Ansel Rd.  
Cleveland, Ohio

JS/ss  
Enc.

June 29, 1953

Mr. John Slawson  
American Jewish Committee  
386 Fourth Avenue  
New York 16, New York

My dear Mr. Slawson:

Please pardon the delay in replying to your communication of June 11th. I have been away from the city a good deal of the time and my correspondence has unfortunately lagged.

I read through the material which you sent me very carefully. I am making the following observations on that material, not as a matter of polemics or for the sake of engaging in any controversy, public or private - purely for information because you asked for it.

Most of the material which you sent me was, as you may well imagine, not new to me. The data has been marshalled very zealously - one might say, avidly. The author of your document has worked hard to prove that the label of anti-Semitism must be pinned at all costs on the Soviet Union because it has repressed the Jewish group along with other minority groups. Dialectic attempts are made to bracket the so-called Russian anti-Semitism with Nazi anti-Semitism and to suggest that whatever differences do exist between the two are purely incidental and irrelevant. I somehow got the feeling that the author was embarrassed by the fact that he was not able to point to definite pogroms or gas chambers in the Soviet Union to clinch his elaborate argument.

Dictionary definitions are marshalled to convince people that the term, anti-Semitism, must not be confined to racist or annihilationist anti-Semitism and to insist that no real distinction should be made between different kinds of anti-Semitism, and no caution or restraint need be exercised in confounding them.

Anti-Semitism as a state measure and as petty political strategy has come to have a very specific meaning since the days of Hitler, regardless of its time and place of origin. It carries specific and deadly ominous connotations to the Jews of the world and to other people. Unless the evidence is conclusive that the Soviet government

has adopted anti-Semitism as a public measure and that the Communist Party is subscribing to it officially with the idea of denying to the Jewish group rights which are enjoyed by other groups, or of exterminating it altogether, the term should not be employed in this instance at all, or should be so qualified as to leave no doubt in the mind of the reader just exactly what it is that you have in mind. It is ridiculous to speak of the life and death distinctions which do exist between Nazi anti-Semitism and of other forms of anti-Jewish prejudice, which exist all over the world and which sometimes assume serious proportions as merely "a question of semantics."

Whenever a valid criticism needs to be made against the Soviet Union or any of its satellites, it should, of course, be made. Anti-Semitic manifestations or incidents should not be overlooked or condoned wherever and whenever they occur, but the author of this document has put together two and two and has come up with 64!

Following the reversal of the Soviet government in the case of the Moscow doctors, the political leaders of the State of Israel, who were the ones most sharply attacked and most directly concerned in the situation, issued statements welcoming the new turn of events and expressing the hope that it might lead to a resumption of normal, diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union. This is statesmanship. The spokesmen of the American Jewish Committee saw no occasion for any satisfaction with this unprecedented action of the Soviet authorities, and proceeded with customary violence to denounce the Soviet Union, characterizing its action as "a typical Communist grandstand play." This is propaganda.

An organization committed to the protection of Jewish interests all over the world might do better than to hunt with the pack. It should explore every channel available for diplomatic intercession and should seize every opportunity to encourage governments which make public avowal of their opposition to anti-Semitism, and <sup>wherever</sup> should give evidence of attempting to rectify whatever mistakes have been made.

Enlightened world statesmanship is now trying desperately hard to find a peaceful modus vivendi whereby the East and the West <sup>could</sup> live together on the same globe and whereby the peoples of the world would be able to work out their destinies according to their own lights. How does the American Jewish Committee, through such a document or through the one recently published on "The New Red Anti-Semitism" contribute to this greatly desired end?

John Slawson

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June 29, 1953

The free peoples of the world, of course, have reasons to oppose Communism. Jews who love freedom and democracy have joined and can join numerous non-sectarian organizations which exist to oppose the spread of Communism. But how does the American Jewish Committee, which has a specific purpose to perform, fit into this picture? Has it gone Bundist? Or is it a strategy for home consumption to persuade American anti-Semites how much the Jews of America are opposed to Communism?

I believe that the American Jewish Committee ought to re-study its position with an eye ~~to truly serving~~ the best interests of the hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries.

I wish to thank you for your kindness in sending me the number of statements issued by the American Jewish Committee on the revival of neo-Nazism in Germany. It is well that you and the enlightened press of our country are bringing these facts to the attention of the American people. But you must realize that this is not enough. Neo-Nazism in Germany is not a menace to the people of the world until it is armed, and unfortunately, we have been thrusting rearmament upon Germany. When Germany is reunited and fully rearmed, the third world war, I am afraid, will be on, and Germany will not be fighting to save democracy!  
...

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

IS THERE ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET UNION?

Suppose that a new government of the French Republic outlawed all Zionist organizations and any groups in which the Zionists had any influence; declared Zionism a treasonable movement and arrested all its known leaders; officially attacked Israel as the center of espionage and sabotage, organized by the Tel Aviv government and aimed at the destruction of the French empire; declared the Israel ambassador persona non grata, and accused him of directing these subversive activities in France; closed the offices of all Jewish international and welfare organizations in Paris; dissolved all French Jewish associations except for a few religious communities that were directed by government agents and forced to engage in pro-government and anti-foreign propaganda; forbade the use of Hebrew and closed all Yiddish periodicals; abolished all synagogues except one in Paris, one in Marseilles, and one in Cherbourg; prohibited religious education, closed down all religious as well as secular Jewish schools, and expropriated all Jewish hospitals, old-age homes and other welfare institutions....

Suppose, furthermore, that all deputies of Jewish origin, except for two or three reliable government adherents, were removed from the French parliament; that confidential memoranda eliminated all Jews from higher positions in the military command and diplomatic service and closed military and diplomatic academies to Jewish students; that thousands of citizens with Jewish names were officially castigated and removed from their posts in civic and cultural life as "cosmopolitans" and "alien wanderers" who could not properly understand the spirit of France and French culture; that a whole group of Jewish writers, loyal

to the regime, were suddenly arrested and disappeared without explanation; that Jewish inhabitants were "evacuated" from Alsace and the Riviera and "resettled" in "corrective labor camps" in the Sahara desert; that all businessmen, except for a few favored by the government, deported from Marseilles, Algiers, Tunis, Oran, Fez, and Rabat and that a great part of the deportees "happened" to be Jews....

And suppose, finally, that fourteen prominent French politicians and administrators, eleven of them Jews, but all of them old and fervent adherents of the ruling party, were tried and executed as traitors, spies, and saboteurs in the services of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy, directed by the Israel government and by the Jewish haute finance in the United States; that these individuals were made responsible for all mistakes, failures, and crimes of the regime, for the starvation of the population, and for faulty industrial planning; that nine prominent doctors, six of them Jews, were arrested under charges of having "shortened the lives" of Aristide Briand and Raymond Poincaré, and of having tried to murder several marshals, generals, and admirals; that immediately afterwards, the French press, from Lille to Nice, discovered dozens of embezzlers, swindlers, thieves of public property, fake doctors, and exploiters of orphans--all with the names of Gruenberg, Gruenstein, Cohen, Kogan and Kagan, and that a violent press campaign ensued, calling for vigilance éternelle against these aliens and cosmopolitans....

Suppose that all this happened even though the guarantees of the rights of man were still in the French Constitution, and that similar measures were taken against the German-speaking Alsatians, the Bretons, the Basques, and the Italian and Spanish immigrants, and generally against

persons suspected of "cosmopolitanism" and/or non-French nationalism....

Would that be evidence of anti-Semitism in France?

That is exactly the question we must deal with in this paper. For overwhelming proof that all these events did take place, not in France, of course, but in Soviet Russia and her satellites, can be easily produced. Nevertheless, persistent attempts have been and are being made to explain away these facts. The most frequently cited arguments are:

1. "THERE IS NO ANTI-SEMITISM BECAUSE JEWS ARE NOT THE ONLY VICTIMS OF TOTALITARIAN OPPRESSION."

*term should not be used*

This argument reverses the entire philosophy on which the fight against anti-Semitism is based. Jewish as well as non-Jewish opponents of anti-Semitism have never ceased pointing out that anti-Semitism is only one of the expressions of prejudice against racial, religious, or national minorities. This fact, in generally accepted opinion, makes anti-Semitism not less, but more dangerous and reprehensible.

Nobody, for example, would vindicate an American bigot of the charge of anti-Semitism because he also hated and persecuted Negroes or because he had general prejudices against all "foreigners." Discrimination in housing and "gentlemen's agreements" in restricted areas are not less anti-Semitic because they are usually aimed at Negroes as well as Jews. The Ku-Klux-Klan cannot be absolved of the charge of anti-Semitism because it also hates Negroes and Catholics.

If only those who persecute Jews exclusively are to be called anti-Semites, there would be not many anti-Semites. Hitler himself could be absolved from anti-Semitism on this count because he persecuted other

minorities as well. Even his wholesale extermination policy was not reserved for Jews alone. The extermination of Gypsies in the Third Reich was as thorough as the extermination of Jews, and plans for a genocidal "solution" of the Czech and Polish question were being prepared in great detail for the period immediately after German victory in the war. But who would maintain that this made Hitler less anti-Semitic?

In the case of the Soviet Union, however, the argument is made that anti-Semitism does not exist as long as peoples other than Jews are subjected to similar treatment. Deportations of Jews, it is held, do not count as anti-Semitism as long as Crimean Tartars, Kalmucks, Caucasian tribes, and Baltic nations are deported in the same way. The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that one cannot speak of anti-Semitism as long as Jews are afforded equal accommodations in the gas chambers and extermination camps....

Of course, the Jews are not the only victims of totalitarian brutalities. They only exemplify what can happen to any group under totalitarian rule. But a good case can be made for the contention that under Soviet rule, Jews suffer not only like anybody else, but more so. For example, the autonomy of the national minorities in the Soviet Union has been reduced to the "right" to praise the dictator and to promote the party line in their own language. But most other national groups in Soviet Russia still have periodicals, books, theaters, and schools in their languages, while Hebrew is completely forbidden and all Yiddish schools and periodicals have been liquidated. Also, those members of other national minorities who adopted the Soviet Russian way of thinking,

and renounced the past and the traditions of their native ethnic group, are usually not accused of "nationalist deviation." But a Jew remains a Jew however assimilated he may be linguistically and politically. Many Jews were accused of Zionism, cosmopolitanism and Jewish bourgeois nationalism although they were faithful Communists, hostile to every authentic expression of Jewish life and completely assimilated.

(Slansky and Ana Pauker are good examples; there are thousands of others.) Even complete assimilation does not save a Jew from the stigma of his "Jewish origin," which makes him a member of a suspect group. The recent purges in Russia and the satellite countries were almost exclusively aimed at such Jews.

2. "THERE IS NO ANTI-SEMITISM BECAUSE PERSECUTION DOES NOT HIT ALL JEWS."

Yes, Kaganovich is still a member of the Politburo, Ehrenburg and Zaslavsky are still allowed to write in Pravda, Rakosi is still Hungarian premier, Mints and Berman are still Polish ministers (and, a little earlier, Slansky was still the Secretary General of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Ana Pauker still the virtual dictator of Rumania...) Occasionally, a Jewish scientist or writer still gets the Stalin prize....

But there is nothing new in the fact that persecutors and tormentors of Jews make such individual exceptions. Throughout the Middle Ages, some of the most violent anti-Jewish rulers had their favorite "Court Jews." And almost every modern anti-Semite counts some exceptional "good Jews" among his best friends. The notorious anti-Semitic Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, once answered a reproach that he himself had some business deals with Jews by coining the famous phrase: Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich!

(Who is a Jew is for me to decide.) Even some Nazi leaders had their Jewish protégés whom they cited during the Nuremberg trials as proof of their innocence.

Hitler's insistence that a man of Jewish origin could not "redeem" himself from his racial characteristics has tended to obscure the well-known fact that throughout previous ages anti-Semites often exempted from persecution those Jews who cut all ties with Jewishness and turned against their faith, their traditions and their brothers. Yet Christian anti-Semites who accepted baptized Jews were still anti-Semites. The exemption of converts is quite compatible with anti-Semitism; although experience teaches that the anti-Semites often catch up with the converts too.

The Jews whom the Soviet anti-Semitic drive thus far has spared, not only had cut their ties with Judaism and Jewish communities a long time ago; they were also used as the spearheads of anti-Jewish drives. It was Ilya Ehrenburg who was chosen to initiate the campaign against "Zionism" and "Jewish bourgeois nationalism" which soon grew into a drive against all Jews. The Jew Rakosi and the Jewess Ana Pauker were the first Central European rulers to introduce mass deportations of "alien elements," among them thousands of Jews. Otto Fischl, one of the defendants in the Prague trial, was notorious for mistreating prospective emigrants to Israel. By now, Fischl has been executed and Ana Pauker jailed, but Rakosi and Ehrenburg still serve as instruments of Soviet policies. Does this prove the absence of anti-Semitism any more than the Judenraete and Jewish Kapos proved the absence of anti-Semitism in Nazi ghettos and concentration camps?

crazy  
beaten  
for many  
years  
puffed

3. "THE JEWS ARE NOT PERSECUTED AS JEWS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT CALLED JEWS WHEN PERSECUTED."

To an individual Jew, it makes little difference whether he is deported, jailed, or executed as "Jew" or as "Zionist," "cosmopolitan" or "Jewish bourgeois nationalist." To a Jewish community uprooted and destroyed, it little matters whether the reason officially given was "Jewishness" or "cosmopolitanism."

The history of anti-Semitism shows that use of the word "Jew" is not decisive. Many anti-Semites before and after Hitler avoided this word and used transparent pseudonyms instead. The Yorkville rabble-rouser, Joe McWilliams, spoke about "Eskimos" and John Beaty castigates "Khazars." Anti-Semites frequently say that they "have nothing against the Jews" and are agitating "only" against "Jewish usurers," "Jewish capitalists," "degenerate Jewish intellectuals," or "Jewish internationalists and cosmopolitans, men without country and fatherland." As a matter of fact, it makes little difference whether the word "Jew" is used as a noun or the word "Jewish" is used as an adjective accompanying well-known stereotypes. There is also ample precedent for the practice of using Jewish proper names without adding the unnecessary description, Jew.

It was clear what the Soviet government and the Communist Party were up to when they conducted a violent campaign against "homeless cosmopolitans," "alien wanderers," and "men without country," whose names were quoted as Melnikow-Mehlman, Yakovlev-Holtzman, etc. Especially when the Soviet press stressed that "cosmopolitanism," "bourgeois nationalism"

and "Zionism" were substantially the same thing.

But if there was any doubt, it was resolved by the Prague trial. Not only because eleven of the fourteen defendants were men of Jewish origin, and dozens of other Jews were named as co-conspirators, but also because all these men were opponents of real Zionism and of bona-fide Jewish nationalism, and even of any kind of Jewish solidarity. The words "Zionist," "Jewish nationalist," "cosmopolitan," applied to such faithful Communists as Slansky, Geminder, etc., clearly stood for nothing else than "Jew." To make it clearer, the indictment added the words "of Jewish origin" after the name of each Jewish defendant, an act without precedent in Czechoslovak judicial practice. And in each case, the defendants were forced to link their "crimes" to their Jewish origin and background. The word "Jewish" was used in the trial proceedings several thousand times, mostly, it is true, in adjective form in linkages such as "Jewish nationalist," "Jewish capitalist," etc., but sometimes also in a noun form, for example, when the indictment spoke of Slansky as the "most clever Jew" and the "greatest hope of Jews in the Communist Party."

In the case of the Moscow doctors, even the pretense of "mere anti-Zionism" was dropped. The Jewish doctors who were made to confess murder and treason were not even called Zionists; and the Joint Distribution Committee, charged with hiring them, was described simply as a bourgeois Jewish organization. That this was done in order to instigate "national enmity" and "racial hatred" was subsequently admitted by the Soviet government in official editorials in Pravda and Izvestia. Those who had denied that the Moscow doctors' affair had anything to do with anti-Semitism are now in the position of being contradicted by the Soviet government itself.

4. "THE SOVIETS ARE NOT ANTI-SEMITIC, THEY ARE ONLY ANTI-ZIONIST."

Of course it is possible to be anti-Zionist without being anti-Semitic. But the really crucial point is that not only Zionists, but also non-Zionists and anti-Zionist Jews are being persecuted under the charge of Zionism. Official propaganda and the Communist courts identify not only any kind of Jewish solidarity or Jewish feeling, but mere Jewish origin with Zionism, and Jews of all points of view are described as agents of a world-wide Zionist conspiracy, directed by the statesmen of Israel and the Jewish capitalists of America. If Slansky, Geminder, Fischl, Freund, Ana Pauker were "Zionists," can there be a Jew who is not? If Soviet-Jewish writers, faithful Communists of long standing, are described as homeless cosmopolitans, what Jew is immune from danger?

Nor is outright anti-Semitism under the cover of anti-Zionism at all unusual. In this country, Gerald L.K. Smith, Conde McGinley, Merwin K. Hart and others of that ilk carry on violent anti-Semitic campaigns while professing that they are not anti-Semitic but merely anti-Zionist. These gentlemen delight in uncovering Zionist "plots" which include everyone from the Rosenberg atom spies to Bernard Baruch.

Similarly, when world public opinion was aroused about the atrocities of the Prague trial and Moscow accusations, Communist leaders tried to mask their anti-Jewish drive behind the phrase: We are not persecuting Jews, we are just fighting the Zionist conspiracy. But here too, it is a transparent lie.

5. "THERE IS NO ANTI-SEMITISM BECAUSE SOVIET LEADERS REJECT THE RACIST DOCTRINE."

This is an attempt to narrow down the notion of anti-Semitism in a way which would exclude, "by definition," those anti-Semites who do not subscribe to the "Aryan blood" theory. But Nazi racism was only one of many forms of anti-Semitism. There are many anti-Semites who do not profess such theories. Anti-Semitism existed many centuries before Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Adolf Hitler, and Alfred Rosenberg. There was and is religious, political, and economic anti-Semitism in addition to the racial type.

Definitions of anti-Semitism in some common reference books make this quite clear.

The Webster (Merriam-Webster, Unabridged, Second Edition, 1946) defines anti-Semitism as:

Opposition to, hatred of, or agitation against Jews.

Encyclopedia Britannica (14th edition, 1932) defines anti-Semitism as:

...a religious, political, and social agitation against the Jews.... The extreme section of the anti-Semites declare that it is a racial struggle...*[italics added]*

The Jewish Encyclopedia (1902):

...a modern word expressing antagonism to the political and social equality of the Jews.

The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (1939):

...the movement to degrade Jews to an inferior position in all branches of life in the countries in which they live. Generally, it is applied to individual and group incitation and action aiming to circumscribe the civil, religious and political rights of the Jews; also to hinder normal relations between Jews and non-Jews.

Among the expression of anti-Semitism the Universal Jewish

Encyclopedia enumerates, among others:

Shifting the Blame. The tendency of individuals and groups is to blame others for their own misfortunes, especially when these are the consequences of their own errors. This tendency is the base for the scapegoat technique, employed in times of crisis by nationalist demagogues to inflame the masses against a group or class, which is already the object of a latent prejudice. Coupled with this tendency is the eagerness of the ignorant and the unthinking to accept oversimplified explanations - linked with alleged misdeeds of such unpopular groups - for complex social, political and economic phenomena. To these factors may be traced the charge that Jews poisoned wells at the time of the Black Death, that Jews were responsible for the German defeat in the world war, that all revolutions and wars are manifestations of a world-wide conspiracy of Jews, Catholics or Freemasons, or the result of machinations of international bankers....

Charge of Disloyalty....The fraternal interest of Jews in one country in the welfare of co-religionists in other countries lays the Jews open to the charges of lack of patriotism, divided loyalty, or internationalism as opposed to nationalism....

Conspiracy Allegation....Furthermore, again because of their dispersion, the political or financial activities of Jews in various countries furnish anti-Semites with material upon which to base false charges of international financial or political Jewish conspiracies.

These last three paragraphs are perfect descriptions of what has been happening to the Jews under Soviet domination in recent years. It is true that the Soviet regime does not define Jewry in racial terms. But it certainly considers Jews as a suspect, potentially disloyal group because of their "bourgeois origin," their "alien character," their "cosmopolitan ties," their "divided loyalty." Since totalitarian society believes in the collective guilt of social and ethnic groups, and since suspicion takes the place of proof, the membership in a suspect group makes an individual subject to such "preventive measures of defense" as purge from office, deportation, or internment in a "corrective labor camp."

6. "ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS WERE MISTAKES COMMITTED IN THE LOWER ECHELONS AND ARE NOW BEING CORRECTED BY THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND."

This statement betrays an utter lack of familiarity with the recent trials and a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the Communist regimes. The Prague trial was not only officially prepared and used for anti-Semitic agitation by the Czechoslovak government, it was also concocted with the aid of Russian security organs on orders from the highest Soviet circles. There is evidence that the Czech Communist leaders only reluctantly and rather late in the investigation injected the anti-Semitic charges into the Slansky case.

The case against the Moscow doctors, it is now officially admitted, was prepared by the Ministry of State Security of the Soviet Union. The ensuing campaign against "alien" elements was conducted through all organs of the press, of the Communist Party, and of the Government. Furthermore, as it was evidently aimed at compromising one of the most powerful leaders in Russia, Lavrentii P. Beria, it certainly could not have been launched without the approval of somebody more powerful than Beria. There is enough evidence that Stalin himself initiated this campaign - which then stopped after his death. This proves how futile was the appeal to Stalin to halt the "excesses of lower organs" or of satellite leaders.

After Stalin's death, the Moscow doctors were exonerated. The reason was that their trial, if not prevented, would have compromised Beria, who had now recovered his power. At the same time, the Soviet leaders, confronted with a grave internal crisis of their regime and a

bitter inner struggle, decided to conduct a "peace offensive," and felt that open anti-Semitism would alienate many circles whose cooperation or at least benevolent neutrality they now badly needed.

So the charges against the Moscow doctors were dropped and openly anti-Semitic items disappeared from the Soviet press.

But the charges against Slansky were not reversed. The damage inflicted by the violent anti-Jewish campaign was not repaired. Quite the contrary, the attacks against the world-wide "Zionist conspiracy" in the Czech press are continuing to this day. Czech Foreign Minister ✓ Vaclav David repeated them in the United Nations. Thousands of Jews arrested in connection with the "Zionist plots" remain in jails. The deported Russian, Hungarian, Rumanian Jews are still dying in concentration camps and places of confinement. Demoted Jewish officials were not reinstated; circulars ordering discrimination against Jews in diplomatic and military services and schools have not been rescinded; Jewish schools have not been reopened; Yiddish periodicals and theaters in the Soviet Union remain closed; Jewish religious communities in the satellite countries still cower under the Communist whip. No serious steps have been taken against local anti-Semitic outbursts.

May 22, 1953

**THE**



**AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

386 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y. Cable Address, "WISHCOM, NEW YORK"

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July 2, 1953

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Your communication of June 29th has arrived during Dr. Slawson's absence from the country. On his return early in August, it will be brought to his attention promptly.

Sincerely yours,

*Selma Silverstein*  
Secretary to Dr. Slawson

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
East 105 St. at Ansel Rd.  
Cleveland 6, Ohio

**THE**



**AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

386 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y. Cable Address, "WISHCOM, NEW YORK"

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March 8, 1954

Dear Friend:

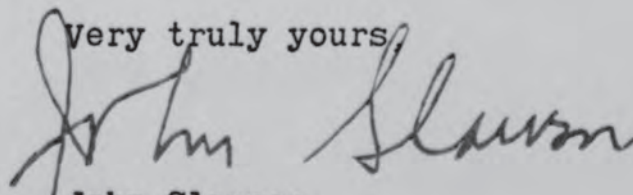
Anti-Semitism in the Soviet empire, which seemed to subside following Stalin's death, still rages throughout the areas under Russian control, although the Communists are attempting to conceal the facts from the outside world. Recent developments in the satellite nations -- the sentencing behind locked doors of Jewish leaders in Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Hungary; the continuing purge of Jews from public life in East Germany -- are only the latest evidences of this Red campaign.

In interpreting the Kremlin's strategy to your readers, you may find helpful the accompanying fact sheet, Anti-Semitism Continues in the Soviet Satellites. Compiled by experts on Central European affairs, this study documents the most recent outrages reported from the Communist sphere and explains why Soviet dictatorships adopt anti-Semitism as a means of retaining power.

The American Jewish Committee keeps a close watch on the unfolding pattern of Communist tyranny. Our Liberty of Jewish Information publishes periodic studies based on interviews with Iron Curtain escapees, analyses of Soviet and satellite publications, and reports from correspondents abroad. Should you desire further information on this topic, we will do our utmost to meet your request.

Tear sheets of any stories utilizing the enclosed material will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

  
John Slawson  
Executive Vice-President

# ANTI-SEMITISM CONTINUES IN SOVIET SATELLITES

## A FACT SHEET

The storm of anti-Semitism which rose to a crescendo throughout the Soviet empire a year ago, and which seemed to subside following Stalin's death, still continues. Although the Communists are trying to conceal the facts from the outside world, it is known that Jewish leaders in Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Hungary have been sentenced behind locked doors, while in East Germany almost every person of Jewish origin has been purged from public life.

Many observers are asking why Communist regimes find it necessary to throttle Jewish life. The answer is revealed in the recently published book, The Jews in the Soviet Satellites (Syracuse University Press). Written by Peter Meyer and other East European authorities, this book describes in detail the step-by-step destruction of Jewish communities in the satellite countries starting from the moment the Reds took control. It analyses the forces behind Communist totalitarianism and explains why Soviet dictatorships adopt anti-Semitism as a means of retaining power.

During the coming year, additional reports of Red persecution of the Jews may be expected to filter through the Iron Curtain. In interpreting these reports to your readers, you may find the following information helpful.

### DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE DEATH OF STALIN

1. False Hopes: When the trumped-up charges against the Moscow Jewish doctors were withdrawn on April 4, 1953, many observers believed the Soviets were shelving anti-Semitism. This view was supported by indications of a new Russian policy of "softness" or conciliation -- less aggression abroad, less repression at home.

2. Disillusionment: As soon as Malenkov had consolidated his control of the party and government, it became apparent that the Communists were not deviating from their traditional policies. Just as they sabotaged the truce talks in Korea and resisted efforts to negotiate German and Austrian peace treaties, they also continued their persecution of the Jews.

3. Beria's Role: Lavrenti P. Beria, former Number Two man of the Soviet High Command, was charged with "criminal, anti-party and anti-State activities," and was held for trial by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court. Though Beria was no less responsible for Red anti-Semitism than were his colleagues, it was he who had quashed the case against the doctors -- a move designed to discredit his enemies and advance his own power within the party. His fall from grace marked the triumph of those who favored a harsh policy toward minority groups. Since his arrest and subsequent execution, several Communist leaders of the various non-Russian Soviet republics have been purged.

4. The Reason for Secrecy: Stalin's blatant anti-Semitism had three foreign-policy objectives: gaining support of neo-Nazis in East Germany; appealing to Arab nationalists in the Middle East; and encouraging the support of anti-American fascistic groups around the world. Universal protests apparently convinced the Kremlin that overt anti-Semitism was bad public relations, especially for a country that had long labored to build the myth of friendship for all minority groups. Halting their "show" trials, the Reds resumed their practice of unpublicized persecution.

5. Evidence of Continuing Red Anti-Semitism: Even after revocation of the charges against the Moscow doctors, the Communist campaign against alleged members of the world-wide "Zionist conspiracy" continued unabated. On April 16, 1953, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Vaclav David repeated all the charges of the Rudolf Slansky

trial before the Political Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York and accused Zionism of being an "espionage and sabotage agency of American imperialism." The Czechoslovak press continued the "anti-Zionist" campaign.

A series of trials against accomplices of Slansky and alleged members of the "Jewish conspiracy" was conducted throughout 1953 and continued in 1954.

On May 26, 1953, four Czechoslovak diplomats stood trial in Prague. Three were Jews: Rudolf Slansky's brother, Richard, and Edvard Goldstucker, former Czechoslovak Minister to Israel, were sentenced to life imprisonment; Pavel Kavan, former official of the Czechoslovak embassy in London received twenty-five years in jail.

On August 7, 1953, Mordechai Oren, a left-wing Mapam member of the Israel parliament, received fifteen years in jail on the usual charges of espionage. Two months later, Simon Orenstein, former commercial attaché of the Israel mission in Prague, was sentenced to forced labor for life. Thirteen diplomatic notes from the Israeli Government protested the arrest of these Israel citizens and asked permission for diplomatic representatives to see them, without avail. Oren and Orenstein were held incommunicado, forced to "confess" and convicted in secret trials.

On January 29, 1954, another Prague trial was conducted against seven alleged accomplices of Slansky. Six were described as "Jewish bourgeois nationalists." They were Jarmila Paussigova, Mikulas Landa (Landau), Bedrich Hajek (Karpeles), Ervin Polak, Vitezslav Fuchs and Hanus Lomsky (Gabriel Lieben). Their original Jewish names were added to their adopted names wherever needed to stress their Jewish identity. The seventh defendant, Mrs. Marie Svermova, was denounced as the mistress of the Jewish "traitor" Otto Sling, one of the men executed in the first Slansky trial. She received a life term; the rest were given sentences ranging from fifteen to twenty-five years.

All of the defendants mentioned above were Communists whose only connection with Jewry was their Jewish origin.

At the same time, authentic former leaders of Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Hungary were arraigned in a series of secret trials. Several hundred such leaders had been held in Communist jails since 1948 and 1949.

In Prague, on August 7, 1953, nine former leaders of Czechoslovak Jews were secretly tried on charges of "treason" and "economic crimes." One was condemned to death and his sentence commuted to forced labor for life; eight others received sentences up to twenty-three years. In December 1953, Erno Osher, a former Zionist leader in Bratislava, was condemned to ten years in prison. Several dozen others, also former Zionists, remained in a Bratislava jail, awaiting trial.

In Rumania, the first secret trial against former Jewish leaders took place in August, 1953. Among other offenses, the defendants were accused of being imperialist agents because they had helped to shelter British parachutists from the Gestapo during the war. The defendant Edgar Kenner, who refused to confess and defended his Zionist convictions, was sentenced to sixteen years at forced labor, while four co-defendants received sentences of ten years and more.

In a second trial, Mrs. Susanne Benvenisti and Jean Littmann, leaders of the Rumanian section of the World Jewish Congress, were accused of having received foreign money for Zionist activities and were sent to jail--the former for ten years, the latter for fifteen.

In Hungary, Judith Steiner, an employee of the Israel legation in Budapest, was sentenced to four years in prison in December, 1953. Of the prominent Hungarian Jews arrested in January, 1953, Lajos Stoeckler, President of the Budapest Jewish community; Leo Csengery, President of the community in Debreczen; Dr. Laszlo Benedek, former director of the Jewish Hospital; and many others, were held incommunicado. Stoeckler and Benedek, generally regarded as pro-Communist, were nevertheless reported to have received heavy prison terms. George Schay, former leader of the Jewish youth organization, Habonim, was sentenced to five years in jail in another secret trial in December, 1953.

## HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET SATELLITES

Under totalitarian rule, any form of cultural diversity is intolerable. In the Soviet satellites, Jews have suffered even more than other minorities for four reasons: their "petty-bourgeois" past; their individualism; their attachment to their own traditions which are incompatible with Communist ideology; and their spiritual ties with Jews the world over.

Two new crimes invented in the Soviet Union became part of the law of the satellites: "bourgeois nationalism" -- defined as adherence to any culture not Russian; and "cosmopolitanism" -- adherence to international ideals. Both are punishable by purge, jail or extermination. Jews, by reason of their very existence, are automatically guilty of both "crimes." With minor variations from country to country, the destruction of Jewish life has followed the pattern below.

### Destruction of Jewish Communities

1. Jewish communal and cultural institutions are first taken over by the Communists and then either liquidated or transformed into sounding boards for Communist propaganda.

2. Zionist organizations are disbanded or forced to dissolve.

3. The offices of foreign Jewish welfare organizations are closed.

4. Domestic Jewish welfare organizations are liquidated, and their property and institutions nationalized.

5. Jewish schools are closed; sometimes a handful are reopened under Communist control as a means of indoctrinating the young.

6. The so-called religious groups permitted to survive are placed under Red domination and used as propaganda agencies.

### Destruction of Jewish Leaders

1. Staunch democratic leaders are eliminated.

2. All leaders of Zionist organizations are purged from positions of influence; many are arrested.

3. Intellectual "cosmopolitans," including a large number of Jews, are purged.

4. Middle class families, always including a high percentage of Jews, are deported to forced labor camps, with death by disease and starvation awaiting them.

5. Finally, even Communists of Jewish origin are purged.

### The Record

#### Czechoslovakia

1945-1948: Repeated anti-Jewish riots occur in Slovakia. Since police tolerate these pogroms, most of the organizers escape punishment.

1945-1948: Restitution laws, providing for return of Nazi-expropriated properties are, in effect, rendered inapplicable to Jews who, in case after case, are disqualified as "Germanizers" or "anti-social elements." In 1948, the Communists revise the restitution laws, barring the remaining claimants, most of whom are Jewish.

February, 1948: Jewish religious communities are taken over by Red action committees.

1950: The Joint Distribution Committee and other relief organizations are banned; local Jewish welfare organizations nationalized.

1950: Jewish emigration is halted; attempts at illegal departure severely punished.

1950-1952: Systematic purge removes almost all Jews from responsible positions.

November, 1952: Rudolph Slansky and thirteen others, eleven of them Jews, are tried as members of a "Trotzkyite-Titoist-Zionist-Pro-American gang of spies and saboteurs." The propaganda-laden trial sets off wave of overt anti-Semitism.

#### Hungary

1945-1947: Post-war pogroms -- some organized by local Communists - are tolerated by the authorities.

1948: Elected leaders of the Jewish communities are removed by government pressure and replaced, through rigged elections, with Communists.

March, 1949: All Zionist organizations are forced to dissolve.

June, 1949: Nine Zionist leaders are arrested and jailed. Mass arrests of Zionists follow.

1951-1952: Many thousands of Jews, along with other middle-class, "unproductive" elements, are deported from cities to relocation centers or slave labor camps in Hungary and the U.S.S.R.

#### Rumania

November, 1947: William Filderman, Chairman of the Union of Rumanian Jews and President of the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities, is forced to flee the country. A few months later the government imposes Communist leadership on the Federation. The Union of Rumanian Jews is disbanded in 1948.

February, 1948: Chief Rabbi Alexander Shafran, forced to flee the country, is replaced by a Communist follower with no rabbinical training.

1948: Sixty-nine Yiddish elementary schools and twenty-three high schools are closed. A year later three are reopened as government propaganda agencies.

1949: Hundreds of Jewish leaders are arrested and held incommunicado, without trial.

March-April, 1949: The offices of Jewish international welfare organizations are closed, their assets seized. Jewish charitable institutions -- hospitals, orphanages and the like -- are nationalized.

October, 1949: Jews born in Bessarabia are deported to slave labor camps in the Soviet Union.

1952: Many thousands of Jews are deported from the cities to remote rural districts or slave labor camps.

Poland

1945-1947: Hundreds killed in anti-Semitic riots tolerated by local authorities.

1946-1948: Jewish political parties and all Zionist organizations are outlawed.

Surviving organizations and institutions are transformed into instruments of Communist propaganda.


Bulgaria

1944: Communist leadership is imposed on Jewish communities.

1948: Jewish schools are nationalized, then abolished. Jewish relief organizations are banned and their welfare institutions nationalized.



The American Jewish Committee  
386 Fourth Avenue  
New York 16, N. Y.

 February, 1954

**THE**



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October 12, 1955

Dear Colleague:

The enclosed statement represents the considered view of the American Jewish Committee in this vital matter of festival observance in the Public Schools. I would be happy to get your reaction to it.

All good wishes and cordial greeting.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer,  
Director  
Interreligious Division

MNK:cc  
enc.

## THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

### DEALING WITH THE CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In recent years, several communities have experienced considerable difficulty with Christmas programs in the schools. While a number of different views on the problem\* have been expressed by Jewish organizations, we believe it might be helpful, nevertheless, to offer a series of suggestions on procedure.

We base our proposals on two major considerations:

- a) That the Christmas observance has been a deeply-imbedded tradition in the public school for many years. Moreover, for many people, the holiday has assumed the aura of a national, as well as a sectarian, event. It is, therefore, unrealistic to expect that the observance can be eliminated from the school program. Those who are determined to achieve that end, however understandable their motives, are likely to embroil the Jewish population in serious conflict with its Christian neighbors. There is a history of such tension situations.
- b) Objections to the program are generally addressed to its Christological and doctrinal aspects. It is, therefore, important to remember that in these respects the Christmas program differs not only from school to school, but from classroom to classroom in any given school. This is true principally because the program is nearly always shaped by

\*The position of the American Jewish Committee is expressed in its Statement of Views on Religion in Public Education.

teachers, and not by the superintendent or the board of education. It is misleading and confusing to treat all Christmas programs alike, and to lump them all under the term "religious holiday observances."

#### First Steps

1. The problem should not be dealt with just before or during the Christmas season. The atmosphere is so charged with emotion at the holiday period that a fair and objective consideration of the issues is almost impossible.

2. A study of current school practices should be undertaken before any community action is considered. Too often, communities have acted on the basis of scant information, with resulting embarrassment. This information should be gathered in a manner that will not incite public controversy before the issue has been joined.

#### Jewish Organizational Consideration

3. Once the necessary information is at hand an intensive discussion of the subject should follow. This will afford the opportunity to consider the several positions adopted by the national Jewish agencies and rabbinical bodies, against a backdrop of the local findings. These discussions should by no means be confined to leadership; they should embrace the rabbinate as well as the memberships of as many Jewish organizations in the community as possible. This process is valuable for several reasons: a) It will disclose any considerable gap which may exist between leadership and membership thinking on the subject; b) if a course of action is adopted, there will be greater understanding and acceptance by the Jewish community; and c) self-appointed spokesmen will then be deterred from attempting to speak for all

Jews in the community, when in fact they are merely voicing their personal convictions.

4. In canvassing community thinking, the possible consequence of any course of action should be fully understood throughout the Jewish community. When community conflict has developed around the Christmas observance, leadership has sometimes found that Jewish support has evaporated, if indeed it was ever there. This unfortunate result undoubtedly can be traced to a failure of leadership to spell out in advance the consequences which may ensue.

Possible Lines of Action

5. If remedial steps are decided on, two alternatives are open.

- a) Representations might be made to the superintendent of schools, or perhaps to one or more of his administrators, either by letter or through personal contact. This step should be approached with the utmost caution, because the school official may feel impelled to bring the matter formally to the attention of the board of education and the issue will then reach the forum of public debate. Some of the most acrimonious community conflicts have resulted from a formal approach to top school officials. Therefore, except in the most unusual circumstances, a school-wide or community-wide approach to the problem is not recommended.
- b) A quiet, year-round program to acquaint the Christian clergy, school personnel and others, with the views held by Jewish organizations on religion in the public schools

might be undertaken, placing the problem of Christmas observances in this larger context. In those communities where this patient educational method has been used, the results have been most effective.

#### The Chanukah or Joint Christmas-Chanukah Program

6. Some Jewish parents press for the introduction of a Chanukah or a joint Christmas-Chanukah program in the schools. For reasons discussed in our Statement of Views, we believe it is inadvisable to recommend either program to teachers or school officials. We are aware of communities where one or both of these programs have been adopted in some schools. Often they have been initiated by well-intentioned teachers who feel they are rendering a service to Jewish youngsters; occasionally they have been suggested by Jewish groups. Where such programs already exist, any attempt to withdraw them may have a negative effect on intergroup relations. Where such programs do not exist, we suggest that no effort be made to introduce them.

7. What of the teacher who asks for some "good material" or the personal assistance of a parent in developing a Chanukah or joint Christmas-Chanukah program? We believe the teacher should be familiarized with the points of view of Jewish groups in the community, and urged not to introduce either program if, in fact, that represents community thinking. There will be instances, however, when it would seem wise to comply with the request. The American Jewish Committee has not made it a practice to prepare program aids of this kind, but we can provide available materials, on request.

#### If Community Conflict Develops

8. If community tensions should develop, we know of no ready solution.

Experience has shown that public statements, however eloquently phrased, are likely to have little or no quieting effect. In the course of these emotional community outbursts it is very difficult to counter irrational fears and unfounded rumors. But there are steps that can and should be undertaken with all possible speed. The first is to assure that Jewish organizations and their members will themselves act in disciplined fashion. The next is to devise an organized but unpublicized approach to every facet of public opinion in your community - the clergy, school administrators, city officials, civic and communal leaders, press and radio. If, as is usually the case, these tensions have developed during the holiday season, the discussion of these issues should be deferred until after the holiday, when a more reasoned and objective consideration may be possible.

#### In Defense of Personal Convictions

9. Regardless of all other considerations, and whatever else may be done, the right of any child to abstain from participating in any holiday observance in the schools, on grounds of conscience, must be defended. All Jewish organizations must help preserve this right, with or without support from other community groups although, obviously, such support would be preferable. Certainly, no child should be made to feel embarrassed or unwelcome in a public school classroom.

#### Counselling with the National Agencies

10. Finally, it is urgently suggested that Jewish communities faced with this vexing problem consult with rabbinical bodies and the Jewish national organizations which have had long experience in this area. The American Jewish Committee stands ready to assist in your deliberations.

10/6/55



## THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. • Plaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New York

. 202 Hayarkon, Apt. 7, Tel Aviv  
. Telephone: 22-4088

. April 5, 1963

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
19810 Shaker Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

Upon the suggestion of Knesset Member S. Z. Abramov, I have the great pleasure of sending to you the four issues published todate of our Hebrew magazine, AMMOT, which is sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and a group of private Israeli citizens.

We would be pleased to include your name among our honorary subscribers and send you forthcoming issues. Would you please be so kind as to let us know to which address you would like us to send the magazine in the future.

I am sorry to have missed the opportunity of meeting you while you were in Israel and I hope I may soon have the privilege of doing so. I would have liked to have acquainted you with the program of the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Maximo Yagupsky  
Director, Israel Office

# 56

th Annual Meeting • May 16-19, 1963 • Hotel Commodore, New York City

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**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y.

June 5, 1963

The Honorable Mr. Anatoli G. Myshkov  
First Secretary  
Embassy of the U.S.S.R.  
1125 - 16 St. N.W.  
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Mr. Myshkov:

In your letter of April 10, replying to a communication from Rabbi Robert P. Jacobs, you sent him two documents. One was a letter from Chairman Khrushchev to Bertrand Russell. The other was an article by the Soviet Yiddish writer, Avrom Gontar. You expressed your belief that these would satisfactorily explain the position of Soviet Jews as altogether satisfactory. Rabbi Jacobs transmitted this letter and the enclosures to me for my comment.

These documents have not allayed my apprehensions. I shall go into great detail because my views are shared by the American-Jewish community and reflect their concern about their fellow Jews in your country. We would be very happy to acknowledge all favorable developments in the U.S.S.R. if and when they occur.

I take up the statements in Mr. Gontar's article in which he presents his case.

**I. Participation of Jews in Education.**

The fact that a number of brilliant individual Jews occupy leading positions in certain aspects of public life is naturally all to the good. But this says nothing about the large

majority who are not as gifted as those named by Mr. Gontar.

Mr. Gontar states that Soviet Jews rank third, after the Russians and Ukrainians, in the number of students. He does not say what kind of students, in what kind of institutions - so I am at a loss to evaluate the significance of that statement.

However, it is known that Jews constitute 3.1 per cent of all students in higher education. This figure, along with the vague general figures given by Mr. Gontar, is frequently used to convey the impression that Jews represent an extraordinarily high proportion of students in Soviet universities. But according to Soviet definitions, the term "higher education" includes categories other than universities. It includes music conservatories, institutes for the study of mechanics and pedagogics, etc. There is much evidence to show that it has become far more difficult for Jewish students to enter universities other than these.

But even if we take that statistic of 3.1 per cent at its face value and without analysis, I note the sharp contrast between it and the fact that in 1935 Jews represented 13.5 per cent of all students in higher education. During this 28-year period, the Jewish proportion of the total population decreased only from 1.6 to 1.09 per cent.

How can you explain the fact that the Jews, with their traditional attraction to education, should suffer so drastic a decline in this short period - especially in a country with an expanding economy and correspondingly growing opportunities?

## II. Participation of Jews in the Professions.

Even though the absolute number of Jews in the professions has increased, the relative proportion of Jews in the professions has actually decreased. Thus, Mr. Gontar conveys a misleading impression when, for example, he states that 15 per cent of Soviet doctors are Jews - for he omits to say that some years ago a much higher proportion of Soviet doctors were Jews. Such an omission does not do justice to the facts.

Let me illustrate. Since 1955, for example, the number of Russians and Ukrainians in scientific and technical occupations has increased by 40 per cent, while that of the Jews has increased by only 25 per cent. Thus, in 1955, Jews constituted 11 per cent of Soviet scientists and technicians, but by 1960 their proportion had decreased to 9.8 per cent. (These figures, by the way, are all derived from official Soviet statistical books.)

This decline has been corroborated in recent years by such figures as Chairman Khrushchev himself, as well as by Madame Ekaterina Furtseva, Mr. Leonid Ilyichev, Mr. Mikhail Pervukhin and others.

Once again, therefore, I ask you how you explain this decline among a people who always had a traditional affinity for the learned professions?

### III. Participation of Jews in Political Life.

Mr. Gontar mentions that more than 7,500 Jews were elected deputies of local government bodies. This figure, too, is misleading.

Considerably more than 1,800,000 such local deputies were elected. The Jewish proportion amounts to less than one-half of one percent, several times less than their proportion in the population. Therefore it is misleading to give the figure of 7,500 - without indicating the infinitesimal proportion it represents.

I should also like to call your attention to additional relevant information on the March 3, 1963 elections to the municipal soviets in Moscow, Odessa and Riga - information published recently in Soviet newspapers: Of 1,100 deputies elected in Moscow, only five appear to be Jews. This amounts to 9.45 per cent - less than one-half of one per cent. But the Jewish population of Moscow has been reliably estimated at as high as 10 per cent.

In Odessa, only five of the newly elected 475 municipal deputies are Jews. This amounts to 1.05 per cent - in a city where the Jews constitute approximately 30 per cent of the population.

As for Riga, of the 370 new municipal deputies only four are Jews. This amounts to 1.08 per cent - in a city where the Jews constitute about five per cent of the population.

Mr. Gontar also writes misleadingly about Jewish representation in the Supreme Soviets of the various Union Republics. In all cases but one, the Jewish proportion in these bodies is far below their proportion in the population of each republic, especially of the three where the bulk of the Jews live - RSFSR, the Ukraine and Bielorussia.

In the RSFSR, they are 0.7 per cent of the population, but only 0.1 per cent in the Supreme Soviet. In Bielorussia, they are 1.9 per cent of the population, but only 0.45 per cent in the Supreme Soviet. In the Ukraine, they are 2.0 per cent of the population, but only 0.22 per cent in the Supreme Soviet. In Moldavia and Latvia, where Jews constitute 3.3 and 1.7 per cent of the respective populations, there are no Jews at all in the Supreme Soviets. All these statistics reflect an unnaturally low disproportion of Jewish participation in political life. They refute Mr. Gontar's claim that Jews "take an active part in management of the state."

#### IV. Jewish Cultural Rights.

Mr. Gontar is clearly trying to give the impression that Jewish cultural aspirations are fully met in the U.S.S.R. Now it is very understandable that, not having a special interest in or knowledge of Jewish culture, you are perhaps in no position to know how misleading and inaccurate Mr. Gontar's statements are. I trust you will welcome the opportunity to correct the distortions presented by Mr. Gontar. Mr. Gontar properly notes that over 470,000 Soviet Jews, according to the 1959 census, consider Yiddish to be their native tongue. He proceeds to state that Sovietish Heimland "is published specially for those who speak it".

Now, let me apprise you of a fact you may not know: hundreds, even thousands, of copies of each issue of this bimonthly make their way to readers in many foreign countries such as Poland, France, Canada, Latin America, Israel and the United States. An ample supply can always readily be found in all of these countries.

How many copies, therefore, are available for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who wish to read a Yiddish journal inside the U.S.S.R.? But let us assume that not even one copy is ever sent abroad. Even in that case, how can Mr. Gontar fairly say that 25,000 copies supply the need of the 472,000 who consider Yiddish their native language? To say, as he does, that Sovietish Heimland "has a larger circulation than any other literary Jewish magazine in the world" is quite misleading. I hope you will not rely on this statement, for it can only lead you into a cul-de-sac. For whoever makes such a contrast forces the informed reader to recall facts which Mr. Gontar either does not know, or has forgotten, or has chosen to ignore.

Against this lone Jewish-language magazine for Soviet Jews - there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly magazines and papers in all other Jewish communities throughout the world. They are published and read in the millions of copies.

To compare the circulation of this only available periodical with that of these thousands of Jewish publications elsewhere is rather irrelevant. The point is that there exist many different Jewish publications which cater to different tastes and different kinds of audiences in other parts of the world - and the same was once true in the Soviet Union. These different publications in other countries appear not only in Yiddish, but also in Hebrew (in Israel, the United States), in English (in the United States, England, Canada, Israel, Australia), in Portuguese (Brazil), in Spanish (throughout Latin and Central America), in French (in France and Canada).

The appearance of many Jewish publications in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese is obviously accounted for by the fact that large numbers of Jews in those countries speak and read the language of those countries. I daresay the same thing might be said of many Jews in the U.S.S.R., who may primarily or exclusively speak and read Russian or some other Soviet language. But I fail to note in Mr. Gontar's article any reference to the existence of a Jewish publication in Russian or any other Soviet language. How do you account for that?

I presume that, when Mr. Gontar cites the very large figures for the publication of Jewish books in translation

into "32 languages spoken by Soviet peoples," he means to suggest that such books are popular not only among those 32 peoples - but also among the Jews who speak and read one of those 32 languages. If so, why is there not a single Jewish publication for Jews as such in any one of those 32 languages? Just as many American Jews express their interest and involvement in Jewish culture and life in the English language, I am certain that there are many Soviet Jews who would wish to do similarly in Russian or Ukrainian or some other Soviet language.

How do you account for the fact that there is no official support for such a program in the U.S.S.R. - similar to the kind of official support that is given to publications of magazines, newspapers and books in the languages of many other Soviet nationalities who are much smaller in number than the Jews and who do not have as ancient a tradition of association with the printed word?

I should also note that, for many Jews in every other country in the world, Hebrew is becoming not merely a language of prayer in the synagogue, but a language which they are learning to speak and read in a purely secular way - for example, to read contemporary Hebrew literature published not only in Israel but in other countries.

I find it hard to believe that in the Soviet Union - where modern Hebrew was first developed by such great writers as the novelist Mendele (who pioneered in Hebrew as well as in Yiddish) and the poet Bialik - there are not many Jews who would welcome the opportunity to publish and read a Hebrew periodical. I feel certain that if they were given official support, they would be encouraged to undertake such a project. Why is there no official sanction for such a project?

Mr. Genter states that "over 100 authors" write in Yiddish in the U.S.S.R. This is a most encouraging fact. It unmistakably demonstrates that they have both a social-literary background and an audience. Yet how do you account for the fact that not one of them has had any book of his published in Yiddish for a decade and a half? If they write in Yiddish for a Yiddish magazine and for a Yiddish-reading audience, how is it that not one novel, not one volume of short stories or essays or poetry of theirs has ever appeared in the language in which they write?

Mr. Gontar writes that "Jewish classics are published in very big editions". But he neglects to say that only three such classics - Mendele, Sholem Aleichem and Peretz - have been published. And in each case, the Yiddish editions were only slim volumes containing but a small proportion of their total output and of their major works. These three, however, ended their careers before the October Revolution. What about the scores and hundreds of writers who wrote and were published in Yiddish during the decades of Soviet rule? They were exceedingly popular in Yiddish as well as in translation. What has happened to their works?

Mr. Gontar mentions only one, Leib Kvitko, and he notes that the total print of his books "exceeded five million in 1956-62". Mr. Gontar, however, fails to note that not one of those five million copies appeared in the language in which Kvitko wrote.

And what of the works of other great Soviet Jewish writers - such as Peretz Markish, Itzik Feffer, Der Nister, David Hofshteyn, Isi Kharik, I. Dobrushin and many others - who wrote and were published in Yiddish in your country until 1948? Why has not one volume of their work appeared since then in the language in which they wrote? And why did not Mr. Gontar mention these facts? You may tell me that their books have not been published in Yiddish because there are not enough people interested to read such works in Yiddish. But if there is an audience to justify the publication of 25,000 copies of Sovietish Heimland, and of 30,000 copies of the three classics - would there not be a similar audience for the works of these great and once-popular Soviet Yiddish writers?

Mr. Gontar fails to mention the gross discrepancies between book and newspaper publications in the native language for the Jews and for many small and backward nationalities. In 1959 and 1960 - when a grand total of 6 books, all by authors long since dead, were published in Yiddish - more than 600 books were published in their native languages for such peoples as the Yakuts and the Bashkirs. In 1961 and since then, no Yiddish books have been published. But in that period, again, many hundreds of books were published in Yakut and Bashkir. Scores of newspapers in their native languages are published by such tiny peoples as the Avars, Ossetians, Komis, Maris and Yakuts - and their circulations amount to the many scores of thousands.

But there is only one Yiddish newspaper. It appears only three times a week in far-off Birobidjan; it contains mostly local news of no interest to the vast majority of Soviet Jews who live in other parts of the U.S.S.R.; and it has a total circulation of 1,000.

When you consider that the Jews have immemorially been considered the "People of the Book," that they have had a tradition of reading and study for thousands of years - how can you account for all these gross discrepancies? I am most deeply troubled, as are Jews throughout the world, about the total absence of any facilities by which Soviet Jews might transmit, in any language, the ancient and rich Jewish cultural heritage to their children. There are no institutions in which young Jews may learn something of their traditional languages and of the great literatures created in those languages during thousands of years.

There is no school, no classroom, no textbooks - not even in the Russian language - through which Jews may acquire a proper knowledge and understanding of their history and culture, and the decent self-respect and pride that go along with such knowledge and understanding.

All other nationalities and ethnic groups - no matter how small or dispersed they are - have such facilities and opportunities, and are officially encouraged to be proud of their language, culture and history. Why not also the Jews? None of these things is mentioned by Mr. Gontar. But I submit that all of these deprivations flagrantly violate the letter and the spirit of Soviet principles. I submit that they amount to national and cultural discrimination - and I invite your comments.

#### V. Jewish Religious Rights.

You can understand that, as a rabbi, I am deeply concerned that the Jewish religion should enjoy equal prerogatives with all other religions in the U.S.S.R. Mr. Gontar asserts that this is indeed the case. But a closer look at the facts indicates that he has misled his readers, yourself perhaps included. Since you have taken

an interest in this question and evidently base your own views on Mr. Gontar's statements, allow me to set the record straight - so that you may not continue to labor under the misapprehensions which he has circulated. In a variety of fundamental ways, Judaism does not have the rights possessed by the other major religions in your country. Jewish congregations are not permitted to maintain nation-wide federations or central organizations of synagogues and rabbis. No Hebrew Bible, nor a Russian translation of the Old Testament, has been published by or for the Jews since 1917. There is an extreme shortage of prayer books and religious calendars. Special prayer books for the major holy days are not permitted to be published. The production of such indispensable religious articles as prayer shawls, phylacteries and shofars is prohibited.

The lone rabbinical seminary has, since its inception in 1957, graduated only two rabbis - neither of whom functions as a synagogue leader, thus depriving congregations of desperately needed fresh religious leadership to replace the aged rabbis who now serve them. For a year now, there have been only four students in that seminary. Mr. Gontar states that the number of believers is gradually diminishing. But there are still scores and hundreds of thousands of Jewish believers in the U.S.S.R. - surely enough to supply more than four lonely students in a seminary.

Jewish congregations and rabbis are not permitted to exchange formal delegations with their coreligionists abroad. Jewish congregations and rabbis are forbidden to enjoy any formal association with Jewish ecclesiastical bodies abroad. Pious Jews have never been allowed or encouraged to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jewish religion. Jews have been deprived of all but the most miniscule opportunity to provide themselves with matzah, which is indispensable for the proper observance of the major religious holiday of Passover. Propaganda in the Soviet press against Judaism assumes proportions that can only be described as defamatory. I attach herewith one such recent and typical article - and I can assure you that if such an article appeared in a major newspaper in my city of New York, all Jews would resent it as anti-Semitic, and

all right-thinking people would publicly condemn it.

I submit that all these deprivations amount to a far-reaching manifestation of discrimination against the Jewish religion. It presents a depressing picture that causes pain and apprehension among Jews all over the world.

Now permit me a few words about Chairman Khrushchev's letter to Bertrand Russell. Mr. Khrushchev denies that there is anything anti-Jewish in the campaign against economic offenses in the U.S.S.R. His denial is surely welcome, as is the fact that the exchange of letters was published in Izvestia. But that denial is unfortunately insufficient in itself to lay at rest the grave apprehensions felt by Jews. Mr. Khrushchev asserts that it is not only Jews who were sentenced to death for such offenses. This is of course true. But the fact is that of some 141 death sentences reported in the Soviet press in the last two years, about 83 or 84 have been Jews - about 60 per cent. In view of the fact that the Jews constitute little more than one per cent of the total population, this can only mean that the proportion of Jewish criminals is fantastically high in the U.S.S.R. - that there is some kind of Jewish affinity for crime in your country.

Is this what you would say? If so, it flies in the face of everything known about the social behavior of Jews in every other civilized country of the world - where the Jewish proportion of criminality is one of the lowest, if not actually the very lowest of all other ethnic or religious groups. Is there something uniquely criminal about Soviet Jews? I cannot believe it. I can only conclude from these startling figures that Jews are being singled out for special treatment in this campaign.

This conclusion - which is sadly shared by the vast majority of Jews throughout the world - is only bolstered by an examination of the press articles which are a major facet of the campaign against economic offenses. For in this campaign, Jews are portrayed in the ugliest of traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes. This in turn can only serve to perpetuate endemic anti-Semitic feelings which Mr. Khrushchev himself has said still exist among some elements of the Soviet

population - or to implant them where they do not exist. Would it not be appropriate, to substitute for such stereotypes, a major educational campaign in the press to combat the even of anti-Semitism? Let me assure you that Jews as such have only the friendliest of feelings for the people of the Soviet Union. As the first and most devastated victims of Nazi brutality in the 1930s and during the war, Jews have only the greatest sympathy and understanding for the suffering of the Soviet masses during that same period. But I hope you can understand no less that, precisely because of that unique Jewish experience and tragedy, Jews are especially sensitive to signs of discrimination in the U.S.S.R.

Jews are greatly alarmed by the evidence of discriminatory policies against Jews and Judaism and Jewish culture in the U.S.S.R. Nothing would make us happier than to witness a change in those policies.

Sincerely yours,

RABBI S. ANDHIL PINEBERG, D.D., Ph.D.

SAF:aw



## THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. • PLaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New York

June 7, 1963

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
Tifereth Israel  
University Circle & Silver Park  
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Abba:

I greatly enjoyed the hour spent in your study. Herewith are three items related to that conversation which I believe will interest you.

The first is an article that appeared in the New York Times a few days ago.

The second is an article from a Chicago newspaper which I reprinted in January.

The third is a letter I sent yesterday to the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Washington. I am confident that this letter is thoroughly cordial, kindly and not at all abrasive.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

DR. S. ANDHIL FINEBERG

SAF:aw

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# Soviet Appears More Sensitive to World Opinion

By SEYMOUR TOPPING

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, June 4—The Soviet leadership seems to have become more sensitive to world public opinion than in the past.

Western analysts recently have noted that in some instances foreign reactions have exerted a moderating influence in domestic affairs.

In the last few months the Kremlin has responded to criticism abroad by modifying some of its attitudes toward its intellectuals, and alleviating the plight of Soviet Jews.

When the leadership feels that vital national or Communist interests are at stake, world opinion has not apparently weighed decisively in policy-making. This was evident in the Soviet termination in August, 1961, of the voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing, and the emplacement of nuclear missiles in Cuba last year.

However, in general policy matters world opinion seems to have become a more important influence as the Kremlin has come to rely increasingly on propaganda persuasion as a weapon in the struggle to dominate the world.

The Soviet Union has undertaken an intensive propaganda effort in the contest between East and West to attract the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Moscow jealously guards the image it has sought to project of the Soviet Union as the best friend of these peoples. When any conflicting impression appears, such as was created by reports of discrimination against African students in the Soviet Union, Soviet propaganda media react strongly.

The Soviet competition with Communist China for the ideological leadership of the international Communist movement also has sharpened Soviet sensitivity to foreign opinion. Communist parties and left-wing movements, which Stalin manipulated as he pleased, are now courted assiduously.

The adverse reaction abroad to the severe ideological restrictions imposed earlier this year on Soviet writers and artists has had obvious effects. Some Soviet intellectuals have said privately that they believed the measures adopted were made less Draconian in practice because of foreign criticism.

The problems of the writers and the artists were reported abroad in considerable detail by Western newsmen stationed in Moscow. Their reporting on this and other controversial subjects was made possible because of the abolition in 1961 of prepublication censorship.

Criticism of the new Soviet policy for art and literature was voiced not only in the non-

Communist world but also within countries of the Soviet bloc. Possibly the most effective objections came from the leaders of the Italian and French Communist parties.

Aleksandr T. Tvardovsky, editor of the Soviet literary journal *Novy Mir* and leader of the Soviet liberal writers, left last week for a tour of Italy. His trip was viewed as an effort to mollify critics there.

The defensive attitude of the Soviet party toward foreign rebukes of its cultural policy also was displayed at a news conference for foreign journalists called last month by Sergei P. Pavlov, first secretary of the Young Communist League.

Mr. Pavlov denied allegations that Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the young liberal poet, was being persecuted. He insisted that it was Yevtushenko who was refusing to cooperate with his official publishers.

Soviet leaders and the press have been stung by criticism abroad into denying that anti-Semitism exists in the Soviet Union. Previously the subject was taboo here.

The change in policy resulted from foreign complaints about the high percentage of Jews among those accused publicly of economic crimes such as speculation. A Jewish survey has estimated that about 60 per cent of

those executed for these crimes had been Jews.

The outcry abroad came to a climax last February when Bertrand Russell, the 90-year-old British philosopher, who has espoused a number of Soviet causes, took up the position with Premier Khrushchev. When the Soviet leader retorted with a denial that the problem existed, the question became an active issue in the Soviet press. It was dealt with again last week by *Izvestia*, the Government newspaper.

Observers here doubt that the fundamental position of the Jews in the Soviet Union has been improved. However, Premier Khrushchev's statements and articles in the provincial press were believed to have inhibited local manifestations of anti-Semitism.

Other evidence of increased Soviet sensitivity to world opinion is seen in the increasing preoccupation of the Soviet press with replying to specific critical comments abroad concerning Soviet life and official policies.

These rebuttals, which frequently are directed at some foreign newspaper or magazine, appear to be published primarily for consumption abroad. Most Russians learn of foreign criticism when they read the rebuttals.

# Nikita On Guard In Jewish Dispute

By Edward Crankshaw

London Observer Special

LONDON—The position of Jewry in the Soviet Union continues to worry Prime Minister Nikita S. Khrushchev—and the Jews.

Reliable reports from Moscow said the publicized meeting of Soviet writers, artists and musicians with high government leaders, including Khrushchev, on Dec. 17, was largely taken up with a bitter argument on and around anti-Semitism.

None of this was published in the official versions of the speeches at that meeting because the Soviet government has been advised by certain satellite leaders that the latest drive against Soviet Jewry — the arrests of rabbis and Jewish leaders on currency offenses, the steady closing of synagogues, has been creating a poor impression in the outside world.

## Nikita's Position

Khrushchev was uneasily half-defensive, half-aggressive. There was no more anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, he said, because "the nationalities question had been solved." There was only "individual anti-Semitism."

Nevertheless, he said it was

better for Jews not to hold top positions in the government because this only provoked popular resentment.

The occasion for these remarks seems to have been the attack by Leonid F. Ilyichev, chief Soviet propagandist, on the world-famed composer Dimitri Shostakovich for using Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem about the Nazi massacre of the Kiev Jews at Babi Yar as the text for his new symphony.

They produced so much consternation, that afterward Khrushchev moved to prop up Ilya Ehrenburg. One of the most prominent Soviet novelists, Ehrenburg (of the Jewish faith) had also been violently attacked by another speaker, and Khrushchev assured him his words were not directed at him personally.

"You must understand that as a professional politician I have to take things as I find them and warn against dangers," he said.

## Sustained Attack

These words do not ring true in view of the sustained attack, increasing all through 1962, on Jewish culture and Jewish religious observances.

At least 10 important centers of Jewish population have had their synagogues closed in recent months, making a total of at least 60 since 1959. More than 60 per cent of the published total of all those persons shot for "speculation" and other similar activities have been Jews and in some of the trials synagogues were described as the meeting place for "crooks and speculators."