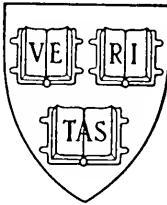


**HARVARD COLLEGE  
LIBRARY**



**GIFT OF THE  
GOVERNMENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES**









# ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

---

---

## HEARINGS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETIETH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

---

JUNE 19, 1968  
(INCLUDING INDEX)

---

Printed for the use of the  
Committee on Internal Security



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

27-407 O

WASHINGTON : 1969

## COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
(90th Congress, 2d Session)

EDWIN E. WILLIS, Louisiana, *Chairman*

WILLIAM M. TUCK, Virginia

JOHN M. ASHBROOK, Ohio

JOE R. POOL, Texas

DEL CLAWSON, California

RICHARD H. ICHORD, Missouri

RICHARD L. ROUDEBUSH, Indiana

JOHN C. CULVER, Iowa

ALBERT W. WATSON, South Carolina

FRANCIS J. McNAMARA, *Director*

CHESTER D. SMITH, *General Counsel*

ALFRED M. NITTLE, *Counsel*

---

## COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL SECURITY

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
(91st Congress, 1st Session)

RICHARD H. ICHORD, Missouri, *Chairman*

CLAUDE PEPPER, Florida

JOHN M. ASHBROOK, Ohio

EDWIN W. EDWARDS, Louisiana

RICHARD L. ROUDEBUSH, Indiana

RICHARDSON PREYER, North Carolina

ALBERT W. WATSON, South Carolina

LOUIS STOKES, Ohio

WILLIAM J. SCHERLE, Iowa

DONALD G. SANDERS, *Chief Counsel*

GLENN DAVIS, *Editorial Director*

ALFRED M. NITTLE, *Counsel*



# CONTENTS

---

	Page
Synopsis -----	2197
June 19, 1968 :	
Statement of Meir Kahane -----	2202
Testimony of Harry Bronstein -----	2206
Statement of Meir Kahane (resumed) -----	2220
Index -----	i

The House Committee on Un-American Activities is a standing committee of the House of Representatives, constituted as such by the rules of the House, adopted pursuant to Article I, section 5, of the Constitution of the United States which authorizes the House to determine the rules of its proceedings.

## RULES ADOPTED BY THE 90TH CONGRESS

House Resolution 7, January 10, 1967, as amended April 3, 1968, by House Resolution 1099

### RESOLUTION

*Resolved*, That the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-ninth Congress, together with all applicable provisions of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended, be, and they are hereby, adopted as the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Ninetieth Congress \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

### RULE X

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

1. There shall be elected by the House, at the commencement of each Congress,

\* \* \* \* \*

(s) Committee on Un-American Activities, to consist of nine Members.

\* \* \* \* \*

### RULE XI

#### POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

\* \* \* \* \*

19. Committee on Un-American Activities.

(a) Un-American activities.

(b) The Committee on Un-American Activities, as a whole or by subcommittee, is authorized to make from time to time investigations of (1) the extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution, and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.

The Committee on Un-American Activities shall report to the House (or to the Clerk of the House if the House is not in session) the results of any such investigation, together with such recommendations as it deems advisable.

For the purpose of any such investigation, the Committee on Un-American Activities, or any subcommittee thereof, is authorized to sit and act at such times and places within the United States, whether or not the House is sitting, has recessed, or has adjourned, to hold such hearings, to require the attendance of such witnesses and the production of such books, papers, and documents, and to take such testimony, as it deems necessary. Subpenas may be issued under the signature of the chairman of the committee or any subcommittee, or by any member designated by any such chairman, and may be served by any person designated by any such chairman or member.

\* \* \* \* \*

25. To assist the House in appraising the administration of the laws and in developing such amendments or related legislation as it may deem necessary, each standing committee of the House shall exercise continuous watchfulness of the execution by the administrative agencies concerned of any laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of such committee; and, for that purpose, shall study all pertinent reports and data submitted to the House by the agencies in the executive branch of the Government.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SYNOPSIS

A subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities held public hearings in Washington, D.C., on June 19, 1965, to receive the testimony of Rabbis Meir Kahane and Harry Bronstein.

The hearings were held pursuant to a committee resolution which authorized hearings relating to—

the extent and character of Communist propaganda and conspiratorial techniques employed within the United States to promote the objectives of the Communist Party in the United States and to advance the purposes of the world Communist movement by the dissemination of false and misleading information concerning Communist doctrine and practices in regard to religion and ethnic and minority groups \* \* \*.

Rabbi Kahane, the first witness, identified himself as a writer and editor for the *Jewish Press*, which he described as "the largest Anglo-Jewish newspaper in the country." The rabbi said he is one of the founders of "a group called the Jewish Defense League, which is currently being organized to defend Jewish people against anti-Semitism and to defend this country against various extremist groups such as the Communists and the black nationalists, functioning at the present time."

Rabbi Kahane testified that for a period of about 15 years he had made a study of communism and Soviet anti-Semitism. The rabbi stated that, prior to 1917, Russia was the "heartland of the Jewish faith—seminaries, synagogues. This was what one could truly say was the flower of the Jewish people." "When the Soviets took over," he said, "there began an immediate campaign to do away with this." State-controlled institutions for Jews were established to replace the truly Jewish institutions. The rabbi said these institutions—

were created for the very purpose of doing away with the idea of Judaism. \* \* \* No Jewish child was allowed to study his faith, either in the government school, the public school, or in the privacy of his own home.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the same time, he is exposed to compulsory atheistic education in the schools. It is quite obvious that this is an unequal battle, an unfair battle, and this is a destruction of the Jewish soul.

According to Rabbi Kahane, "The Communists did a very, very thorough job. Within a decade, the greatness that had been Russian Judaism had been destroyed." He continued:

Jewish ritual is banned; synagogues have been closed. One seminary, one small token which Khrushchev opened up again as part of this great myth, is closed. The youngest student at any time was 40 years old, and at no point were there more than 13 students.

At this point Rabbi Kahane's testimony was interrupted so that Rabbi Bronstein might be heard by the committee. Rabbi Bronstein furnished the following information: He was born in Wyszkow, Poland, in May 1911. At the end of 1933 he left Poland and emigrated to Canada. In 1940 he came to the United States and subsequently

acquired citizenship. He is vice president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America and is president of *Al Tidom*, an organization whose purpose is "to aid Soviet Jews in their quest for religious, cultural, and informative material." He said he has made nine trips to the Soviet Union and to Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The first trip was in 1958, the last in 1967. The purpose of his travels was to train young men in the Jewish ritual of circumcision—a ritual of great significance to the Jews, but forbidden in the Soviet Union—and to strengthen the faith of his people.

Rabbi Bronstein stated Jews in the Soviet Union were being persecuted and oppressed. He asserted that "If the Soviet Union would open its doors today for an exodus, I can assure you a quarter of a million Jews would leave on foot \* \* \*." He said students could not go to the synagogue because they were in school, and the working men could not go because of the 6-day work week. This is the reason, according to Rabbi Bronstein, that tourists in the Soviet Union see only old people in the synagogue. Nevertheless, "Despite all the propaganda and brainwashing, Jewish children today are seeking religion," and, he continued, "religion is a tremendous weapon against communism." As evidence of the persistence of Judaism, he cited the example of 30,000 young men and women gathering in front of the central synagogue on a Jewish holiday to dance, sing, and pray.

The witness urged that communication media such as the Voice of America or Radio Liberty be utilized to disseminate religious information which the Jews in Russia and satellite countries have been denied, as well as information on religious freedom in the United States.

He said recent propaganda which declares communism compatible with religion is "the greatest lie." He cited examples to show the Soviets are becoming "more aggressive" against religion. "The Soviet Union today is one great prison, and they [Jews] are prisoners in that prison." The Jewish people have been denied the ritual of circumcision, a cemetery in Moscow, the Hebrew alphabet, prayer books, Jewish calendars in order to recognize the holidays, the talis, and matzoth. They have also been denied their own Yiddish-language newspapers and theaters.

On his latest trip to the Soviet Union, Rabbi Bronstein twice encountered the KGB.<sup>1</sup> On the first occasion he was detained and interrogated for 2½ hours. He was told his visa was not good for travel to a city he had visited and he was fined 50 rubles. The second incident occurred as he was preparing to depart from Kiev airport. He was picked up by three KGB agents, taken to a room, and interrogated. The KGB had a dossier on him "which weighed over a kilo, with pictures and statements and letters from Russian citizens," stating his purpose in the Soviet Union was not just as a mere tourist, but that he had come to organize an illegal exodus of Russian Jews. They also accused him of "taking illegal pictures from concentration camps and prisons, which was not true." The KGB confronted Rabbi Bronstein with a list of the names of persons he had met during his nine visits to the Soviet Union. According to the rabbi, the fact most of the people

<sup>1</sup> *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*—Committee for State Security (Soviet secret police).

he had met during his visits had actually managed to leave the Soviet Union constituted proof to the KGB that he had come to organize an illegal exodus. According to the witness, the Soviets knew everything about him, not only his activity in the Soviet Union, but in the United States as well. He stated the Soviets "must have good sources of information in the United States."

The rabbi testified, "Tens of thousands of Jews have applied for exit permits to leave the Soviet Union, although the Soviet Union does deny this, but we know better." He said that the people he had talked with were anxious to leave the Soviet Union—he did not persuade them to go.

Rabbi Bronstein informed the committee he has been declared *persona non grata* by the Soviet Union.

Rabbi Kahane, resuming his testimony, furnished details about 50 years of Jewish persecution at the hands of the Communists in the Soviet Union. He also pointed out specific situations wherein the Communist Party, U.S.A., has, as he put it, "hewed faithfully" to the Soviet line on the Jewish question. In the 1930's Soviet persecution of the Jewish people was largely ignored by the Communists in the United States. During the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Communists appealed to the Jews in this country to stay neutral, even though they knew that adoption of that policy meant death to many Jews. During the war years Soviet anti-Semitism decreased but, resuming in 1948, it reached a peak in 1953. Throughout this period the CPUSA, including its Jewish section, declared the reports of the purges and persecutions were a lie—"a lie created by the Americans, by the imperialists, by the Zionists \* \* \*." After Khrushchev admitted the reports were true, Rabbi Kahane stated, the "Communists didn't bat an eyelash." Today in the Soviet Union, anti-Semitism continues, and American Communists continue to reject or rationalize any report of such a policy.

Rabbi Kahane advised that the average age of a Russian rabbi is 70 years. In a country which once boasted tens of thousands of synagogues, the Soviet Union had only 450 synagogues in 1956, and 7 years later there were only 96. Today there are only 64 synagogues remaining in a country with 3 million Jews. And, Rabbi Kahane said:

Each of the remaining lonely synagogues stands alone, for Jewish congregations are forbidden to maintain a central organization or a nationwide federation which would coordinate needs and standards and bolster religious beliefs. Needless to say, no communication with foreign religious bodies is countenanced.

And so the synagogues remain dying centers of a once-thriving religion, where old people sit beneath the eye of the inevitable synagogue informer, where the rabbi and the remaining devout sit motionless, fearful, watching their faith—and themselves—die.



# ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1968

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES,  
*Washington, D.C.*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities met, pursuant to call, in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C., at 10 a.m., Hon. Edwin E. Willis (chairman of the full committee) presiding.

(Subcommittee members: Representatives William M. Tuck, of Virginia, chairman; Edwin E. Willis, of Louisiana, chairman of the full committee; and Albert W. Watson, of South Carolina.)

Subcommittee members present: Representatives Willis and Watson.

Staff members present: Francis J. McNamara, director; Chester D. Smith, general counsel; and Herbert Romerstein, investigator.

The CHAIRMAN. The subcommittee will come to order.

This subcommittee is convened this morning pursuant to a resolution of the full committee dated March 8, 1967, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, That hearings by the Committee on Un-American Activities or a subcommittee thereof, be held in Washington, D.C., or at such other place or places as the chairman may determine, on such date or dates as the chairman may designate, relating to the extent and character of Communist propaganda and conspiratorial techniques employed within the United States to promote the objectives of the Communist Party in the United States and to advance the purposes of the world Communist movement by the dissemination of false and misleading information concerning Communist doctrine and practices in regard to religion and ethnic and minority groups, the legislative purpose being to provide factual information to aid the Congress in the enactment of any necessary remedial legislation pursuant to the mandate to the Committee by House Resolution 7 of January 10, 1967, and Public Law 601 of the 79th Congress.

(The order of appointment of the subcommittee follows:)

JUNE 18, 1968.

To: Mr. FRANCIS J. MCNAMARA,  
*Director, Committee on Un-American Activities.*

Pursuant to the provisions of the law and the Rules of this Committee, I hereby appoint a subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities, consisting of Honorable William M. Tuck, as Chairman, and myself, and Honorable Albert W. Watson as associate members, to conduct hearings in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, June 19, 1968, as contemplated by the resolution adopted by the Committee on the 8th day of March, 1967, authorizing hearings concerning the extent and character of Communist propaganda and conspiratorial techniques employed within the United States to promote the objectives of the Communist Party and world Communism by the dissemination of false and misleading information concerning Communist doctrine and practices in regard to religion, and other matters under investigation by the Committee.

Please make this action a matter of Committee record.

If any member indicates his inability to serve, please notify me.  
Given under my hand this 18th day of June, 1968.

/s/ Edwin E. Willis  
EDWIN E. WILLIS,

Chairman, Committee on Un-American Activities.

### STATEMENT OF RABBI MEIR KAHANE

Mr. SMITH. Identify yourself for the record, stating your full name, address, and date and place of birth.

Rabbi KAHANE. Meir Kahane, 233-20 139th Avenue, Rosedale, New York. I was born on August 1, 1932, in Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. SMITH. How long have you been a rabbi?

Rabbi KAHANE. Since 1956.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, please give the committee a brief résumé of your activities over the years beyond those of a purely religious nature.

Rabbi KAHANE. I have been a writer and editor for the *Jewish Press*, which is the largest Anglo-Jewish newspaper in the country.

During that time, I have specialized in a series of articles on "Communism v. Judaism." I have also authored a book entitled *The Jewish Stake in Vietnam*, which defends the position of this country in that Southeast Asian country.

I am also one of the founders of a group called the Jewish Defense League, which is currently being organized to defend Jewish people against anti-Semitism and to defend this country against various extremist groups such as the Communists and the black nationalists, functioning at the present time.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, for a period of time, have you made a study of Soviet Communist policy and practice in regard to religion, particularly as it has affected Jews in the Soviet Union and any other East European nation?

Rabbi KAHANE. Yes, I have, for a period of approximately 15 years.

Mr. SMITH. Have you, in addition, also made a study of the position taken by the Communist Party, U.S.A., and other Communist organizations in the United States on the subject of Communist persecution of Jews and Soviet anti-Semitism?

Rabbi KAHANE. Yes, I have.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, please give the committee an outline of your findings and those of others who can speak with authority about Soviet policies and practices regarding the Jewish religion.

We would then like to have you discuss propaganda on that subject distributed in the United States by Communist groups for the purpose of advancing world communism by misleading the American people, trying to keep them from learning the truth about Soviet anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews.

Rabbi KAHANE. I would like at this point very, very briefly to give an outline of the history of the Jews of Russia in the last 50 years since the Communist regime took power.

In general, I can state that in these 50 years the Jews of the Soviet Union have suffered a determined governmental policy to wipe out Judaism as a faith and the Jewish people as a definite entity.

Beginning with the early years of Communist rule in the Soviet Union, the Communists were faced with a very definite body of Jews, a very large body of Jews who were tied to their faith.



Russia, prior to 1917, was the heartland of the Jewish faith—seminaries, synagogues. This was what one could truly say was the flower of the Jewish people.

When the Soviets took over, there began an immediate campaign to do away with this. What was done at first was to establish a Jewish Communist section, whose purpose was to establish media in Yiddish, which at that time was the basic language of Russian Jews, for the dual purpose of having the Jews feel grateful to the new regime for its recognition and aid as well as using these media for the purpose of propaganda and indoctrination in communism. Thus, Yiddish language newspapers, theaters, book publishing firms, and secular schools were created.

To the gullible, the Soviets appeared determined to preserve the Jewish identity. After all, when, in the entire history of exile, had any government done so much to back and set up Jewish institutions?

But, of course, these were not Jewish institutions.

These were institutions for Jews, and the distinction between the two is quite critical. These Jewish institutions were created for the very purpose of doing away with the idea of Judaism. Yiddish was to be used to do away with the Yid.

Within a brief period of years, all of the previously existing truly Jewish institutions, Yeshivas, the institutions of Jewish learning had been abolished. No Jewish child was allowed to study his faith, either in the government school, the public school, or in the privacy of his own home.

The Communists did a very, very thorough job. Within a decade, the greatness that had been Russian Judaism had been destroyed.

I would like to supply for the record at this point a very, very brief letter written in 1929 by the leading rabbi of his time, Rabbi Yesroel Meir Hacohen. He was undoubtedly the leading rabbi of his time who wrote of the tragedy that was happening to Russian Jews. (See page 2222.)

At this point, I would just like to pause and comment on this last paragraph. The crying out to public opinion is one of the functions that this committee is serving at this moment.

I would like to give my own personal thanks and the thanks of Jews of this country to this committee for offering an opportunity to bring to the public the plight of the Soviet Jewry, the immense myth that the Soviets are trying to propagate that this is not true and to show the American people, both Jew and non-Jew, how the representatives of the various Communist powers, whether it is Soviet Russia or China, follow this line.

All that I have said occurred in the early years of communism. In the later years, things went from bad to worse.

The Soviet Union was not content to do away with Jewish culture. Blatant anti-Semitism and physical destruction of Jews took place.

From 1936 to 1939, the Jewish communal institutions which had been established by the Communists to indoctrinate Jews were deemed to be unnecessary any longer. Even these were done away with. In that period of time and immediately preceding the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Jewish intellectuals and Jewish leaders were murdered. There was, at this point, no Jewish communal institution within the Soviet Union.

In 1939 Stalin concluded his infamous pact with Hitler. Because

of this pact, Communists throughout the world began a massive campaign against war. They attempted to use all possible means to keep the Western Allies and especially this country from joining the battle against nazism and fascism.

Because of this, there is no doubt that countless Jews died—countless Jews who might have been saved, died. Needless to say, by June 22, 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, there was a radical, overnight change of policy.

During the war, for obvious reasons, the Soviets played down anti-Semitism and they created a puppet Jewish anti-Fascist committee in order to consolidate Jewish opinion for the backing of the Soviet Union against Hitler.

After the war, this committee was completely liquidated. Every person on it was killed. Soviet anti-Semitism reached its peak in 1953 with a blatantly anti-Semitic plot against doctors.

At this point, let me make it clear that communism and fascism have ceased to be meaningful differences. Communism and fascism both use the same methods.

The CHAIRMAN. May I suggest this question to you: For years the Communists in Moscow took the position that religion was an opium.

Now, as you have indicated, I think you called it a myth that in the last 2 years or so they are now saying that communism is compatible with religion. You dispute that. In other words, the policy is inconsistent with the practice; is that not true?

Rabbi KAHANE. Definitely so, and this particular policy within the past 2 years is not a meaningful policy, not in any manner or means. Any serious student of communism knows that communism moves forward, moves backward, zigs and zags, but never changes its basic policy.

There is an incompatibility between Judaism or any other faith and communism.

The Soviet attacks upon Jews have continued to this present day. Within the Soviet Union at this present moment, Judaism is gasping for breath. There are no schools to teach Judaism. No Jewish child under 16 is allowed to be taught privately in his own home anything of the Jewish faith.

At the same time, he is exposed to compulsory atheistic education in the schools. It is quite obvious that this is an unequal battle, an unfair battle, and this is a destruction of the Jewish soul.

Jewish ritual is banned; synagogues have been closed. One seminary, one small token which Khrushchev opened up again as part of this great myth, is closed. The youngest student at any time was 40 years old, and at no point were there more than 13 students.

Finally, I would like to say one thing: There are those who say that communism persecutes all faiths. This is quite true. Certainly, we join with other faiths in condemning the persecution, the blatant persecution of Baptists, the Witnesses, and various other groups.

However, let me add this final point in this particular session: The Jewish people not only suffer a discrimination of their faith, but they suffer more than others.

Whereas other faiths are allowed token seminaries, the training of priests and ministers, the Jews are allowed none.

Where other faiths have a federation which allows priests and ministers to have contact with each other in different cities, the Jews have none.

Whereas other faiths have had bibles printed, the Jews have had none.

Whereas other faiths have had permission to send representatives of their faith to world conferences, Jews have not had that opportunity. And at this point let me just make one comment about what I consider the unfortunate propaganda which the Communists will make use of in the visits at this moment of the Chief Rabbi of Moscow.

Chief Rabbi Levin is a wonderful Jew, a Jew who bears upon his shoulders the yoke of 3 million Soviet Jews.

What he says here he must say, but in no way if he says anything to indicate that the stories that we have heard of persecution of Jews is not true—in no way is this correct.

His visit will be used for propaganda purposes. I sympathize with Rabbi Levin, but I want you to know that the Jews of America realize why he was sent. It is a tragedy. In no way—in no way does this mean any lessening of the persecution of the Soviet Jew.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, could you address yourself to the type of propaganda being put out within the United States to advance world communism, as to its meaning and what it really is?

Rabbi KAHANE. I think one of the most blatant examples of this deals with a very, very recent problem and that is that of the sudden and intense blatant rise in anti-Semitism in Poland, a Soviet satellite.

The evidence is indisputable that the purge of Jews is an anti-Semitic purge. The leader of this purge, Interior Minister Morcza, is an anti-Semite with roots going far, far back to the early forties, when, as a partisan, he fought together with Jewish partisans against the Nazis. The evidence is indisputable.

Nevertheless, on May 12 [1968], *The Worker* published an article which was entitled "Slander Against Poland," in which the author, Harry Yaris, said:

I am firmly convinced that the present leadership of the Polish United Workers Party [the Communist Party] and of the government are not anti-Semitic. There is too much of the contrary in their personal and collective history to permit such a notion.

Aside from the obvious garbage of this particular fact, the fact is here was an article which was dictated from Moscow, which is printed in *The Worker* here, by, unfortunately, someone who is Jewish.

Mr. SMITH. That is *The Worker* of the Communist Party of the United States?

Rabbi KAHANE. Yes, in New York City. It attempts to once again put the lie to an obvious truth. There is much, much more that I would say, and hope to say later, about the general Communist support of every zig and every zag of Moscow, and in recent years with the rise of the pro-Peking Communist groups of a similar line on their part, when it comes to Chinese policy.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I would like to temporarily discontinue Rabbi Kahane's testimony in order to hear the testimony of Rabbi Bronstein.

Rabbi Kahane will be recalled a little later to complete his testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Rabbi Bronstein, do you solemnly affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I so affirm.

### TESTIMONY OF RABBI HARRY BRONSTEIN

Mr. SMITH. What is your date and place of birth, Rabbi Bronstein?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I was born in Poland, in the city of Wyszkow, in the month of May 1911.

Mr. SMITH. When did you leave Poland?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. At the end of 1933.

Mr. SMITH. Where did you go?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I went to live in Canada. I lived there for 7 years. In 1940 I emigrated to the United States.

Mr. SMITH. Are you now a United States citizen?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I am.

Mr. SMITH. Did you serve the United States during World War II?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes, I served as a civilian chaplain in the United States Army and Marine Corps during World War II at Camp David and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Mr. SMITH. How long have you been a rabbi?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Since 1933.

Mr. SMITH. With what organization are you affiliated?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I am the vice president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, the official organization of orthodox rabbis.

Mr. SMITH. Is this a Zionist organization?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. No, this is not a Zionist organization.

Mr. SMITH. Are there others?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes; I am president of *Al Tidom*, which means in English "dare not be silent." The purpose of this organization is to aid Soviet Jews in their quest for religious, cultural, and informative material.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, have you been to the Soviet Union and other countries behind the Iron Curtain?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes; I have made nine visits to the Soviet Union, also to Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia on nine different occasions.

Mr. SMITH. In your travels to the Soviet Union, have you gone for a specific purpose and have you been able to accomplish your purpose?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. My first visit to western Poland was in 1958. At that time, Mr. Michael D. Tress, the executive vice president of *Agudath Israel* in America returned from a short visit in Poland. He found out there that 20,000 former Polish citizens who had been repatriated from the Soviet Union back to Poland on their way to Israel, not to remain in Poland, had begged him to see to it that a rabbi should come to Poland to circumcise the adult boys who had no opportunity to be circumcised in Russia since the Soviet Union prohibits ritual circumcision. Since I am in the United States and one of the top rabbis in this field who trains young men and also doctors in the field of circumcision—I happen to be an expert in this field—I was asked by my organization to go to Poland to perform this act; also, to train several so they should be able to continue this work after I left.

On February 11, 1958, I arrived in Poland and I found hundreds upon hundreds of young men, not children, clamoring for circumcision.

When I asked them why, they told me that psychologically they feel like non-Jews because they were not circumcised. This is an historic fact, that these young men between the ages of 8 and 28 begged for circumcision. They refused even local anesthesia. They just clenched their fists and said, "It hurts," but they went through this ritual.

I think that this is the greatest challenge to communism. We must remember that these young men had been trained and indoctrinated in communism, as the honorable chairman just said, that religion is the opium of the masses and the first slogan that a child upon entering the nursery in the Soviet Union is taught—that religion is the opium of the masses.

Still, when they came to Poland and Poland did not prevent them from going through with this ritual, they demanded circumcision. I have circumcised hundreds of them and I have trained three young men in this field and they, after I had left, continued and still continue to do this work.

Mr. SMITH. Has the Soviet Government accused you of helping Jews leave the Soviet Union?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Well, they did. They accused me of organizing an exodus of Russian Jews and they have had so-called witnesses and have obtained statements from Jewish informers that I came to them and I told them to leave the Soviet Union and that they should go to Israel and America instead, because conditions are better outside the Soviet Union than inside.

Mr. SMITH. Did you have any experience with the Soviet secret police during your last visit and when was your last visit, by the way?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. My last visit to the Soviet Union, I believe I arrived in Kiev on May 30.

Mr. SMITH. What year?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. 1967. I traveled from Kiev to Zhitomir and Berdichev and a few other small towns. The reason I went there was that I wanted to visit old cemeteries where lay buried the greatest geniuses, the greatest heads of the Jewish people, especially in the city of Berdichev.

I was entitled to a car for 6 hours because the day before I did not use my car. I am entitled to 3 hours every day. So I engaged an Intourist chauffeur, and he drove me to Berdichev.

On the way back, on the outskirts of Berdichev I was arrested, and they interrogated me for 2½ hours. They told me that I had no special visa to go to Berdichev. My visa was only to Moscow, Kiev, and a few other cities.

I told them I did not sleep over in Berdichev, but I went for a ride with an Intourist chauffeur.

The chauffeur was also interrogated, and his license was taken away from him. And upon returning to Kiev, I was made to pay a penalty of 50 rubles, which is about \$55, for overriding the time of my car which I was entitled to.

Mr. SMITH. What date were you arrested?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. This was not an arrest; it was an interrogation. It was on Sunday. I spent this weekend in Kiev, and on Sunday morning I was on my way to the city of Lvov, at the airport, and three KGB agents came over to me and said, "Rabbi Bronstein, you are under arrest and please follow us."

I didn't know why. I first thought that this was the result of my so-called illegal trip to Berdichev, but I soon found out it was not so.

I was taken to a room. I didn't know where I was. Three KGB agents began to interrogate me. They didn't give me a chance to answer one question, when there came another question.

They attempted to confuse me, but with God's help I stood my ground. And they had a dossier, a file on me which weighed over a kilo, with pictures and statements and letters from Russian citizens that my purpose in the Soviet Union was not just as a mere tourist, but, as I said before, that I came to organize an illegal exodus of Russian Jews. They also accused me of taking illegal pictures from concentration camps and prisons, which was not true.

They also had a letter from a certain man in Chernovtsy, who gave them the names of individuals with whom I had met. And the head of this interrogation group read off to me a list of various names with whom I had met in the Soviet Union during my nine visits there, and most of them did manage to leave the Soviet Union. They asked me how come most of the people I had met with had left the Soviet Union. In other words, this was proof that I came to organize this illegal exodus.

Tens of thousands of Jews have applied for exit permits to leave the Soviet Union although the Soviet Union does deny this, but we know better. These people I have met with I did not persuade to go. They were anxious to leave the Soviet Union. I did not assist them in it, but since Mr. Kosygin made a statement on December 4, 1966, in Paris that any Soviet citizen that wishes to leave may do so, especially to be reunited with his relatives, a few people dared—I say a few—out of the tens of thousands only a few dared to apply for an exit permit. Most of them were refused. The reason why they were refused is because the Russian Government does not want to see such a mass exodus. They are afraid maybe 50 million or 75 million Russians will follow their example.

This was what they accused me of. They accused me of spying, working for the State Department and other organizations, and also accused me of working for the Joint Distribution Committee.

The truth is, I never worked for the Joint Distribution Committee. I have never worked for them. I want to help Jews. My purpose in going to the Soviet Union was to strengthen the religious faith of my people who, as my colleague Rabbi Kahane has just said, are gasping for air, for religious freedom.

I think it is incumbent upon any rabbi or any religious person, Jew or Gentile, to extend a helping hand to these unfortunate people who are being denied the God-given right to be what they are. I am proud of it and, if I could do it again, I would do it again.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, please explain to us the significance of the circumcision ceremony and in what way this is of particular importance to Soviet Jews.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I was instrumental in training 18 rabbis and men in the Soviet Union in the performance of ritual circumcision and 19 rabbis and laymen in the other satellite countries like Poland, Rumania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Why? As I told you before, a Jew feels like it is a psychological block. If he is not circumcised, he does not feel like a Jew.

Today in the Soviet Union we have tens of thousands of young men and women, particularly of college age, who are terribly disillusioned with communism and they are seeking God; they are seeking religion because communism after 50 years of existence has not fulfilled its promises to its people.

Just like one buys a ticket to go to Los Angeles with say 10 coupons in it. The 10 coupons are removed, and only the stop is left.

The reason why the Soviet Union is fighting religion is because they have nothing else to fight. They have lost all of their arguments and so they still cling to this fight against religion, and therefore we are the biggest victims because the Jewish people essentially are very religious people. They have given religion to mankind.

By training these men and by doing it myself, and I wish to describe to the committee under what conditions these young men are circumcised today in the Soviet Union, I think you would all cry.

They are hiding in cemeteries.

I had to go with them to places where I would never dream or dare to go, and they have not only demanded but begged me, "Rabbi, make me for a Jew."

After I have completed this ritual act on them, they embraced me and kissed me, saying, "Thank you, Rabbi, for making me a Jew."

If you people read that 30,000 young men and women gathered in the front of the central synagogue—Simchas Torah, the holiday, the final day of the holiday in the fall—and danced and sang Hebrew songs, I want you to know this is the result of a little bit of our work. There were many circumcised boys there who were circumcised by our people in the front of that synagogue. You must also remember that among the 30,000 young men and women who dared to come to the front of the synagogue, at least 10 percent were informers who came to inform on those who did come. Still they came because they wanted to identify themselves with their people, with their religion, with the synagogue, and to show the Soviet Union that these young men and women still believe in a God and still want to be Jews.

I think it is incumbent upon us to help them, and this is what I am doing.

Mr. SMITH. Has the Soviet Government hindered Jewish life as such?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Not only did, but does. The Soviet Government does everything in its power not only to hinder, but to erase, eradicate the Jewish life and therefore the reaction.

I am not a bit pessimistic about Jewish life in the Soviet Union. Others may be, but I am not. It is just like the violinist who places his finger on the string and it produces a nice tone.

This is it. Because the Jews are being persecuted and oppressed, there is a tremendous revival among Jews in the Soviet Union today.

If the Soviet Union would open its doors today for an exodus, I can assure you a quarter of a million Jews would leave on foot from the Soviet Union.

So, my job in the training of these young men in the performance of circumcision was not to impose upon the Soviet citizens something they did not want, but because there was a demand for it, a desire for it, that is the reason I did it.

Mr. SMITH. Could you describe the Jewish schools and the home life of the Jewish families as to whether or not there is this persecution of these two elements of Jewish life?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. There are no schools in the Soviet Union which are Jewish or Hebrew. You cannot see a young man or a young woman in the synagogue, not because neither wants to go there, but because we must remember that the Soviet Union, being that it is the paradise, so they say, people work their 6-day weeks and no Jewish child or young man or woman would dare to go to a synagogue, and therefore none can go to the synagogue.

At night when this celebration took place at the synagogue, they came at night. In the daytime they couldn't come because they went to school, and therefore you can't see any working man or woman in a synagogue because each is at work. So, they cannot come; they want to come, but they cannot come. They would not dare be absent from work and go to a synagogue. Therefore, they are not there, and I am surprised that some tourists go to the Soviet Union, take a camera on their shoulders and say, "I did find some worshipers in the synagogue, but most of them were old people." That is just not true. They would love to be there, but they cannot.

Now, as far as Jewish life is concerned, there are parents who do train their children, so-called underground in the Jewish religion. I know of a family whose children refused to go to school on the Sabbath. When this boy or girl came on Monday to school and was asked why did you miss school, he said, "My father told me to go. In fact, he beat me. He told me to go, but I know on the Sabbath you are not allowed to go to school. Therefore, I didn't go."

They are trained to do so.

I believe there is a spiritual genocide being committed against the Jews in the Soviet Union.

Mr. SMITH. What is the significance of the denial of matzoth during the Jewish Passover?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. To us, to eat matzoth during the Passover is a commandment, one of the Jewish laws. We must not eat leavened bread during the 8 days of the Passover holiday.

But I want to make you understand, gentlemen, that the reason why the Soviet Union is hindering baking of the matzoth is not because they say there is a shortage of flour—and we have to buy flour from capitalistic countries such as America, Australia, and so on—and they ask, "Why should we spend it on your ceremony?"

To us, matzoth is more than a diet bread. To us, matzoth signifies liberty, because matzoth is associated with the exodus of the people of Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

I always like to enlighten my statement with an episode and I have plenty of them.

My chauffeur in Moscow 3 years ago, around February this was, happened to be a Jewish person. After speaking to him for a few minutes, I found out he was Jewish. I asked him, "Will you have matzoth at Passover?"

He said, "No," and tears were in his eyes. I then said, "Why not?" He replied, "Well, we can't get it."



I asked him if he was a religious person. He said, "No, my parents couldn't train me in religion. I would eat my matzoth with vodka and kielbasi."

I said, "How can you have matzoth when it is against the law?"

He says, "It means svoboda. It means liberty. That is what matzoth means to me," and that is why they are denying the Jewish people the baking of matzoth because it is associated with liberty, with freedom, and this they could not take.

Mr. SMITH. Have Jews been imprisoned for the practice of their religion?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Thousands of them are languishing in prisons today in the Soviet Union because they have observed their religion and because they have attempted to circumcise a child, because they have attempted to train a child in the Jewish religion. They have lost their jobs. I have been to homes where the children had swollen bellies with rickets because the father couldn't hold a job because he was a so-called political prisoner.

I know of many Jewish babies who died in the Soviet Union because the grandparents attempted to circumcise them themselves. They were not trained for it, and the baby died because of hemorrhage and infection. They didn't have the money to bring in someone from the outside, and I know of some rabbis who are in prison because they were caught in performing this ritual.

A lot of parents refused to do it, not because they don't want it, but because every child after the mother delivers the baby, 30 days later, the child is admitted to the yasna, a so-called nursery, and the mother is afraid the nurses or doctors will see the child is circumcised and they will be interrogated where and who did it, and therefore they are afraid to do it.

Mind you, in the United States, in the city of New York, for example, 92 percent of all male born children, Jews and non-Jews alike, are circumcised, whether it is for health reasons or ritual. Science has discovered that carcinoma of the penis is nonexistent among males who have been circumcised, nor are there incidents of carcinoma of the uterus among females whose husbands have been circumcised.

Why don't they permit them to do it for health reasons if not for ritual reasons? Why don't they permit that?

Mr. SMITH. We have had testimony in the past about Communist secret police infiltrating the Russian Orthodox churches as well as other churches in the Soviet Union.

Have they done the same thing with regard to the Jewish synagogues?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. As far as the Russian secret police are concerned—and I would like to explain why so many synagogues have been closed in recent years in the Soviet Union—there are only 64 synagogues functioning today in the Soviet Union.

This is because they have been successful in getting the presidotels [presidents] to inform on the congregants, to inform on the worshipers.

Unfortunately, every fourth citizen in the Soviet Union is an informer. But the reason why they are closing synagogues is because they were not so successful in penetrating the worshipers. They were successful in getting the officials to inform on other people, but the

congregants themselves have not cooperated and refused to give information to the KGB.

You must remember that we have already today a cadre of hundreds of thousands of Jews who have passed the working age, and before they couldn't go to the synagogue because, as I told you before, they were working, but now they are at liberty to sit in the synagogues, and therefore these synagogues are so crowded with worshippers, with the so-called pensioned Jews.

This grandfather takes a Hebrew alphabet which is not available in the Soviet Union today because no prayer books are being printed. They did print 5,000 in 1957, but it was only for foreign consumption, but not for domestic consumption.

Rabbi Levin just made a statement that they printed again a quantity of prayer books, but I can assure you 3 years ago they also printed the first Jewish calendar in the Soviet Union, but the Russian Jews would not be able to get one.

That is the reason they are closing the synagogues because the grandfather rents an alphabet. He rents it from the prayer book. The first page is an alphabet. It is placed in plastic covers. He pays 25 cents, and he is training his grandson in the reading of the alphabet.

Some of the informants know about it, but I want to make a distinction between the non-Jewish church and the Jewish synagogue. In the non-Jewish church they have been successful because they so-called neutralized the Russian church to a great extent.

Nikolai Nikodin was here and spoke nicely about everything being fine and dandy in Russia, but they were not successful in neutralizing the Jewish synagogue because we are a practicing religion.

In order to allow the synagogue to survive, we have to have a talis, a religious shawl, which you cannot get in the Soviet Union. Not one was ever manufactured in the Soviet Union for the whole 55 years of their existence.

The CHAIRMAN. You have said that the education of young Jews in Russia through Jewish schools is forbidden, proscribed. Are there young Jews exposed to Russian schools? Do they attend Russian schools?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Jewish children have to attend Russian schools. Every child has to attend school.

The CHAIRMAN. This is a terrific influence on the younger generation.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Of course. But, Mr. Chairman, I want to make this clear to you, with all of this propaganda in the schools—

The CHAIRMAN. Despite the propaganda?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Despite all the propaganda and brainwashing, Jewish children today are seeking religion, and it is our aim, it is our purpose to extend to them a helping hand. And I believe not only my committee, not only organizations that are trying to help them—but I believe it is incumbent upon the American people to do something in this field.

I am convinced, and many others are, that religion is a tremendous weapon against communism. We are spending millions and millions of dollars on Voice of America and other means of communication, but I think Voice of America and Radio Free Europe should have as part of their programs religious programs, because this is what the people want.

You don't have to ask the doctor. Ask the patient what the patient wants, and I know what the patient wants. I have been there nine times. I struggled with them and I know that is what they want. They want an alphabet and a religious shawl. I gave an elderly gentleman a talis in Kiev, and he began to dance with tears in his eyes.

I said, "Why are you so happy?" He said, "Now we have something to die with because they bury a Jew in a talis."

Is this our problem?

Our problem is the hundreds of thousands of Jews who do not want to have the talis to be buried with, but to live with and worship with, but they can't get it. You can go to a synagogue and see tens of thousands of people and only 10 might have one.

Why hasn't the Jewish calendar been printed for 48 years? There are Jews in the Soviet Union who don't know when to observe Rosh Hashana because they don't have a calendar.

I say we are singled out for discrimination, and this is what we are talking about. We are worse off than any other denomination in the Soviet Union. As far as the Jewish children are concerned, if they would be given the opportunity, they would want to be good Jews.

Mr. SMITH. You spoke a moment ago of 64 synagogues throughout Russia to serve how many Jews?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Three million Jews.

Mr. SMITH. Could you give any indication of how many of these synagogues are located in Moscow?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. In Moscow there is only one great synagogue, and there are two small ones on the outskirts of Moscow.

Mr. SMITH. What is the reaction of Soviet Jews to these informers you spoke of a moment ago?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. They hate them.

Mr. SMITH. Do they take any measures against them?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I would also like to enlighten again with another episode.

There was a certain presidotel in Kiev, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Yonah Gendelman, who for many years terrorized the Jewish community of Kiev. He was an informer, and everybody knew about it. Last year before I went to Kiev, I arrived there in May, 2 months before the people refused to worship. They made a stop, they didn't go to make the minyan. And they refused to worship unless this Mr. Gendelman would step off the so-called pulpit.

The people stood there until about 10 o'clock in the evening, reading the book of Esther. When he saw there was no use, he left the synagogue, and that was the beginning of their service. This took place for 4 weeks, 4 Friday nights the people refused to worship with him until he gave up his presidency.

Another gentleman took over with whom they were also dissatisfied because he was a former vice president, and he was attacked by the Jewish community in Kiev, physically attacked.

What I am trying to bring out here, gentlemen, is that the Jewish people, as such, are not cooperating with these informers and the KGB people who are coming and trying to infiltrate the synagogues. They were not successful.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, it is well known that the Soviet Union regime is an antireligious regime and, of course, has been persecuting religi-

ous groups since the founding of the Soviet state. Is there any additional factor of significance in regard to the persecution of the Jewish religion?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. As I said before, we are singled out for persecution because we don't want to give in. They could not neutralize us. And if after 50 years of communism 30,000 young men and women still gather in front of the synagogue to sing Hebrew songs and recite Jewish prayers, I think this is the best proof that they have not been successful.

I want to reiterate that it is up to us, men and women of the world, to extend them a helping hand in their struggle for religious liberty. If not, we are committing the biggest crime in history.

Mr. SMITH. Is Jewish cultural life suppressed, such as theaters, and so forth?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes. There are no theaters. There is a so-called wandering troupe of Jewish actors, sometimes going into a city and playing an act, but take for instance in Poland where there is a Jewish state theater functioning in Warsaw.

There is a Jewish daily paper, *Folks-Shtimme*,<sup>1</sup> but there is none in Moscow. In Communist Poland there is a daily theater and daily paper, but for 3 million Jews in the Soviet Union there is none.

Mr. SMITH. Is there any Jewish-language newspaper in the Soviet Union?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Only a Jewish magazine once a month, although there is nothing Jewish about it; it is of no Jewish significance whatsoever, just Jewish letters.

Mr. SMITH. Do the Soviets suppress the Jewish language as such?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yiddish as a language?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I have to go back again to figures.

In 1959, during the census in the Soviet Union, 487,000 Jews answered one of the questions: "What is your mother tongue?"

487,000 Jews dared—and I emphasize the word "dared"—to write down the word "Yiddish" in answer to that question. If close to half a million Jews said that Yiddish is their mother tongue, well, why don't you furnish them with a Jewish paper, with a Jewish book?

I am not talking about religious books now. If half a million citizens, and by the constitution you are compelled, and you say yourself you give every ethnic group—it is trying to develop its culture.

Well, why don't they give the same thing to the Jewish people?

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi Bronstein, do you have any final statement that you would like to make before closing your testimony?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. The Jewish community of the Soviet Union is the second largest Jewish community in the world after the United States. These 3 million Jews are our best brethren. I say that without any hesitation. I say that for this reason: After 50 years of communism, oppression, they still want to be Jews; they are the best Jews in the world and they are the best freedom-loving people in the world.

The Soviet Union today is one great prison, and they are prisoners in that prison.

I am of the opinion that a lot could be done on their behalf. I am not in a position to spell out in public here all of the details for obvious

<sup>1</sup> Yiddish Communist paper published in Warsaw.

reasons, but I can assure you gentlemen that a lot is being done and more could be done.

I would strongly urge the American Government to extend a helping hand in this field. In fact, I am meeting today with the State Department on Soviet affairs and I am going to give them a detailed program of what could and should be done.

Let's not beguile ourselves with all this propaganda that they are trying to sell us here in the United States that everything is khoro-sho—that is, fine.

I can tell you of incidents where Jews risked their lives to perform a religious act.

I want to quote one example. For half a million Jews in Moscow, there is no Jewish cemetery. According to Jewish law, a certain piece of land must be assigned especially for Jewish burial. Half a million Jews in Moscow don't have a Jewish cemetery where they can bury their dead. I know that people are selling their shirts to carry a deceased person to a city where there is a Jewish cemetery where they can bury their loved ones in a Jewish cemetery.

I would appeal to the United States Government to see to it that all the media of communication, the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and other friendly countries which have similar operations, make it their business to have a part of their programs devoted to religious programs and to religious information. This would be of tremendous help. After 10 o'clock in the evening there is no more jamming because people go to sleep in the Soviet Union.

People listen with earphones on their ears to hear words of Radio Liberty, Voice of America, and Voice of Israel, so they are risking their lives. When they want to hear, let's give them something worthwhile instead of politics. This would be of tremendous value to them and this is what they are asking for.

Another thing I would like to say before the committee here is this: The American people are also interested in this problem, Jews and non-Jews alike.

This problem has come before the American Congress and the American Senate, even before the United Nations. It is in the air. The American people want to help. It is up to the American Government to direct this help in the proper channels.

What I have suffered myself does not mean anything. I would do it again. They declared me persona non grata. This does not mean anything else again. There are others like me who go there and do a fine job, and I am sure the American people will know what to do.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, are there any questions?

The CHAIRMAN. Before we reach the questioning period, we will take a recess for 5 minutes and then resume with the testimony of Rabbi Kahane.

(Brief recess.)

The CHAIRMAN. Counsel, you may resume with the first witness.

Before you do that, Rabbi Bronstein, did you find out that the policy of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis Judaism is practically the same as Catholicism and Protestantism? Generally speaking, is the same policy of antireligion against all religions?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. The policy of the Soviet Union is to fight all religions.

The CHAIRMAN. This recent propaganda that communism is compatible with religion is a myth?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. It is the greatest lie. It just is not so because to say something on paper and to deny the Jew and the non-Jew his religious rights are definitely incompatible.

What is doing in churches today?

How many religious church schools are functioning in the Soviet Union?

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Watson, do you have any questions?

Mr. WATSON. Yes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Pursuing the line of questioning you started there; in other words, the general theme that they, the Communists today, are espousing, about the compatibility or at least we have a dialogue between communism and Judaism or Catholicism or Protestantism, that is poppycock and they do not practice it in the Soviet Union?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Certainly not.

Mr. WATSON. Apparently, this line they are espousing now of having some dialogue between the Communists and Christians is purely for propaganda purposes?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. There is no question about it.

Mr. WATSON. And it does not reflect a change on the part of the Soviet Union?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. None whatsoever. I think they are becoming more aggressive against religion now than before. I will show it to you in deeds.

Whereas before, they closed down synagogues and churches. What do they say? Why are they closing them?

There are illegal activities going on—drunkenness—the priests and the rabbis are not behaving themselves, and so on and so forth.

Now they don't say that anymore. They say that the people don't want it. The people don't want it. There is no need for a synagogue or church. Why? Why is that? Because they cannot prove anything. People are traveling now back and forth. Tourists are coming to the Soviet Union and they see for themselves, and the people tell these facts, so they know it is not so. Therefore, they just close them up saying that the people don't want them.

Mr. WATSON. I should think that, in view of your statement that there are thousands of Jews in prison because they attempted to practice some of the tenets of their faith, it would be agreed that it would be rather difficult for them to state objectively whether or not the people really want the religion. If you have the threat of imprisonment, it is rather difficult for one to espouse his religious beliefs under those circumstances. Is that basically about it?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Definitely.

Mr. WATSON. My twin brother, who is a minister, visited Russia 2 or 3 years ago and he likewise pointed out, as you have, the fact that you have so few young people—I believe he said under 16 or 18—that are worshiping in the churches now. He was under the impression perhaps it was prohibited, but I gained from your testimony that it

isn't actually prohibited for a young person, but he is not able to go because he has to work.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. He has to go to school and he has to go to work. But if they were to go to such a church or synagogue, they would be thrown out of school or university. They would stand no chance of continuing their education.

Mr. WATSON. Your services are held the same time he is required to be in school?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. That is right.

Mr. WATSON. You stated when they arrested you in 1967 they had a complete file or dossier on you. Was it only relative to your activities in Russia or did they have any information concerning your activities in the United States in that file?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. They knew everything about me here and there. They must have good sources of information in the United States.

Mr. WATSON. The reason I was asking if there was information about your activities here, I was wondering if someone was supplying them with information here.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. They do have agents in America that supply them with plenty of information.

Mr. WATSON. You concluded from your casual examination of the file they had on you—

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I did not examine the file, but the questions they asked me told me right away they knew everything. They even had my private telephone number, which very few people have, and they knew the names of my grandchildren.

Mr. WATSON. So there is no question about the fact that they have confidential information about you?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. There is no question about that.

Mr. WATSON. I think religion is the antithesis of communism, but how can we teach religion with a government—you know, we have the constitutional bar—

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Separation of church and state.

Mr. WATSON. I am afraid we might have a little trouble there.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. There should be no trouble at all.

For instance, let us say the Voice of America has a program starting this afternoon at 4 o'clock and going on to 11 o'clock. Let's examine the program. I am not here to criticize the Voice of America—I am all for it. But I say if Voice of America would spend 1 hour on religious matters, not teaching religion, but to tell the Russian Jew that there are 400 Yeshivas in America, 400 religious schools in America, things of that nature; if they were to tell them that some of these boys and girls simultaneously with their Hebrew education are receiving a good secular education and are winning the state medals for English—in other words, that religious and secular knowledge are compatible, this would be of tremendous value to the Russian boy and girl.

Mr. WATSON. I agree with you that it would, but I am afraid we would have some of the people immediately rise up and demand—

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. This is information, these are facts. This has nothing to do with propaganda, it gives facts.

Mr. WATSON. I am not arguing with you. I am on your side.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I don't think anybody would question the legality if this would be given in the form of information. For instance, if Voice of America or Radio Liberty were to tell that Rosh Hashana this year will be celebrated by the Jewish people the world over on this particular date, is this religion or information? I think it is pure information.

Mr. WATSON. I agree with you and would be inclined to interpret it as information, but frankly I believe those who are interpreting the various procedures and practices in this country now would interpret it as giving religious instruction. Anyway, I hope you can work it out. If you have an appointment with the State Department, more power to you. Frankly, I think you are going up against a brick wall.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I met last year with the leadership of the Voice of America, Rabbi Teitz now, and we have discussed this matter. What we need is a little push from the legislative branch of our Government.

Mr. WATSON. I think this is a good idea, and you can rest assured you will get a little push from the one speaking now. It will not amount to much, I am afraid.

You are the president of Al Tidom?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes.

Mr. WATSON. I think it is a most laudable organization and I should think you would have no difficulty at all in getting financial help to implement your programs. Are you experiencing any difficulty in that field?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. We are experiencing difficulties not because the people don't want to support it. There are people who do know what Al Tidom stands for and want to support it, but our problem is we cannot publicize in detail what we are doing behind the Iron Curtain. That is our weak spot.

Mr. WATSON. You don't have problems getting money?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. We do have problems.

Mr. WATSON. You do?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Yes.

Mr. WATSON. You mean with such an objective to aid the Soviet Jews in their quest for religious, cultural, and informative material, you have difficulty getting support from your faith and people of other faiths?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. If we could come out with a program in detail telling what we are doing, there would be no problem of getting money, but when you have a slogan, just like when you have a store, if you can't show your merchandise you can advertise all you want, but the person who comes into the store wants to see your merchandise.

I would like to show you merchandise. This is my merchandise here. This is a slide in Russian Hebrew. This is a slide in Hebrew in writing and in print. These slides are being smuggled in today to the Soviet Union, and a group of 10, 50 young boys and girls sit and project this on the wall and learn how to read Hebrew.

This is what is called counterrevolutionary material in the Soviet Union. I am the biggest smuggler in the world. I have never smuggled a diamond, but I have smuggled religious articles.

Mr. WATSON. I notice your instructions here are in English. Do most of them understand English?



Rabbi BRONSTEIN. The slide itself is not in English; the contents are not in English.

Mr. WATSON. Do many of the Jewish people over there speak English?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. If they work for a state company they would. It is the second most spoken language in Russia today. This is a mezuzah. This is what every Jewish family has on its doors.

Let me add this statement here: I was never asked by any Jew or Jewess in the Soviet Union for a tie, for clothes, for a pair of shoes, or for a dollar. But whenever I came and wherever I came, a Jew asked me in the Soviet Union, "Rabbi, may we have a talis, may we have a mezuzah or film?"

This is what they want. As the prophet says, "Not hungry for bread nor thirsty for water but for the word of God."

I want to assure you gentlemen that we have a marvelous opportunity now with Russian youth to give them what they want.

Mr. WATSON. I agree with you.

Let me ask you this: How many of your fellow rabbis here in this country are telling the American people of your faith the story you have told this committee this morning?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I think that at least 75 percent of the rabbinate today are telling the American Jews and even non-Jews about what is going on in the Soviet Union, about persecution, about prejudice. And it is quite known today among the American people what is really going on in Russia, something that had been kept a secret until 10 years ago. I think now the American people are being told.

Mr. WATSON. I hope you can increase your activity in this field. We all need to do it, but as Rabbi Kahane said a moment ago when he read from the Communist paper, *The Worker*, unfortunately, they were making us out to be the real liar.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Whenever I meet a Jewish Communist here in America I say, "Look, I will pay your fare. Go to the Soviet Union and live there for 1 year and then you will come back a cleansed Jew."

Mr. WATSON. I agree with that proposition—all those who don't like our system, the doors are open to leave.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, but I know the question I wanted to ask you now: Do you agree with Rabbi Kahane that Baptists, Jews, and Catholics are all suffering?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. The Baptists in the Soviet Union are suffering almost as much as we are.

Mr. WATSON. But you agree with Rabbi Kahane that you are in a virtually impossible position?

The children over there, while they are not allowed to exercise the tenets of their faith, at the same time they are being forced to learn, or at least study or be exposed to, atheism.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Exactly.

Mr. WATSON. They are forced to take a course of atheism in the Russian school.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. It is not only the course; it is the entire environment in the school. In the Komsomol, the political commissar does not just read *Pravda*, but all must listen to a so-called political orientation talk. In other words, the Russian citizen today and for the past 50 years indeed has been surrounded with a massive propaganda and

brainwashing on communism. They have no chance. You can buy *Pravda* here if you want to, but you try to get a *Times* in Moscow—you can't get it.

Mr. WATSON. Perhaps you have an answer here. It is difficult for us to get across to some of those who are spewing the Communist line, "Now economically speaking we have a better system."

Maybe we can get across to the American people that if they buy this Communist line it will mean the ultimate destruction of their religious liberty.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Not only religious liberties, but liberty as such.

Mr. WATSON. If the American people realize they no longer will have an opportunity to worship as they please, that should be the strongest faith of anyone and perhaps we can get something across to some of these people now who are trying to destroy our system of government.

I am talking about the people right here in this country. I am not talking so much about those overseas. I am worried about those right here in America who are trying to get us to buy this Communist line.

I appreciate your testimony very much, Rabbi.

The CHAIRMAN. You may resume with the first witness, Rabbi Kahane.

#### STATEMENT OF RABBI MEIR KAHANE—Resumed

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi Kahane, please tell us in detail and supply this committee with the documents that you have gathered in your years of study as regards the history of Soviet anti-Semitism.

Rabbi KAHANE. I can think of no better way to begin than by reading to you the story of an incident that happened in the Soviet Union and which was printed in an English-language paper called *Russian Sketches* published by the American Jewish Committee.

The author of this pamphlet is the foreign news editor of the Jewish-language daily newspaper called the *Forward*<sup>1</sup> published in New York City.

The editor went to the Soviet Union in 1966 and in the city of Kiev, in the Ukraine, he was in a synagogue. He describes how he was sitting in a pew when, from behind him, he heard the following:

But many of the older Jews cling to their faith with a strength that surpasses all understanding. Once, in a synagogue in another Russian city, I heard a tremulous voice behind me.

"*Reb Yid*, don't turn around. Keep your eyes on your *Siddur* and pretend you hear nothing. I have to talk to someone."

Out of the corner of my eye I saw an old man, his face covered by the prayer shawl draped over his head. Leaning against his lectern, he spoke in a voice choked with tears. He had lost his whole family—his wife, his children, his relatives, all except one son, who now had a young son of his own, named Volodya.

Until he was five, Volodenka had accompanied his grandfather to synagogue. When he started school, his teacher forbade the students to attend church or synagogue, but the boy was so devoted to his grandfather that he went anyway until, one day, a classmate reported him. The teacher punished him, humiliated him in front of the class, and issued a stern warning. Since then, Volodenka has not dared to go to synagogue.

The years passed. Six months ago, eight gentile boys attacked Volodenka and beat him up, shouting "*Zhid!* Let's kill the dirty *Zhid!*" Since then, the boy has

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Daily Forward*.

been full of fears. He clings to his grandfather and begs the old man to explain why he is Jewish, and why the others hate him for it. The old man would have liked to teach his grandson Jewish history, Hebrew and the Bible, but the boy's father would not permit it, afraid that if word got out, he might lose his job, or worse.

Soon Volodenka will be 13 years old, and the grandfather is desperate.

"Volodenka, I said to him," the old man wept, "I'll give you anything you want. Just come to *shul* with me. But Volodenka won't do it."

The lectern behind me shook with the old man's sobs. Suddenly he leaned forward.

"I beg of you, dear friend," he whispered. "When you go back to the free world, don't hold your peace. Stir up the people, *turn the world upside down if you must*, but help us! Help me so that my Volodenka will remain a Jew."

This story typifies the plight of Soviet Jewry at the moment.

As Mr. Watson asked, are there people who are trying to bring this story out to the American public?

The answer is "Yes."

Being with the *Jewish Press*, we are deeply disturbed at the immense ignorance and lack of knowledge on the part of people in America and especially the young people, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who have no idea of the horrors that are in store for them if what they want to happen would really happen.

Much of the materials which I am about to present appeared in a series of articles, extending for more than 4 months, "Communism v. Judaism."

I and our paper certainly intend to get across one message to the American Jewish people, that communism is a deadly enemy of Judaism and all free men.

As I began speaking before, when the Communist government took over the Soviet Union in 1917, there began a massive campaign to do away with Jewish communal institutions.

This was handed over to the Jewish section of the Communist Party, which was known as the Yeveseckzia.

Staffed by bitterly antireligious and anti-Zionist Communists, the Yeveseckzia went about its job with gusto. All existing Jewish communal and religious organizations were to be smashed and replaced with a well-subsidized network of Communist-oriented Yiddish-language institutions.

Religion was the special target of the vicious fury of the Yeveseckzia. Armed with instructions by the Communist government to eliminate religious "superstition," they hastened to sequester synagogues and convert them to Komsomol (Communist youth) clubs.

Rabbis and teachers who broke the law by secretly teaching children religion and Hebrew were caught and arrested. No minor child may be taught religion in the Soviet Union.

The religious schools were shut, and the great Russian Judaism began to dry up at its source—the child and his studies.

Within a decade the greatness that had been Russian Jewry was withering on the vine. The word of God was no longer heard on the lips of Jewish children, and what the Czars with all their tyranny had never done, the Communists were now accomplishing.

The leader of his generation, the great Rabbi Yesroel Meir Hacohen, the Chofetz Chaim from Poland, knew the trials of his Russian Jewish brethren and his heart ached for them.

In the month of Av, that tragic month in Jewish history of the year 1929, this great rabbi penned a letter to world Jewry. His subject was the tragedy of the Jews in the Soviet Union.

This is what he wrote:

Most bitter and fearful is the situation of our brethren in Russia and the Ukraine, may God have mercy. Almost three million Jews find themselves in great danger (aside from the fact that a great portion of them have no economic status and are simply starving). One's hair stands on end hearing of the great suffering of our brethren in Russia due to the overwhelming wickedness of those who desire to uproot our Holy Torah.

They closed the Hebrew schools and yeshivas. Those Roshei Yeshivas and teachers who continued to spread learning privately were sent to Siberia. The rabbis are being held as hostages. The synagogues and study halls are being shut down and turned into clubs (the scornful tyrants seek every excuse to close synagogues and tear away kosher meat from Jewish mouths). Those whose livelihood depends on the government are afraid to Judaize their children. They are Marranos. Just as in the times of the Inquisition Jews were forced to cause others to go astray, to profane the Sabbath and to openly eat leavened bread on Passover, equally tragic is the present situation which leads to assimilation and destruction, Heaven forbid.

Our suffering and persecuted brethren over there are afraid to speak out a word of protest.

It is therefore our responsibility to protest openly, to cry out and to awake public opinion . . . to pray . . . and just as our fathers did, so must we do. We must declare a fast.

But the prayers of the great rabbi and others like him were not sufficient to have Heaven intervene and the Yeveseckia went methodically about its job.

As the years went by the Yeveseckia grew even more vicious. Its schools, lectures, forums, newspapers, and books mocked Jewish laws and customs and distorted Jewish history.

Wedges were deliberately driven between children and their parents and grandparents. The new generation was being ripped from the bosom of its heritage.

Not only religion but Zionism, too, was brutally hunted down. Show trials of Zionists accused of imperialist conspiracy against the state were held.

Hebrew, the language of "rabbinism" and "imperialist Zionism" both, was strictly forbidden.

The disintegration of Soviet Jewry was rapid and there was, as I have mentioned, no longer a need even for these Jewish institutions whose purpose was to destroy Judaism.

By 1936 the final liquidation of Soviet Jewry began.

In 1936 a wave of arrest of writers and artists took place.

In 1937 the liquidation of Yiddish elementary, secondary, high schools, the Communist ones—they arrested Communist teachers Litvinov, Colback, Weinstein, Rofus, Bookbinder, Friedland, and many others.

This continued through to 1939 when the Soviet Union concluded its pact with Adolf Hitler.

From the time of that pact to June 21, 1941, the Soviet Union was the greatest opponent of the free world coming to the defense of Great Britain and France.

In December of 1939 Stalin in an interview with the editor of *Pravda* said the following:

“(a) It was not Germany that attacked France and England, but France and England that attacked Germany, thereby assuming responsibility for the present war;

“(b) After hostilities had broken out, Germany made overtures of peace to France and England, and the Soviet Union openly supported Germany’s peace overtures, for it considered, and continues to consider, that the earliest possible termination of the war would radically improve the position of all countries and nations;

“(c) The ruling circles of England and France rudely rejected both Germany’s peace overtures and the attempts of the Soviet Union to secure the earliest possible termination of the war.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of this, countless Jews died—countless Jews that might have been saved. Their deaths are laid directly at the feet of the Soviet Union.

By 1941 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, and suddenly things changed. The Soviets were greatly in need of the aid of the same United States which they had been pleading to stay out of the war.

Incidentally, as I will indicate later, the Communist apparatus in this country swallowed this line—hook, line, and sinker, and it is the measure of the obscenity of the Communists in this country and throughout the world that there were Communist Jews who knew what would happen to their fellow Jews if they espoused this line and they espoused it anyway.

In 1941, as a result of the desperate need for American aid, a neutral America, an organization by the name of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was formed.

In a passionate address, Ilya Ehrenburg, the famous Soviet writer who was also Jewish, laid the main emphasis on the fact that he appealed to the Jews in the United States, who until that moment had been pleaded with to stay neutral, to turn to their Government to come into the war on the side of the Soviet Union.

The war was over, and there was no longer a need for the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. In 1948 a wholesale liquidation of every member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee began, and from 1948 to 1952 anti-Semitism on a physical scale raged inside Russia. Jews were killed because they were Jews, just as in Nazi Germany. This culminated in 1953 with the infamous doctors plot.

On January 13, 1953, the Soviet news agency Tass published a plot by Jewish doctors on the life of Stalin. It was a fantastic thing that would have done justice to Julius Streicher.

In each case, the Jewish origin of the doctor was made abundantly clear. They were accused of having maintained relations with the Joint Distribution Committee, which is an organization devoted to the relief of Jewish refugees, which was called the international Jewish bourgeois-nationalistic organization which was created by the American intelligence service.

These doctors were killed, and we have clear indication that Josef Stalin intended to liquidate the entire population, the entire Jewish population of the Soviet Union, if not for the fortunate fact that he died.

His place was taken by Khrushchev, who at the 20th Congress startled the world with the facts of Stalin’s crimes. And despite the

<sup>1</sup> This quotation appeared in English in an official Communist Party, U.S.A., publication entitled “A History of Soviet Foreign Policy,” which was published during the Soviet-Nazi Pact by Workers Library Publishers, Inc., 1940, pp. 44, 45.

fact that Khrushchev had a leading hand in these crimes, the blame was imputed to Stalin and others.

All during this era of murder of Jews in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party in this country, including its Jewish section, went up to the barricades, on the ramparts, and said it was a lie—it was a lie created by the Americans, by the imperialists, by the Zionists, by everyone.

Suddenly Khrushchev said it was all true. The Communists didn't bat an eyelash. They said it was true and the reason was simple: that Stalin was in aberration, but Khrushchev had the courage to admit it so this proves the integrity of communism.

Khrushchev began an immediate persecution of the Jews in the Soviet Union. Under him, we saw the rise of the charge of economic crimes. Economic crimes were suddenly imputed again to people, 80 percent of whom were Jews.

Every Jew had his name indicated clearly and if he had changed his name, his original Jewish name was put in brackets.

Economic crimes were imputed to the Jewish synagogues. The great synagogue in Lvov was accused of anti-Soviet activity, illicit currency dealings, and this excuse was used to close it down.

Today in the Soviet Union anti-Semitism continues.

In 1963 a vicious 48-page booklet published in Uzhgorod in the Ukraine inadvertently shed light on the heroic secret resistance as it stated:

It must be said that in our day, too, there are some people who are in the captivity of Judaism and who are trying to inculcate children with religious fanaticism.

In 1958, in Uzhgorod, there was an exposure of the dirty activities of Nander Leibovich. He gave up his job and began teaching children the Torah. This semi-literate idler made use of his own ways to lead the children unto the "path of truth".

A similar breeding ground for religious obscurantism also existed in the Sereднеye Vodanoye village of the Tyachev district. Mayer Faig was misleading the children. . . . It is characteristic that after the public had exposed these harmful and forbidden religious schools the rabbis began to go to the children's homes and teach them individually—something that is also an infringement of the Soviet regulations. . . .

Until 1957 there was literally not one school for religious studies in the Soviet Union.

In 1957, as in 1958, because of public pressure, Khrushchev created a farce, a fiasco, one school for 13 students, the youngest of whom was 40 years old. That was the sum total of rabbis to service the religious needs of 3 million Jews, and that school was closed down.

It is closed at the moment. At the moment, there are no schools for the training of rabbis. The average age of the Russian rabbi is 70. In Moscow, in the main synagogue, it has Chief Rabbi Levin who is 74, and one other small one, a rabbi who is 92.

Being deprived of their leadership, the Jews of Russia are subject to another equally severe disability. Judaism is permitted no publications and no publications facilities; no Hebrew Bible nor one Russian translation of the old Hebrew Bible has been published since 1917. Not a single religious book has appeared in print since the early 1920's.

Until 1958 not one prayer book was printed, and in that year a ridiculous 3,000 copies were photocopied, none for the domestic use of the Soviet Jewry.

No Jewish calendars are available in the Soviet Union—and the Jew depends on his religious holidays—he has no idea when the holidays of Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur occur.

This country once boasted tens of thousands of synagogues. There were 450 synagogues in 1956 and 7 years later there were only 96, a decrease of 500 percent in a period of 7 years.

The process of attrition is not due merely to the fact, as Soviets maintain, that Jews don't want to go to synagogue. There have been physical closings of synagogues and administrative orders which have closed them down under various pretexts.

At this moment, there are 64 synagogues left in the entire Soviet Union. That includes the Russian empire, taking in the captive nations of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, plus the various parts of other East European countries that were annexed by the Soviet Union immediately after the war. Just 64 synagogues in this vast area.

In those regions where Soviet fiat has ordered synagogues closed, stubbornly pious Jews have taken to organizing private services in their homes.

Propaganda assaults on these meetings have been frequent, while Soviet police have harassed, disrupted, and dispersed such gatherings on hundreds of occasions, warning those who attended and occasionally punishing them.

Articles list those who organize and attend the meetings.

The persecution of Jewish religious institutions has been systematically stepped up in recent years. In June and July of 1961, six lay religious leaders in Moscow and Leningrad were secretly arrested and synagogue presidents in six major provincial cities deposed.

The arrested leaders were held in prison until October of that year and then secretly tried, convicted of alleged espionage, and sentenced to lengthy prison terms.

When a storm of protests arose, *Trud*, the trade union paper, published a vicious article accusing the religious leaders of being agents for the Israeli secret service and tools of the American intelligence system.

Each of the remaining lonely synagogues stands alone, for Jewish congregations are forbidden to maintain a central organization or a nationwide federation which would coordinate needs and standards and bolster religious beliefs. Needless to say, no communication with foreign religious bodies is countenanced.

And so the synagogues remain dying centers of a once-thriving religion, where old people sit beneath the eye of the inevitable synagogue informer, where the rabbi and the remaining devout sit motionless, fearful, watching their faith—and themselves—die.

And, indeed, this is how a gifted young writer, Elie Wiesel, describes his visit to the Moscow synagogue on the holiday of Simchas Torah.<sup>1</sup>

In each of the last 3 years, 30,000 young Jews—these are young people who never had an opportunity to attend a Jewish school—danced and sang Hebrew songs that they had heard over the Voice of America, the Voice of Israel, and through other sources.

These were not religious Jews. This was a demonstration for freedom. These boys and girls were college students. They risked their

<sup>1</sup> *The Jews of Silence*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1966.

futures. They risked expulsion. They can never join the Communist Party, but they did this.

Mr. WATSON. May I interrupt you here?

You say that they can never join the Communist Party?

Rabbi KAHANE. That is right.

Mr. WATSON. Is that because the Jewish people are prohibited, or because of this activity?

Rabbi KAHANE. Because of this activity.

Incidentally, there is a very definite quota of Jews in the institutions of higher learning, a very definite quota.

Judaism is not a faith limited to prayer, but acts, the observance of the Sabbath, circumcision, bar mitzvah.

The bar mitzvah, which is the day when a Jewish youngster enters upon the obligations of a Jew, was described by a Soviet propaganda tract as a strong and disfiguring influence.

This article goes on to say :

... In our day, too, the Bar-Mitzva is observed in some Jewish families, in which the fanatical parents do not wish to give up this harmful tradition.

The rite of the Bar-Mitzva has a strong and disfiguring influence on young boys.

Long before the observance of the rite, the young lad is obliged to learn at least the basic tenets of the Jewish faith.

This alone distracts him from his studies in school. It is difficult even to imagine that in some families a young boy, before whom is opened the bright paths into the interesting world of science, is forced, under the tutorship of his father, or of a hired tutor, a "rebbe" to sweat over the dusty books of the ancient Bible.

It is therefore not surprising that the children often agree to this only under the threat of a punishment. Sometimes parents even beat up their children to force them to study for their Bar-Mitzva.

The regional paper, *Sovietskoye Zakarpatye*, wrote at one time that a 6th grade pupil of the Uzhgorod High School No. 8, Lyndvig Leibovich, tearfully complained to his teacher that his father was beating him for his unwillingness to go to the synagogue and to study for his Bar-Mitzva.

Other parents bribe their children with promises of expensive gifts. Under the influence of such fanatic parents, our Soviet schoolboy, a pioneer, is forced to compromise with his conscience and this cripples the child morally and causes him a grave spiritual trauma.

Thirty thousand spiritually effected traumas danced outside the synagogues of Moscow on Simchas Torah.

Rabbi Bronstein has helped to perpetuate circumcision.

I have in my files a front-page article from one of the Moslem Republics of Russia, and the Moslems, of course, also practice these rites.

There is a photo of it, a great holiday and in no way was there any word of condemnation. I quote the words from the Uzhgorod booklet:

... Judaism is just as cruel towards children. It demands the performing of the rite of circumcision over an eight-day old baby boy.

The rabbis, insisting on the fulfilling of this rite, are still pursuing a reactionary purpose in this: to isolate the Jewish workers from the workers of other nationalities and to inculcate children, from an early age, with the deeply harmful idea of their belonging to the "chosen people."

Reactionary individuals show special insistence on this here, too. A few years ago in Chernovtsy, the son of a certain Gendel, a worker in the Restaurants and Dining Rooms Trust, almost died as a result of circumcision.

He lost so much blood that only a doctor, called for assistance, saved the infant from imminent death. With anger and with pain, the child's father told about this savage incident at an atheistic evening attended by more than one thousand workers.



Shekhter, the one who performed the rite, spoke after him. He said that he was ashamed to look people in the eyes and called upon all believing Jews to finish with this barbaric custom. . . . .

This is the propaganda that the Soviet people and the Jews must read. This is what the young Soviet Jewish child is taught in his school.

There is no way, no legal way, for him to hear the opposite view, to hear the opposite facts.

I would just like to touch at this point on something which I mentioned before.

All faiths in the Soviet Union are persecuted. The Jewish press has come out time and time again calling for the American Jew to stand up in protest against the persecution of the Baptists in the Soviet Union.

There have been meetings, joint meetings, held by organizations in this country who are active on behalf of the Soviet Jewry, in conjunction with Baptist groups, to protest the persecution.

Unfortunately—and I say this with a heavy heart—when certain Baptists appealed for sanctuary at the American Embassy in Moscow, they were turned away. I think this is a terrible, terrible stain on this country.

Mr. WATSON. Spell that out a little better. They appealed for sanctuary at the American Embassy, and the American Embassy did not give them sanctuary?

Rabbi KAHANE. Yes, sir; about 40 families suddenly appeared in Moscow. They had come from the provinces. They appeared in Moscow and they came into the United States Embassy and they listed a long list of persecutions they had undergone and they asked for sanctuary inside the Embassy and they were turned away.

They were kept there for a day, and instructions were asked of Washington what to do about them.

Mr. WATSON. How long ago was this, Rabbi?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I was there. It was about 5 years ago. It was published in all of the papers in the United States.

Rabbi KAHANE. At the time the Jewish press wrote a very, very strong editorial on this. It was one of the few moments when I who am truly proud to be a citizen of this country—the finest country in the world—felt a twinge of shame that we had done such a thing.

Mr. WATSON. Were these people charged with any specific crimes?

Rabbi KAHANE. No, none at all.

Mr. SMITH. You indicated that the Embassy asked for instructions from Washington as to what to do.

Rabbi KAHANE. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. I don't believe you stated what happened.

Rabbi KAHANE. The next day they were ousted from the Embassy so it is quite obvious what those instructions were.

Mr. SMITH. Rabbi, has the plight of Jews been aggravated by the attitude of the Soviet toward the situation in the Middle East?

Rabbi KAHANE. There is no doubt that the Soviet Union suffered a severe blow; in fact, the world Communist movement suffered its severest blow in more than a decade when the Israelis defeated the Arabs last year. I cannot tell you how infuriated and how psychopathic the Soviets became at that defeat. Not since the Soviets were forced

to remove the missiles from Cuba have they literally suffered any defeat in the world.

In Laos, Vietnam, throughout Africa, throughout America communism was expanding. And here was their opportunity to literally seize the Middle East, to destroy one of the few Western bastions aside from a country like Turkey. There are really few Western bastions, bastions of freedom and democracy, aside from Israel.

The Soviets campaigned for over a year to prepare the groundwork to have the Arab states attack Israel. It was the Soviets who began spreading the rumor that Israel was about to invade Syria in early 1967.

It was they who encouraged Nasser to demand the withdrawal of U.N. troops from Sinai and to block the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel shipping, which they knew was an act of war, which they knew would compel Israel to fight or die.

For months prior to the outbreak of the war, the Soviets, the press, and radio laid the groundwork for public opinion against Israel and against America.

Let me make this clear right now. During this entire period preceding the war and during the war and after the war, Israel was called by both the Soviet Union and China the lackey of American imperialism, that Israel was being used to reestablish imperialism, colonialism, ad nauseum, in the Middle East.

Moscow radio on April 8, 1967, broadcast this following gem :

New and very important details have emerged in the news concerning the 7 April Syrian-Israeli armed clash caused by Israel. For example it has become apparent that American pilots participated alongside Israelis in the air raids against Syria. Syrian authorities were told this by one of the American pilots whose plane was shot down while the Syrians were repelling the Israeli attack. The statements of the American pilot, who fell into the hands of the Syrian authorities, indicate that a deal has been concluded between the United States and Israel to import planes and other war equipment.

In compliance with Washington's request, Jordan granted Israel the right to use its airspace without interference. These facts indicate once more that Israeli aggressiveness is but a curtain behind which Washington pursues its aggressive aims toward the independent Arab states. \* \* \*

Unfortunately, very, very few people know or realize how closely linked American foreign policy or the American security, the American future, is linked to that of freedom-loving nations such as Israel, and I would like to make the comment right here that I believe my newspaper believes, and the majority of American Jews believe, that the war in Vietnam and the war in the Middle East were part of the same war, same enemies.

Communism is an entity, a unity. The Israeli troops fought for America. American troops in Vietnam fight for Israel. Both fight for the free world, and I would like to make that very, very clear to you, that no matter what you might read or think, American Jews are convinced of this. And while many of us, many Americans, might differ on certain aspects of the war, some calling for less escalation and some calling for more, but the fact is that the knowledge is clear that Israel and Vietnam and every other area in which communism fights the free world is part of the same thing.

Mr. SMITH. What are the so-called economic crimes in the Soviet Union?

Rabbi KAHANE. As I had mentioned, the Soviet Union used the pretext of economic crimes as a cover for anti-Semitism. To begin with, 80 percent of all of the so-called economic criminals was Jewish, listed as such, to ethnic charge; to charge, their ethnic background was carefully listed and above all religious leaders were linked to these crimes.

Just as an aside, those same groups in this country which protest against the death penalty for rapists and murderers did not protest when 250 people were shot to death for black marketeering, just as the same groups that protest against the bombing of Hanoi and the accidental killing of civilians do not protest when, in Saigon, civilians are purposefully, deliberately murdered.

The economic crimes, as I say, were used as a campaign against the synagogue and against the Jew.

On November 5, 1962, the great synagogue of Lvov, the last remaining Jewish prayer house in the Ukraine, was shut down. The closing of the synagogue was the culmination of an intensive campaign of the state police, the militia.

In a paper published in Kiev, 1962, a demand was made that the Lvov synagogue, which is pictured as the center for illicit currency dealings, be closed.

According to the article:

Jewish speculators from Lvov and foreign towns met and carried on their trade and concluded their transactions. \* \* \* The leading figure in the Synagogue and in the ring speculators was \* \* \* the ritual slaughterer Kontorovich, who made religion and its rites the source of his personal income. In contravention of the State wine monopoly he made religious wine, which he sold at exorbitant prices, for the celebration of religious festivals.<sup>1</sup>

The article goes further and says this misdeed caused the death sentence of this person and another member of the synagogue council. They were both shot, and the synagogue was closed.

Mr. SMITH. What has been the reaction of the groups that you mentioned a while ago, Communist Party, Workers World Party, Youth Against War and Fascism, Progressive Labor, and Socialist Workers Party, toward the persecution of the Jews in the Soviet Union?

Rabbi KAHANE. All of the Communist groups, whether Moscow-oriented or Peking-oriented, follow the party line precisely and exactly. There is no doubt that within the Soviet Union there is an attempt to forcibly assimilate the Jew and do away with the congregant Jew.

The facts were so obvious that several Jewish Communists who have withstood the storms and the tides of swerving party lines finally had it just a little bit.

Several of them called for the Soviet Union to alleviate its line just a little bit. The American Communist Party, the Communist Party of the U.S., devoted three issues of its *Political Affairs* journal to this question and various top Communist leaders as well.

Daniel Rubin, who at that time was the Communist Party's youth director, wrote in the December 1966 issue of *Political Affairs*—

we still should ask ourselves whether, if it is true that Jewish culture in the USSR will be dead in 10 years, this in itself is bad? \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> "Economic Crimes in the Soviet Union" (reprint), *Journal of the International Commission of Jurists*, summer 1964, vol. V, No. 1, p. 37.

What Rubin was saying was that to be a Jew was no great or important thing.

And this concept was taken up by Irving Potash, a long-time anti-Jewish Semite and long-time party leader.

Potash writes:

This false concept is a throw-back to historic narrow nationalism reflected in such expressions as "Jewishness" and "Jewish spirit" \* \* \*.

This emphasis on the idea of the Jewish community, from the emphasis arises the fantastic demand that the Soviet Union allow its Jewish community to establish contact with the Jewish community of other countries.

Hyman Lumer, at that time the editor of *Political Affairs* [quoting from Lenin], states:

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the "most just," "purest," most refined and civilized brand.\* \* \*

The Jews of the Soviet Union will disappear. This is precisely what the Communist Party wants. This is one area in which the Communist Party defends the present campaign to destroy the Jew at this moment.

But this is only an end. Here is a long, long traditional precedent.

At the time that Stalin was opposed to intervention against Hitler and at that moment when Jewry was being doomed, the Communist Party of this country, through one of its Jewish traitors named Moses Miller, published a booklet called *A Jew Looks at the War*,<sup>1</sup> in which Miller said the Jewish people of America are against this war.

The Jewish people do not want one single American young man to lose his life over there. We have a war to carry on, but that war is right here.

Incidentally, you could take these paragraphs and the Jewish Communists are saying it right at this moment—things never, never change.

At that moment he knew adaptation of that policy would doom Jews to death, but he wrote it anyway.

MR. SMITH. Do you have any evidence of the deliberate creation of anti-Semitism by any of these Communist groups?

Rabbi KAHANE. I am not quite finished. I would first of all like to mention several more areas in which the Communist Party of this country has hewed faithfully to the line on the Jewish question, since this is the basic line of this committee, and in addition to that also cover several of the other Communist groups which are not led by Moscow.

On the question of the establishment of a Jewish state, in 1937 when the specter of Hitler, who swore to wipe out the Jews of Europe, was hovering over the world, at that moment when there was still a hope that some of these Jews could be saved and somehow they could be gotten to Palestine, the Soviet Union opposed any such move and since the Soviet Union did, the Communist Party of this country put out a booklet called *Letter To A Zionist Friend*.<sup>2</sup>

At that moment, Arab mobs were carrying on terrorism against Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Booklet published by Jewish Peoples Committee, New York, N.Y., June 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Booklet by Ben David, published by Jewish Pamphlet Library, New York, March 1937.

My aunt was killed in 1937 by the Arabs in Palestine, and I am happy to say that I am ready to testify to that scene at any time.

All through the horrors of Stalin, the Communists in this country said that there was no truth to it, there was no truth to anti-Semitism, there was no truth to the stories that Jewish writers and intellectuals were being killed.

Suddenly, Khrushchev says it is true, it all happened. So, suddenly, Jewish life under the Communist order grows. "We are sorry, we are sorry," they said, "we were wrong."

During the crisis last year between Israel and the Arabs when the Soviet Union, of course, followed a completely viciously anti-Israel line, the Communist Party of this country followed the exact line.

*The Worker* said in an editorial on May 28, 1967:

GUILT for the present dangerous crisis in the Middle East rests solely upon the Wall Street imperialists, the oil trusts and the Johnson Administration, which is acting as their agent.

June 13, 1967, headline of *The Worker* was "LBJ Helps Israel In Attempt to Hold Seized Arab Land."

In November 1967, an International Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples, a Communist group, was held in New Delhi.

Herbert Aptheker wrote a speech in support of the Arab peoples right down the line, though Aptheker knew that the Arab peoples, the Arab armies, intended not just to conquer Israel, but to liquidate the Jewish state and its inhabitants, to add 2½ million Jews to the 6 million that Hitler killed, but Herbert Aptheker went right down the line, right down the line and he called in his declaration:

The method of warfare employed by Israel was in cynical violation of standards of human decency, now established by the judgments of the Nuremberg Trials, the Charter of the U.N.O. and the Conventions of the International Red Cross. The large-scale use of napalm—"Portable Crematoria"—against civilians, the expulsion of civilian populations, the shooting of prisoners or turning them loose in the desert to die—such actions can not fail to raise memories of the policies of Hitler's Nazis.<sup>1</sup>

Not just the Communist Party of this country, but those parties which follow the Peking line went right down the line with Peking.

Incidentally, I want to make it very, very clear to groups in this country such as the SDS, which sees no evil in China, to such groups as Youth Against War and Fascism, which sees no evil in China, as the Progressive Labor Party would see no evil in China, I would like to call attention to what the Chinese version is for the final solution to Israel.

The Chinese are not talking about whether Israel should take in Arab refugees, whether they should give up conquered lands.

In June of 1966 at a conference in Peking [the Afro-Asian Writers' Emergency Meeting, June 27–July 9, 1966], the following resolution on Palestine was passed, and paragraph 10 reads:

The Meeting demands that Israel, a colonialist entity completely dependent on world imperialism, be completely liquidated.<sup>2</sup>

That was the Chinese version.

Nevertheless, those groups which owe allegiance to China, such as the Progressive Labor Party, went down the line—July 1967 issue of

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, January 1968, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Peking Review*, July 15, 1966, p. 47.

*Challenge*, the newspaper of the PLP—"5 pages on MID EAST Facts, Lessons"—facts were facts, lessons were lessons.

"Israel Plotted Suez Grab With Imperialists, Minister Confirms"

"PALESTINE: WHOSE HOMELAND?"

"Israel's Birth: Zionists Coldly Planned Terror"

All through their leaflets and their publications was one theme—Vietnam, the Middle East, are one war and in this particular case, I agree with them. It is one war.

I would like to conclude with this following word:

I was in Israel last year, a year in which anti-Vietnam riots in this country were going very, very well. If the Israeli people could have a referendum on that war, I can assure you overwhelmingly they would have pleaded with America to stay in Vietnam.

I want to read an article to you to conclude with this which was in one of the leading Israeli papers:

In Vietnam, the United States bars the road of destructive military force that is capable tomorrow of reaching India and the next day Asia Minor, if only she is allowed to do so.

It is worthwhile for the sensitive souls who decry the dirty war to remember this: It is time for them to remember bombs falling on a bridge in Hanoi.

So long as America stands alone and does this work and spills the blood of her sons in Vietnam, she is not worthy of being kicked and smeared but is deserving of appreciation and support for then in the end she defends that civilization, that way of life, those ideals common to her and to everyone who sees himself belonging to the free world.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, since time will not permit Rabbi Kahane to cover all of his material, I request permission for him to submit various documents he has used here and additional ones which will reveal the manner in which U.S. Communist groups have denied that they tried to clear the Soviet Union of all charges of anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jewish religion.

The CHAIRMAN. That permission is granted.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, because of its relevance to the testimony received this morning from Rabbis Kahane and Bronstein and also the testimony of Richard Wurmbrand received last August, it is requested that an article entitled "THE GREATEST BEGGAR IN THE WORLD" be printed as a part of this hearing.

The article in question was published in the June 18, 1968, issue of the *National Review*. It concerns Communist-bloc persecution of Catholicism and certain steps being taken by the Catholic Church to preserve the practice of Catholicism behind the Iron Curtain.

The CHAIRMAN. That will be received and printed. (See appendix, pages 2235 and 2236.)

Thank you very much. You have made a great contribution to this committee and to the cause we are digging into.

Mr. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, may I just make one statement and ask Rabbi Kahane a question?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. WATSON. I notice in the *Evening Star* yesterday an article on the second page of section A, where Rabbi Levin, who is the chief rabbi of Moscow, received "a clamorous welcome" and the official welcoming party was headed by Richard Korn, president of the American Council for Judaism.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Yediot Arnot*, an Israeli Hebrew-language newspaper.

Could either of you give us some information on this organization or this individual?

I am not trying to pick an argument here with any faith, but I was just trying to get a reading on this thing as to whether or not your people are fully apprised of what is going on in Russia and this man's particular position.

Rabbi KAHANE. Ordinarily, I hesitate to comment on other Jewish organizations. However, in this case since you have asked me, I thank you for asking me.

The ACJ is a very, very small group of individuals who are opposed to the establishment of a Jewish national homeland. They fought the creation of the State of Israel until 1948, when it was created, and since that time they have joined openly with Arabs.

Many of their members have traveled through Arab countries for anti-Israel propagandist purposes. When all American Jewish organizations have been protesting anti-Semitism within the Soviet Union, this group alone said it was not true, not because they are Communists, but for other reasons.

In any case, the Soviet Union, which is desperately anxious to call all these charges a lie, thought of the idea of sending Rabbi Levin to America. I can assure you that Rabbi Levin was not anxious to come in any manner or form. He has no desire in any form to be a part of a Soviet plot to disprove these true charges.

However, as Rabbi Bronstein said, the Soviet Union is one great prison, and he is a prisoner. It is not just for his own life or safety he fears, but for 3 million hostages back in the Soviet Union, 3 million Jews.

He was forced to come. The Soviet Union cleverly came up with the one and only organization which would work with them in having Rabbi Levin come here. It is an anti-Zionist and, in a sense, truly an anti-Semitic group.

Therefore, this clamorous welcome was far from clamorous, incidentally. I don't know if this story has a wire service heading or not.

Mr. WATSON. New York AP byline.

Rabbi KAHANE. The *New York Times* had the same lead paragraph, and I have my own particular criticism of that paper. The fact is that it was not a clamorous welcome. The fact of the matter is a second group came there in an attempt to salvage something and to at least rescue Rabbi Levin and have him come over with a legitimate British group, and that is the group mentioned there led by Rabbi Teitz.

I want to say in no way should the visit of Rabbi Levin be construed as any lessening of Soviet anti-Semitism. You can rest assured that *Pravda* and all of the lackeys of Moscow here will play this up to prove there is really no anti-Semitism. That is the sole purpose of this visit.

Mr. WATSON. In other words, the group led by Rabbi Teitz?

Rabbi KAHANE. It is a group of orthodox Jews who have held personal contact with him. I think on this particular point, Rabbi Bronstein could certainly add several things.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. I would like to clarify the purpose of bringing Rabbi Levin to the United States—I am talking here about the true purpose.

I know Rabbi Levin from my nine visits to the Soviet Union.

He is a loyal, learned rabbi. However, any official in the Soviet Union

just because of the fact of being an official must follow the Soviet line.

I know of many great rabbis and scholars who are collecting junk and who are doing the most black work not to be a rabbi, just to avoid being an official rabbi, because if they are official rabbis they must submit every sermon before it is preached to the minister of all religions, and every news medium is controlled by this bureau.

Mr. WATSON. In other words, Rabbi Levin is officially selected by the state as the head or chief rabbi of the state?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Rabbi Levin was a rabbi in a small town and when the Yeshiva was opened in 1950, he was called in to be one of the Yeshiva's presidotels upon the passing of the present chief. Rabbi Levin was selected as the chief rabbi of Moscow.

Mr. WATSON. Selected by whom?

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. By the government.

In Russia there is such a thing as a Barzetska, which is a group of 20 members of the synagogue who are so-called in control of the religious activities in the synagogue, but they are really informers for the Soviet Union.

Mr. WATSON. The main thing we wanted to get to is this man is an official of the state and he is not over here speaking for the 3 million Jews in Moscow.

Rabbi BRONSTEIN. Certainly not. All of the rabbinical organizations, including my own and other organizations, have always attempted to invite Rabbi Levin to this country, but he could never get here.

When this Organization of Assimilations invited him and because they followed the anti-Jewish line, they were successful in getting him.

Now, when Rabbi Teitz and myself went to greet Rabbi Levin, we didn't go to greet him on behalf of the American Council for Judaism, but rather as personal friends and hoped we would have every opportunity to show Rabbi Levin real Jewish life in America.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your great contribution.

The subcommittee will stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 1:50 p.m., Wednesday, June 19, 1968, the subcommittee adjourned.)



## APPENDIX

## PIMPERNEL FOR THE CHURCH

THE GREATEST  
BEGGAR IN THE WORLD

CHARLES FOLEY

YOU HAVE TO PUT ten lire in the elevator to make it work. Grumbling, it heaves you up six floors to the top of a nineteenth-century palazzo on the Vatican side of the Tiber. A door is opened by a smiling, fresh-faced girl with a lot of fair hair, who looks as if she should be selling butter and eggs in Holland, and you step, slightly startled, into a clean and sparkling set of rooms that also seems to have been imported from the North. White curtains, blowing in the breeze, white walls and paintwork, clinical modern furniture, and behind a desk buried in papers, a big man in abundant, dazzling white robes.

*The Re-Christianizer*

Father Werenfried van Straaten looks a bit like an ex-boxer: heavy shoulders, a solid jaw, a little trouble around the midriff, which he slaps heartily. "Nothing to be done! No time for exercise!" He is a Dutchman and the head of a remarkable organization which has been called "the Vatican CIA" and is in fact the Catholic Church's "Iron Curtain Relief Service." Its immediate task is to help the persecuted church of Eastern Europe, and its ultimate aim is nothing less than the re-Christianization of the countries now under Communist domination.

Father van Straaten admits to being a boxer in his youth; but as for running a spy center—"my spies only interest themselves in charity and religion."

"But it's true," he adds, "that in Czechoslovakia, for example, where the Church is dying and the 1,400 priests are prevented in so many ways from carrying out their ministry, they call us spies. Once I entered Czechoslovakia clandestinely with a tourist party. In a Prague square I saw five big photographs exhibited—the five biggest religious enemies of the regime. The Pope, Cardinal Mindszenty, Cardinal Spellman, Cardinal Frings—and me. Under my picture the cap-

tion read: "This is the man who calls himself chief of the army of God. He takes money and jewels from the faithful to turn priests into spies."

Father van Straaten rummaged among the papers on the desk and found a document which he recently took to Pope Paul VI at a private audience: his annual budget. The total income—which equaled expenditure—was more than \$5 million.

There were items for aid to churches and priests who work in secret, for the families of priests in prison, for food, clothes, books. I queried "motorization."

"Those are our chapel trucks," Father van Straaten explained: "We have converted hundreds of lorries. You open the side and there's the altar. Priests drive them around the villages in areas which have no churches."

Part of the money goes on preparations for the day when the Communist regimes will crumble. More than twenty seminaries and monasteries are training priests and close to a thousand refugees have already been ordained. The target is 3,000, and if, by some means, all restrictions were to be lifted on the Church in satellite countries tomorrow. Father van Straaten's priests would be ready to cross the frontiers the same day in chapel trucks, bearing supplies of food and fuel. "We've even recorded messages of hope and greeting to be broadcast when the day of freedom comes," he says.

To raise money, the head of Iron Curtain Church Relief goes on speaking tours. His dusty black Mercedes clocked up 100,000 miles last year. He sleeps in the back seat, to be woken at frontiers and towns where people are waiting to hear him preach. He has made twelve speeches a day in different towns and villages. When we met in Rome he was just preparing for another tour in East Germany. He asks for money, or for gifts. This means that ICCR's ware-

houses are crammed with 2,000 tons of offerings, from socks to smoked sausages, double beds and diamond brooches. He begs addresses from business organizations, and to these he sends copies of his twice monthly *Mirror* periodical, which has a printing of 50 million.

"I'm sorry I cannot tell you the means we use to send aid behind the Curtain," he said. "But one way or another we keep the supplies going. Money, food parcels, typewriters, cars."

"Transport is vital. In one way or another we've provided thousands of motorcycles and cars for priests in Communist lands and in refugee areas."

*Priests for Sale*

Father van Straaten has traveled often in Communist countries. He risks his life but seems also to enjoy it.

"I adopt a false name and leave my habit behind. I go as a farmer, say, or tourist and I grow a how-do-you-say. . . ." His fingers twirled at the ends of an invisible moustache. In this way he has visited the bishops of the Catholic Church in six Peoples' Republics, and personally spoken to scores of secret priests—men who wear no robes and who are, in outward appearance, ordinary factory workers or farm laborers. These men evade state control by being ordained in brief ceremonies in some secret place. Some are betrayed by informers, but many thousands are at work, baptizing, hearing confessions, celebrating Mass among the 65 million Catholics of Eastern Europe.

Many Communist officials turn a blind eye to the work of secret priests, either because they wish to insure themselves against a possible collapse of the regime; or because they are themselves secretly Christians. It is known that some very high-up Soviet leaders are believers; they may even, like Svetlana Stalin, be members of the Russian Church.

Certain Communist regimes sell priests, along with Jews and other "undesirables," to the West. The practice has provided useful support for the Rumanian economy over the past six years. But, perhaps because Catholicism is the most stringently persecuted of all Christian creeds, Father van Straaten has been able to buy only seven priests over this period.

Weren't things getting better for

the Church in these days of "peaceful coexistence"? I asked.

Van Straaten looked at me with questioning grey eyes. "On the contrary, they are getting worse," he said, and brought out a thick folder stuffed with documents. "This is my radiograph of the persecuted Church, country by country. They cannot touch thousands of our bravest priests, because they are already dead. Some three thousand, however, are still in prison and more than ten thousand nuns have been driven from their convents to work in labor camps. Of the bishops, about two hundred have been exiled, imprisoned, killed or forced to renounce their ministry. There is a constant movement to replace a faithful priest with a 'state candidate'—a man who will obey whatever order the government may give him, however contrary to his faith.

#### Albanian Church Gone

"Take Poland. For 35 million Catholics there, no new church has been built since 1958. The authorities talk about the separation of church and state, but in fact the state controls every last detail. There's no religious instruction in the schools, and the few Catholic schools still open—five—are kept on simply to show to tourists from the West. All religious books have disappeared. They burn them at a farm in Jeziorno—people call it the breviary-grinder.

"Albania is worse still. The Church there has been annihilated, and the five bishops have just vanished. In Rumania there were ten bishops, of whom three have been killed, four have died in prison and the others are still confined. In Czechoslovakia the number of priests falls and falls. The limit is twenty new priests a year, against the sixty lost in the same period. All the seminaries are closed, and 764 convents are empty. Do you know that they offer a prize of 10,000 crowns to anyone who can induce a nun to renounce her faith?"

What was the ICCR doing in Soviet Russia? I asked.

"We have been there, even in Siberia; in the Ukraine there were five million Catholics, but many have been deported, the churches in the villages are ruined or used as grain stores, and of the eleven bishops, ten are dead and the last, Cardinal Slipiv, has been allowed to come to the West after eighteen years of forced

labor. It is forbidden to teach the catechism and from the age of six, children are taught to hate the idea of God."

Father van Straaten, who is fifty-five, studied languages as a young man at Utrecht University, and today he speaks seven. He founded the ICCR movement in 1947 when some twelve million German refugees were flowing into the West. He told his superior on Christmas morning that he had decided to leave the abbey where he worked to help the refugees by speaking for them and collecting aid on their behalf. He remembers his first sermon:

"The church was crowded, and I knew everyone there had reasons, personal reasons, to hate the Germans. While I preached, explaining the sufferings of these refugees and asking for help, the crowd just stared at me coldly. It was the most difficult sermon of my life. At the end of Mass I stood at the church door with a hat in my hand; and one by one the whole congregation went by and not many of them looked at me, and not one put anything in the hat.

"I went back into the church in anguish and went down on my knees and prayed. Then I felt a touch on my shoulder. It was an old woman. 'My two sons were killed by the Germans,' she said. 'But what you said was just. Here are five francs for those poor people.' So I started with five francs to feed twelve million."

Later, touring factories, forums and towns, Father van Straaten found that people could learn to care for those whom they had so recently cursed. His work and fame grew. He recalls a day in 1949 when he was attempting to negotiate with a Red

general in behalf of refugees. "We Rumanians are the picked troops of Satan!" he said, and laughed. "Are you the best God can produce?" I thought: we shall see. I haven't looked back from that day."

#### God Helps the Helpers

ICCR is now expanding its activities to help the Church in many other countries where it is in danger or difficulty: in Brazil, Chile and Colombia; in the Congo and in India; in Vietnam, where over a million Catholic refugees have fled Hanoi to the South.

"It is presumptuous and unreasonable to expect that God will free the Church from Communism if we haven't done all we can to make that liberation productive and significant," said Father van Straaten. "We have already lost 20,000 priests in the countries of the Soviet empire. They died in prisons and camps, they fled or simply disappeared. We pray for the persecuted Church, and we pray for the conversion of all Communists, the dupers and the duped, Brezhnev, Gromyko, Tito, Mao—for the persecutors are in greater need, spiritually, than the persecuted. But if we do not dare to make preparations, to work, our prayers will not have a very persuasive influence on God!"

Father van Straaten smiled. "You know, I wasn't altogether at home as a monk. I sang in the abbey choir, but my voice was loud and always slightly off key."

There is a certainty in his voice now that is, in itself, a solace. It is easy to understand why "Werenfried"—his monastic name, meaning "Champion for Peace"—has become for millions of people in East and West a symbol of faith in the future.



# I N D E X

## INDIVIDUALS

### A

	Page
Aptheker, Herbert-----	2231

### B

Bookbinder-----	2222
Brezhnev (Leonid I.)-----	2236
Bronstein, Harry-----	2197-2199, 2205, 2206-2220 (testimony), 2226, 2233

### C

Colback-----	2222
--------------	------

### D

David, Ben-----	2230
-----------------	------

### E

Ehrenburg, Ilya-----	2223
----------------------	------

### F

Faig, Mayer-----	2224
Foley, Charles-----	2235
Friedland-----	2222
Frings-----	2235

### G

Gendel-----	2226
Gendelman, Yonah-----	2213
Gromyko (Andrei A.)-----	2236

### H

Hocohen, Yesroel Meir-----	2203, 2221
Hitler, Adolf-----	2199, 2203, 2204, 2222, 2223, 2230, 2231

### J

Johnson (Lyndon Baines)-----	2231
------------------------------	------

### K

Kahane, Meir-----	2197, 2199, 2202-2205 (statement), 2218, 2220-2234 (statement resumed)
Khrushchev (Nikita Sergeevich)-----	2197, 2199, 2204, 2223, 2224, 2231
Kontorovich-----	2229
Korn, Richard-----	2232
Kosygin (Aleksei)-----	2208

	L	Page
Leibovich, Lyudvig -----		2226
Leibovich, Nander -----		2224
Lenin (V. I.) -----		2230
Levin (Yehuda Leib) -----	2205, 2212, 2224, 2232,	2233
Litvinov -----		2222
Lumer, Hyman -----		2230
M		
Mao (Tse-tung) -----		2236
Miller, Moses -----		2230
Mindszenty (Joseph) Cardinal -----		2235
Moreza -----		2205
N		
Nasser (Gamal Abdel) -----		2225
Nikodin, Nikolai -----		2212
P		
Pope Paul VI -----		2235
Potash, Irving -----		2230
R		
Rofus -----		2222
Rubin, Daniel -----		2229, 2230
S		
Shekhter -----		2227
Slipy -----		2236
Spellman (Francis) Cardinal -----		2235
Stalin, Josef -----	2199, 2203, 2222-2224, 2230,	2231
Stalin, Svetlana -----		2235
Streicher, Julius -----		2223
T		
Teitz (Pinchas M.) -----		2218, 2233
Tito (Joseph Broz) -----		2236
Tress, Michael D. -----		2206
V		
van Straaten, Werenfried -----		2235, 2236
W		
Weinstein -----		2222
Wiesel, Elie -----		2225
Y		
Yaris, Harry -----		2205

## ORGANIZATIONS

A		
ACJ. ( <i>See</i> American Council for Judaism.)		
Afro-Asian Writers' Emergency Meeting, June 27-July 9, 1966, Peking, China -----		2231
Agudath Israel -----		2206
Al Tidom -----	2199, 2206,	2218
American Council for Judaism (ACJ) -----	2232	2234
American Jewish Committee -----		2220

## C

CPUSA. ( <i>See</i> Communist Party of the United States of America.)	Page
Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA)-----	2197, 2230
	2199, 2202, 2223, 2229, 2230
Communist Party, Soviet Union-----	2222, 2224, 2226, 2230
Congresses:	
Twentieth Congress, February 1956, Moscow-----	2223

## I

ICCR. ( <i>See</i> Iron Curtain Church Relief.)	
International Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples-----	2231
Iron Curtain Church Relief (ICCR)-----	2235, 2236

## J

Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee-----	2223
Jewish Defense League-----	2197, 2202
Jewish Pamphlet Library-----	2230
Jewish Peoples Committee-----	2230
Joint Distribution Committee-----	2208, 2223

## K

KGB. ( <i>See</i> entry under Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Government of, Secret Police.)	
Komsomol. ( <i>See</i> Young Communist League, Soviet Union.)	

## O

Organization of Assimilations-----	2234
------------------------------------	------

## P

Polish United Workers' Party. ( <i>See</i> United Polish Workers' (Communist) Party.)	
Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) (or Party (PLP))-----	2229, 2231

## R

Rabbinical Alliance of America-----	2198, 2206
Radio Free Europe-----	2212, 2215
Radio Liberty-----	2198, 2215, 2218

## S

SDS. ( <i>See</i> Students for a Democratic Society.)	
Socialist Workers Party (SWP)-----	2229
Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)-----	2231

## T

Tass (News Agency)-----	2223
-------------------------	------

## U

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Government of-----	2208, 2209, 2213, 2229
Secret Police (GB—Gosudarstvennaya Bezopasnost—state security):	
KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti—Committee for State Security)-----	2198, 2199, 2208, 2211, 2213
United Polish Workers' (Communist) Party-----	2205
United States Government:	
Embassies:	
Moscow, Russia-----	2227
United States Information Agency:	
Voice of America-----	2198, 2212, 2215, 2217, 2218, 2225

## V

Voice of America. ( <i>See</i> entry under United States Government, United States Information Agency.)	
Voice of Israel-----	2215, 2225

	Page
W	
Workers Library Publishers, Inc.-----	2223
Workers World Party (WWP)-----	2229
Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF)-----	2229, 2231

## Y

Young Communist League, Soviet Union (Komsomol)-----	2219, 2221
Young Against War and Fascism. ( <i>See</i> entry under Workers World Party (WWP).)	

## PUBLICATIONS

## C

Challenge (Progressive Labor Party newspaper)-----	2232
Communism v. Judaism (Meir Kahane)-----	2202, 2221

## F

Folks-Shtimme (newspaper)-----	2214
--------------------------------	------

## G

Greatest Beggar in the World, The (article) (Charles Foley)-----	2232, 2235
--	------------

## H

History of Soviet Foreign Policy, A (booklet)-----	2223
--	------

## J

Jew Looks at the War, A (booklet)-----	2230
Jewish Daily Forward (newspaper)-----	2220
Jewish Press (newspaper)-----	2197, 2202, 2221
Jewish Stake in Vietnam, The (book)-----	2202
Jews of Silence, The (book)-----	2225

## L

Letter To A Zionist Friend (booklet)-----	2230
---	------

## M

Mirror-----	2235
-------------	------

## P

Political Affairs (magazine)-----	2229, 2230
Pravda -----	2219, 2222

## R

Russian Sketches-----	2220
-----------------------	------

## S

Sovietskoye Zakarpatye -----	2226
------------------------------	------

## T

Trud (newspaper) -----	2225
------------------------	------

## W

Worker, The -----	2205, 2219, 2231
-------------------	------------------

## Y

Yediot Aronot (Israeli Hebrew-language newspaper) -----	2232
---	------









BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 05706 3024

u	6	an	lands
n			city of new n
co	3024		1-2



