

# ALERT

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## The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews

### VOLVOVSKY DISAPPEARS IN KISHINEV



Leonid (Arye) Volvovsky [pictured at left] a prominent refusenik recently forced out of Moscow, was detained by the militia while on a visit to Kishinev. He has not been seen for more than a week; the militia now denies that he is in their custody. Repeated attempts to locate him have been unsuccessful.

Arye, as the famed Hebrew teacher is affectionately known, was visiting with friends at the Rosenthal home for a Yom Ha Atzmaut celebration. The police entered without search warrants with the declared intention of looking for vagrants. Three people were taken to the central militia station: Volvovsky, Aron Moonblit and a non-activist female lawyer. Volvovsky was the only one not released after interrogation.

The refusenik community is very concerned. The militia detail consisted of a Major Bashkov, Senior Lt. Susorov (inspector of criminal cases) and another "volunteer". Susorov now claims Volvovsky is in Moscow, where he has not been seen. The militia team was obviously not an ordinary detail, but rather an impressively high level group with a specific mission.

Since he lost the right to live in Moscow, Volvovsky has been living in Gorky, where Andrei Sakharov was also exiled. His Moscow apartment had been previously raided, and all Hebrew books were confiscated by the police. There is no Soviet law against the possession of Hebrew language material, but Hebrew is at present not an officially recognized language in the USSR.

Volvovsky was working as a computer specialist when he first applied for an emigration visa to Israel in 1974. Dismissed from his job immediately, he now earns a living as a private Hebrew teacher. (This money is not considered taxable by the Soviet government which does not recognize Hebrew teaching as a legal profession; thus those claiming to be Hebrew teachers are liable to the charge of parasitism).

Please send cables to the Chief Procurator in Kishinev protesting Volvovsky's detention. The address is: Chief Procurator, I.I. Cheban, 25 Gogola St., Kishinev, Moldavian SSR, USSR.

### INVESTIGATION DIRECTED AGAINST BRAILOVSKY AND YELISTRATOV

"Frame-ups" are being prepared against long-time refuseniks Brailovsky and Yelistratov, according to information from the Soviet Union.

As mentioned in the April 16 issue of the ALERT, several refuseniks have been recently subjected to intensive searches of their homes, as well as interrogations. All were told that the interrogations are in connection with Victor Brailovsky.

Brailovsky's Moscow apartment was the location of the recent international scientific seminar for refusenik scientists. Twenty-four foreign Scientists attended, as well as 40 refusenik scientists.

The attempt to frame Brailovsky influenced the fate of POC Igor Guberman who was asked repeatedly to testify against him. The threat of a fifteen year sentence was made during the pre-trial period to induce Guberman's cooperation against his fellow editor of Jews in the USSR. He refused, and was approached again by the KGB after the summary speech of the prosecutor. Promised a minimal punishment in return for his testimony, Guberman once again refused to testify.

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Victor Yelistratov's name has been raised frequently in recent weeks in connection with the case of Tatiana Velikanova, a prominent dissident. A number of people in various parts of Soviet Asia have been interrogated by the KGB concerning Yelistratov's activities.

Last year Yelistratov wrote:

We are well and all right, wondering exactly what the Moscow procurator office meant when it answered my claim to give my back my personal things confiscated at the search on August 9 with a phrase" ...after the investigation is over, we shall decide whether to give you back your things." Up till then we are getting prepared for the eve of the Olympics when we (or I, at least) shall be either arrested or expelled to provide foreign tourists and athletes with a joyful unclouded holiday.

Since the chill in relations between the US and the Soviet Union, Victor has become much more pessimistic. He now tells friends he expects to be arrested any day.

These two investigations may be part of the general "cleanup" by the Soviets in the pre-Olympic season. Please send letters of support to Yelistratov and Brailovsky.

Victor & Irina Brailovsky  
Vernadsky Pr 99-1  
Korp.1, apt. 28  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Victor & Batsheva Yelistratov  
Bol. Cherkizovskaya 1  
Korp 2, Apt. 50  
Moscow 107061, RSFSR, USSR

#### ZATS TO GO ON TRIAL FOR EMBEZZLEMENT

Moisei Zats, cleared in 1977 of embezzlement charges, has had his file reopened and is expected to go on trial during the week of May 4. His friends believe that the procurator of this city re-opened the investigation after after Moisei applied for permission to emigrate to Israel.

Three years ago, Zats worked as a construction engineer in Chernovtsy and was often contracted to do private work. Although these additional projects were authorized, a fellow worker sent an anonymous letter to the municipal procurator charging Zats with embezzlement. On October 2, 1977, after a nine month investigation, the local procurator decided to drop the charges.

Moisei, his wife, two children and mother-in-law, received their visas for Israel in the latter part of 1979. Needing more time to properly prepare for their departure, Zats requested an extension. The visas, given back to the OVIR, were subsequently returned only to Moisei's wife, children and mother-in-law. The family refused to leave without him. His mother-in-law died of a heart attack within a few weeks.

#### NOTES ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS IN THE USSR

The distribution of matza, which started in Moscow on the first of February, attracted at least six hundred people a day. Three tons were baked every day and each person was allowed to receive not more than five kilos at a time. People began lining up outside the synagogue at six in the morning.

In Vilnius too, matza was distributed in the Kapsuko Street Synagogue. Several of the local Jews arranged to send matza parcels to outlying towns where there are no synagogues and no facilities to obtain them.

The synagogue in Simferopol has been closed due to construction work in the vicinity. The baking of matza was transferred to Krasnoznamennaya 78, where some of the 20,000 Jews living in Simferopol gather for evening prayers.

The town of Shahrizyabs in Uzbekistan has a new cantor. He is Khanan Borokhov. The synagogue is situated in Baynal-Minalo Street #23. There are 200 Jewish families living here.

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On Purim at least 600 people attended the Moscow Synagogue to hear the reading of the Megillah, among them nearly 100 young people. Outside the synagogue more than 500 celebrated the festival with songs and music.

One of the first new Soviet rabbis in years was ordained in Budapest on March 9th. Adolf Shayevich studied for six years in the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary, the only religious college in Eastern Europe.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON AN IMPRISONED FAMILY

Zina and Arkady Abranzon have been held for seven months in pre-trial isolation in the Ukraine on possible charges of "possession of resources."

This is not a case of refuseniks being imprisoned, but rather an example of the reasons many Soviet Jews do not apply to leave.

According to information supplied by their cousins in California, it was well known that the Abranzons were planning to apply for an exit visa. Realizing that they might have to wait for a visa without any means of support - possibly several years if they were refused - they put aside their personal savings and possessions to help get them through a rough period.

On October 5, 1979, the police broke into their apartment in Ivano Frankovsk, arrested Zina Grigorevna and Arkady Leontevich Abranzon and confiscated their possessions. Since then they have been held, without visitors and without the medicine that both require for high blood pressure. Their trial may take place this month.

The family asks that letters of encouragement, and requests that they be given their medicine, be sent to the prison. Since the trial may take place soon, cables requesting clemency should be sent to the Chief Procurator, Ivano Frankovsk, Ukr. SSR, USSR.

The Abranzons are being held at: The Trial-Isolation Prison, Dadugina Street, Ivano Frankovsk 284025, Ukr. SSR, USSR.

#### NEWS BRIEFS

\* Naftali Tsitverblit, 16 year old son of Kiev refuseniks, was accosted and severely beaten last week by a group of hoodlums. These same boys had beaten Naftali so badly in an incident two years ago that Naftali was transferred to another school at his parents' request.

\* Ida Nudel is presently working in Tomsk, but is experiencing kidney problems.

\* Leonid Brailovsky is not participating in the "Military semester" of the Institute where he studies. So far, he has claimed to be ill, though this can only delay his army participation. Expulsion from the Institute would result in his being drafted into the army.

\* The Goldstein brothers in Tbilisi were refused again last month. An interesting sidelight has been reported by Isai. Mikhail Chazin, a member of Isai's Physics Institute claimed that Isai had knowledge of state secrets. This was the basis of his refusal on grounds of secrecy. This same Chazin is now under investigation for selling state secrets! Isai reports that he is now receiving only registered letters.

\* Lev Genin is an 18 year old Hebrew teacher who refuses to be drafted into the Soviet army. He applied for an exit permit twice, but was refused. He is now threatened with the draft. His address is: Lev Genin, Ul. Matveyevskaya 10, corp. 2, Kv.174, Moscow 119517, USSR.

\* Long-time refuseniks Yefim and Bella Zigelboim, formerly of Vilnius, are now in Israel.

\* A document from the Kolkhoz (collective farm) or Ilyinka details the tribulations of the Jewish families who are attempting to emigrate. They have not been allowed to quit the Kolkhoz, even though articles 1 and 7 of its charter permit the resignation of its members. Without resigning, it is impossible to submit an application to emigrate. Appeals to officials at all levels, from local to national, are ignored.

NEWS BRIEFS (continued)

\* Grigory and Natasha Rosenstein will be moving to Riga until the Olympics are over. They feel pressured to do this because their Moscow apartment is across from one of the Olympic sites. Correspondents should write to them at: Do Vostrebavania, Glavpochtamt, Riga, Latvian SSR, USSR.

\* An Israeli Lerner Committee was recently formed at the Weizman Institute. Their first activity on behalf of Dr. Alexander Lerner will be to try to understand recent developments in his "security" situation. An official told him last fall that he was no longer considered in possession of state secrets, but, nonetheless, he was refused again. The committee in Israel is working with Dr. Lerner's daughter, Sophia Lerner-Levin.

\* Word from the Soviet Union has it that the reason Anatoly Shcharansky received clean bedding in a newly whitewashed barracks was that the camp commandant expected a visit from the Red Cross. The camp, Perm 35, has no other Jews, though former POC Mark Dymshitz used to sleep in Shcharansky's bed. Other political prisoners, such as Ukrainian and Armenian nationalists, are being kept away from Shcharansky.

\* Lev Blitshtein will spend his fiftieth birthday alone on May 21. His family has been in the US since 1976 and their hopes of being reunited have been dashed by repeated refusals. A birthday card might lift his spirits. His address is: Bolshaya Pereyaslavskaya 3/2/2, Moscow 129041, RSFSR, USSR.

END OF AN ERA: JEWISH THEATRE CLOSED

Tallin, the capital of Estonia, is a clean quiet port city with a population of about one half million, among whom are about 1,500 Jews. When considering such a small population, it is most surprising to learn that a Jewish theatre with a dance company and choir existed there for ten years. Anna Krutchek, born in the Ukraine and a lawyer by profession, came to Israel in the beginning of February, and recounted how she was one of the initiators, as well as a principal actress of the ensemble. She brought with her a treasure-house of photographs and theatre listings which are testimonial to 10 years of devotion and hard work, hope, success, and excitement, as well as a deep love for the art.

Anna came to live in Tallin in 1962, when her engineer husband was assigned to one of the local plants, she found about 2,000 Jews in the city completely severed from any Jewish cultural or communal activity. She simply could not reconcile herself to this reality and, with her dynamism, set about changing it. The theatre was in existence until 1973. During this period forty company members presented various plays by Shalom Aleichem, Yakov Gordon etc. Performances were given every three months in Tallin, and periodically the group appeared in Vilna. Soviet authorities allowed no additional appearances.

"Every performance was an experience, everyone looked forward to it, sang and danced with us, each time it was like a Jewish holiday" relates Anna. The choir and dance group presented Jewish and Israeli folk dances. "Our purpose," she says, was to bring a little Jewish feeling, Jewish life, Jewish folklore to our people who were so far removed from any link with Yiddishkeit. Principally we wanted to bring the almost-assimilated youth closer."

In this they succeeded, for many young Jews began to ask to take part in the three companies. Why then did it cease to function in 1973? Because aliyah to Israel assumed serious proportions; actors, dancers, singers came to Israel and have been living there since then. Concomitantly, in the light of this massive re-awakening, the authorities began to place difficult obstacles in their paths. And so Anna Kurtchek comments wryly: "Perhaps it is symbolic that our last offering, the one during which we parted from our actors and audience, was Anna Frank."

## SOVIET JEWS: FACTS AND FICTION

RCDA Comment

BY OLGA S. HRUBÝ

THE following two documents offer two completely divergent views on the situation of Jews in the USSR. Neither of them presents any astonishing new revelations. The issue of Judaism in the USSR has been discussed on innumerable occasions from every point of view. Each of Soviet Jewish emigrants in the West can tell of his or her personal experience with overt or covert discrimination and humiliation, yet Soviet propaganda keeps repeating that Jews never had it so good as in the USSR and, except for some trouble-makers, they are absolutely happy and content with their lot and with all the opportunities open to them in the USSR.

It is true that there are many success stories concerning Soviet Jews. Many citizens of Jewish extraction indeed achieved prominence in sciences and arts, in professions and trades, even in the Communist Party. However, how many of them are practicing Jews? How many of them can honestly say that they have never experienced discrimination because of their origin? No matter what their social position may be, they are regarded as a foreign element which the society cannot fully trust; this is only natural, if we consider Karl Marx' attitude toward Jews and the history of sporadic outbreaks of anti-Semitism in the past in Russia and in the Ukraine, and in not too distant past in the USSR.

Furthermore, it is true that many Jews in the USSR have become assimilated and lost contact with their religion and with their roots, which in many cases is the result of their struggle for survival in the antagonistic Soviet society and a lack of opportunity to become acquainted with their history because now already three generations of Soviet Jews have been living in isolation from the world Jewry.

In the USSR the Jews are regarded as a nationality. Distinction is made between Jews (nationals), followers of Judaism (i.e., believers, practicing Jews), and Zionists, foreign and domestic, who as a rule are presented as villains, bourgeois exploiters, money-grabbing supporters of capitalism, and instigators of Israeli "aggression."

Israel is treated as an abomination by Soviet propaganda. Immediately after the establishment of Israel the Soviet government made several overtures to Israeli leaders, offering them assistance; however, the offer was declined and the Soviets began acting with all the fury of a woman scorned. Already in the early 1950's charges of Zionism and pro-Israeli espionage were used against numerous Jews (Rudolph Slansky) and non-Jews (Vladimir Clementis), Communists and non-Communists, in courts all over the Soviet-dominated areas and in most cases, they were tantamount to death sentence. Stalin's paranoia concerning the conspiracy of Jewish doctors in the last years of his life offered another proof of his deep-seated obsession which had cost many Soviet Jews their lives. No wonder that their only chance for survival was their assimilation and adaption.

Repression of Jews in the post-Stalin era continued mainly in the form of harsh punishment for the so called economic crimes, which continues to this day. Among those executed for fraud, black market and profiteering, the majority are Jews, although it is no secret that members of many nationalities are actively engaged in black market, usually with total impunity and even with a tacit agreement on the part of the authorities. In fact, Soviet economy cannot satisfy the needs of the population in any other way; however, Jews are being singled out as scapegoats.

The official Soviet version of the Jewish issue is presented in its standard, programmed form in a booklet published by "Znanye," a state-sponsored organization for promotion of atheism and "scientific Marxism." G. L. Bakanursky, the author — or rather compiler — of the pamphlet, claims to be a candidate of philosophical sciences, which is an academic degree roughly equivalent to our Ph.D. He not only failed to introduce some new, interesting arguments, but also failed to do his homework. His expertise is evident from such gems as "the Jewish Orthodox Hunter College in New York" (p. 54).

He discusses Judaism in chapters entitled "Judaism in Antiquity and Middle Ages"; "Judaic Religion in the Capitalist Era"; "Judaic Clericalists and Zionism"; "Modernization of Ideology in Contemporary Judaism";

"Search for Clericalist Partners"; "Judaism in the USSR." We selected the last chapter and the conclusion as illustration of his assessment and prognosis.

True to the form, Bakanursky characterizes practicing Jews as uneducated elderly people; on the other hand, he avails himself of statements made by their representatives whenever he wishes to support official allegations concerning the happy life of Soviet Jews. He does not deal with those Jews who have given up that blessing, as well as their position, jobs, property and frequently even their family, in order to emigrate from the earthly paradise.

Ironically, Jewish emigration provided fresh ammunition for Soviet anti-Semitism because Soviet unofficial propaganda is skillfully using it to set the Jews apart from the rest of the population. As Peter Balshev stresses in his appeal, Jews are being pilloried before the nation as traitors of their fatherland. Soviet propaganda plays this tune with its usual virtuosity, completely ignoring the fact that many Christians and even atheists have been trying to emigrate from the USSR for just as long — since the early 1960's. As a matter of fact, many Soviet Christians and Jews have found a common ground and began cooperating in their struggle for emigration, which does not please the government and the Party one bit. Attempts are made to separate them because such a joint movement is potentially dangerous for the Soviet system; expert as it is at twisting facts according to its needs, it hardly can present Soviet Christians who wish to emigrate as an alien element or nationality, as is its common practice regarding the Jews.

Soviet propaganda succeeded in some instances in raising suspicions of Jews against Christians and conversely, in arousing anti-Semitic feeling among some Christians, as evident from the statements made recently by a Soviet Christian "leader" speaking to American Christians in New York. In his presentation he stated that Soviet Jews, far from being discriminated against in the USSR, are the privileged class of that society. In his words, which may be easily refuted by any informed reader, no Jew holds a menial job in his country; all of them have achieved prominent positions in arts, professions and trades, and most of them have joined the Party for reasons of prestige and advantage. He said further that Soviet Jews have numerous synagogues and schools (Bakanursky mentions only one); kosher food is available to them; they have access to schools of higher learning. As an example he mentioned that 60% of the students in a dental school in Moscow were Jews. He continued that Soviet Jews did not demonstrate much interest in religion, and stressed their upward social mobility and adaptability, quoting as an example the case of his Jewish schoolmate who had changed his Jewish surname Zakharius to Zakharov and whose wife had adopted the Russian name of Nina instead of her original Jewish given name.

Particularly embarrassing and unwarranted were his references to the involvement of Soviet Jews in black market and profiteering and their just punishment for such crimes, which, as he implied, gives rise to the belief that they are being persecuted in the USSR. (In all fairness, this Soviet Christian representative was just as scornful of the Soviet Christians who are reluctant to embrace Soviet ideology whole-heartedly and become its loyal servants; in particular, he attacked Rev. Georgi Vins.)

To complement Bakanursky's review of the situation of Soviet Jews we include a rather typical case history of a Soviet Jewish refusenik. It is by far the most dramatic or exceptional one, however, it shows the cat-and-mouse game played by Soviet authorities with the would-be emigrants, which often ends in tragedy (in fact, many refuseniks suffered mental breakdown and in some cases, committed suicide, unable to withstand continuous humiliation, racial slurs, and frustrations). Balshev's story should be read in context with the Vashchenko Chronicle (RCDA, V, 17, Nos. 4-6) and the story of the Chmykhakov family (RCDA, V, 17, Nos. 10-12) in order to appreciate properly Soviet implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

From: *Nauchny Ateism* [Scientific Atheism], No. 1,  
1978, *Znanye* [Knowledge] Publishing House,  
Moscow.

## JUDAISM AND CONTEMPORARY ERA

by G. L. BAKANURSKY

### Judaism in the USSR

**T**HE Great October Socialist Revolution made it possible to implement in reality the slogan of freedom of conscience. V. I. Lenin said: "Every person must be completely free to profess whatever religion one may wish, or not to recognize any religion, i.e., to be an atheist..."<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after the Revolution the church in our country became separated from the state, and the school from the church; the ruling position held in the tsarist Russia by the Russian Orthodox Church was abolished and all religions, including the Jewish faith, became equal before the law. This circumstance means in particular that all believers, no matter what religious faith they profess, have the same rights and obligations as non-religious citizens, and any discrimination based on religious faith as well as on ethnic origin, sex, etc., is prohibited.

The provision concerning freedom of conscience has been subsequently incorporated in Soviet constitutions.

The Constitution of the USSR, adopted in October 1977, confirmed the experience of safeguarding freedom of conscience in our country, which had been implemented for many years: the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, in other words, the right to profess any religion, and perform religious rituals, or not to profess any religion, and to conduct atheistic propaganda. It is forbidden to incite hostility and hatred in connection with religious convictions. The church in the USSR is separated from the state, and the school from the church.

The Soviet Constitution is a clear reflection of the basic demands articulated in the slogan of freedom of conscience, which are fully expressed and implemented only in the conditions of socialist society, namely: the right to confess any religion; the right not to profess any religion; the right of each individual to conduct atheistic propaganda; equal rights and obligations of the citizens, no matter what their attitude toward religion may be; equality of all religions before the law; prohibition of any kind of coercion as regards religious faith or the lack thereof; non-interference of the government in the affairs of the church, and non-interference of the church in the affairs of the state; prohibition of exploiting religious beliefs to incite hostility and hatred.<sup>2</sup>

By guaranteeing and safeguarding genuine implementation of human rights, among them also freedom of persuasion, the socialist system enables the individuals fully to satisfy their religious needs, regardless what the confessional contents of such needs may be.

The believing citizens of the USSR, sharing Judaic religious principles and faith, are no exception in this program. As regards their needs, there are 180 synagogues and tens of millions [sentence incomplete, presumably "Jews"] (small groups of believers meeting for joint prayer in private homes) in our country. The synagogues are located in many large cities, particularly in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Riga, Vilnius, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Baku, Sverdlovsk, Lvov, Odessa, Birobidzhan, etc. A *yeshiva*, a Judaic theological school established many years ago at the Moscow synagogue, is training Judaic clergy-rabbis. At a press conference Yakov Fishman, the rabbi of the Moscow Choral Synagogue, declared: "I may confirm that the believing Jews in the Soviet Union enjoy full religious freedom. Nobody prevents us from praying in our synagogues and from performing our religious rituals."

As every other religion, the Judaic religion in the USSR is undergoing a deep crisis. It is losing more and more of its followers who, under the influence of socialist realities, are voluntarily giving up religious ideology and adopting the positions of agnosticism and atheism.

Sociological research conducted in our country has shown that the number of practicing Jews on the territory of the Russian Federation and in the Ukraine ranges from 3 to 5% of the total Jewish population in

those Republics; in the Baltic area (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) it is from 5 to 9%, and among the Georgian, North Caucasian and Bukhara Jews — from 7 to 12%. In the absolute majority of cases those who practice Judaic religion are elderly citizens above 60 years of age.

An analogical situation has been determined by sociological studies of the Jewish population in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, in the Jewish Autonomous Territory of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, and in other areas of our country. Thus, studies of religiosity among the Jewish population of Birobidzhan, conducted in the late 1960's, demonstrated that only a small group of aged people practiced Judaism. As for the young and middle-age Jews, these categories of our population in those areas have no connections whatsoever with religion.

Sociological studies conducted among the Jewish population in the Moldavian SSR demonstrated that the level of its religiosity did not exceed 7-8% of all the citizens of Jewish extraction residing in that Republic. As for the age of the practicing Jews in the Soviet Moldavia, those persons were mostly over 60 years old. In various districts of the Moldavian SSR the believers in that age group comprised 62 to 94%. In most cases, these believers are persons who do not participate in social production (retired and disabled persons, and housewives). As a rule, their educational level is not above that of elementary school.<sup>3</sup>

Long gone are the days when the Judaic clergy and some of the believers hoodwinked by the clergymen displayed hostile attitudes toward the Soviet government. Now the overwhelming majority of believing Jews and their spiritual leaders-rabbis have adopted a loyal attitude; they actively support the policy of the Communist Party of the USSR and the federal government in every area of our country's economic, social and cultural life. As the absolute majority of non-religious citizens of Jewish nationality, the practicing Jews in the USSR have rejected the clericalist-Zionist provocations from abroad, directed against true socialism in our country and its great achievement — friendship among nations.

The conference of the leaders of the Rabbinate and Judaic Religious Congregations in the USSR, held on March 23, 1971, in Moscow, issued a declaration stating: "We decisively reject any attempts made by international Zionist circles and by the government of Israel to speak in our name and to protect us from the non-existent injustice and oppression... As citizens of our Fatherland, we hereby declare that all the allegations made by the government of Israel and by the international Zionist circles concerning the purported inequality of the Jews in the Soviet Union are vicious fabrications intended for anti-Soviet purposes."<sup>4</sup>

On January 22, 1976, on the eve of an anti-Soviet Zionist meeting in Brussels, demagogically entitled "International Congress for the Defense of Jews in Non-Democratic Countries," the leaders of Judaic religious congregations in Odessa addressed the following statement to the embassies of six Western countries — Belgium, the USA, Canada, Italy, France, and England: "We, the citizens of the USSR, believing Jews residing in the city of Odessa, hereby voice our protest against the impudent intentions of the Zionists to provoke their next meeting in Brussels. We understand full well what inclinations are motivating the Zionist leaders. They are not inspired by any concern for the fate of Jews but by their hatred for our Fatherland, their efforts to slander the Country of the Soviets, where for the first time in the world the national problem has been truly resolved, where all nations enjoy equal rights and are building a good life together. However, the Zionist gentlemen will be disappointed. The world is well aware of the rating given to them by the 30th Assembly of the United Nations. As believing people, we reply to the Zionists: 'Fear God and

don't disturb the peace but help create it!' We appeal to the sensibilities of your governments, requesting you to condemn the provocations committed by world Zionism and to ban its meeting."<sup>5</sup>

The proofs of the negative attitude toward Zionism on the part of the absolute majority of the clergy and followers of the Judaic religion in the USSR bear yet another testimony that, contrary to the allegations by Zionist propagandists and Judaic clericalists, Zionism and the practice of Judaic religion are not necessarily related. In our time the greatest follower and champion of Zionist clericalism is that part of Judaic clergy in the West that is associated with certain circles of monopolistic bourgeoisie. The unity of their class interests, the attempt to defend the capitalist system, the hatred toward the ideas of socialism and Communism, the struggle against the socialist camp and above all, against the USSR — that is the basis for the unity of the reactionary clergy and the monopolistic capital as partners in clerical politics.

### Conclusion

The changes of Judaism and also of the character of those changes refute the rabbinical fabrications concerning the exclusive nature of Judaic religion. Throughout its long history Judaism has passed through great many stages which reflected radical changes in the conditions of Jewish life in various socioeconomic situations and in various countries. In the antagonistic the Jewish religion, as other religious faith, always supported the interests of the ruling classes and defeated private property and exploitation. Contemporary Judaism in the capitalist countries plays the same social role.

The reactionary character of the class contents of Judaism in our days has been intensified because the rabbinical ruling clique in the West had put religion into the services of Zionism, one of the most militant and jingoistic expressions of bourgeois nationalism. Judaism in its orthodox variant is being directly used by the government of Israel to "justify" its annexation drive aimed at usurpation and absorption of territories belonging to the neighboring Arab nations.

In the USSR Judaism exists primarily in its orthodox form, spread among a negligible number of the Jewish population. It is now undergoing an escalating crisis which is reflected in the fact that masses of its believers are abandoning religion.

Judaism in our country represents a phenomenon that, just as other religions, is a vestige of the past and an anti-scientific, reactionary ideology.

The main task of atheistic propaganda and education is to overcome any influence of religion, including the Judaic faith, in conditions of socialism.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>V. I. Lenin, Complete Works, V. 12, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>For details see: V. A. Kuroyedov "Soviet Government and the Church," Moscow, 1976, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>See: "Hébreos soviéticos: mitos y la realidad" [Soviet Jews: Myth and Reality], Moscow, 1972, pp. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup>Compare: A. Vinokur: "Dying of Ancient Faith," in "Nauka i Religiya" [Science and Religion], 1967, No. 1.

<sup>5</sup>See: M. A. Goldenberg "Critique of the Ideology of Modern Judaism and Zionism," Minsk, 1972, pp. 41, 42, 47.

<sup>6</sup>"Izvestiya," March 25, 1971.

<sup>7</sup>See: Reports on current affairs by the authorized Council for Religious Affairs at the Odessa Provincial Executive Committee for 1976.

Translated from the Russian by Olga S. Hrubý

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SMOLOSKYP

# The Olympic Dilemma

By **Yuriy Deychakiwsky**

*The Olympic Games are a most important event in international sports life. They attract the close attention of millions of people on our planet and mirror the irresistible wish of mankind to achieve and progress.*

Leonid Brezhnev (1978)

This remarkably noble statement about the Olympic Games was made by the leader of a government which has and continues to defy the ideals and spirit of the Olympics. It is not surprising, however, that it came from a man who excels in the "art" of deceit and hypocrisy. In fact, Brezhnev is so skillful that he has succeeded in exposing Lord Killanin's lack of vertebrae and rendering him speechless with a blood-flavored lollipop—all at one time.

The International Olympic Committee closes its eyes to the numerous violations of the Olympic Charter by the USSR. According to the charter of the IOC, no discrimination is permitted against any nation or individual on racial or political grounds. Moreover, the IOC rulebook (Chapter 4, paragraph 39) states that colonies, dominions, and even those national entities that are temporarily incorporated into other nations, may participate in the Games. Thus, dependent colonies such as Bermuda and Hong Kong, and non-UN members such as Liechtenstein and Monaco participate independently in the Olympic Games.

The Soviet Union has blatantly violated this principle and continues its systematic Russian colonialist policy in sports. Ukraine, a nation of over 50 million and a member of the UN, is not permitted to form its own Olympic Committee and field an independent Olympic team. Instead, the USSR fields as a single team with athletes of

various nationalities and, moreover, misrepresents many of the non-Russian athletes as "Russians." Most illustrious are the examples of Valery Borzov and Leonid Zhabotynsky, both of whom are Ukrainians.

Ukrainian athletes, who have won 38% of the USSR's Olympic medals since 1952, have been expressing their desire to form an independent Ukrainian Olympic team since 1953, when Volodymyr Kuts, the outstanding distance runner, first raised this question in Paris. Many articles to this effect have appeared in the Soviet Ukrainian press, for example, one by Kim Pushkarov, which appeared in *Dnipro* (No. 6, 1960), a journal published in Kiev. Professor Bunchuk, director of the Institute of Physical Culture in Kiev, wrote a book on the issue and was subsequently dismissed from his position. More recently, the Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group in Kiev has publicly demanded that Ukraine exercise its legitimate right to participate independently in all international events and proceedings, which includes the Olympic Games. Ukrainian athletes who openly express their national strivings, are immediately repressed. Such was the case of two Ukrainian lugers, Mykola and Valentyn Papirovy, who were not allowed to compete in Lake Placid, and possibly were even arrested by the KGB for nationalistic tendencies.

Because of these totalitarian practices by the Soviet-Russian regime, Ukrainian athletes, unable to express their desires publicly, have asked Ukrainians in the West to take up their cause. Thus, Ukrainians have lobbied in behalf of their enslaved countrymen at the Olympics in Melbourne, Rome, Mexico City, Munich, Montreal, and most recently, in Lake Placid at the XIII Winter Olympic Games.

The formation of independent Olympic teams by all of the nations enslaved by the USSR would not only serve to uphold the statutes of the Olympic Charter, but would also be in the interests of athletes since the number of participants would be multiplied many times over.

Besides directly disregarding the Olympic Charter, the Soviet Union—the host of the 1980 Summer Games—has violated the spirit of the Olympics. The pre-Olympic period in the USSR has been a time of massive repressions against activists for human and national rights; these repressions have been particularly harsh in Ukraine. This in itself is reason enough to disqualify Moscow as an Olympic host city. Yet calls for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics were not given serious consideration until President Carter raised the issue as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Practically speaking, the boycott of the Moscow Olympics is a weak and insufficient response to the Soviet invasion, but it is at least a symbolic response to the murder of thousands of Afghans and to the repressions in Ukraine and other republics of the Soviet Union.

The idea of an Olympic boycott is not new. An "Olympiad" opposing Hitler's Games was organized in Catalonia (at that time a semi-autonomous region of Spain). Hundreds of athletes were prepared to compete in Catalonia as a denunciation of Nazi Germany, but were stopped on the scheduled opening day—July 19, 1936—by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. The apathy of the IOC (which received all documents released to the press by Smoloskyp at the Olympics, including calls for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics from dissidents in the USSR) was particularly disturbing. Even a mysterious fire alarm, which sounded when police escorted the ULF members out of the IOC headquarters, did not awaken the "sleeping" Lord Killanin to the events in the real world.

Active support at the Lake Placid Games for President Carter's call for a boycott and condemnation of the policies of the Soviet Union, came solely from Ukrainians from the U.S. and Canada.

An excellent picture-essay, entitled "The Russia We Never See", appeared in the May, 1980 issue of Life Magazine. The vivid photographs, taken by Vladimir Sichov, who recently emigrated, constitute a compelling portrait of civil disobedience and police brutality in the USSR.

The photos below depict Antonina Agapova's desperate attempt to join her son. The placard reads: "Brezhnev, let my family go."



Three Jewish activists have issued an open letter, asking for support for the campaign to boycott the Moscow Olympics, in response to Soviet violations of human rights. Eduard Kuznetzov was a long-time political prisoner of the USSR, having been sentenced to death (later commuted to a fifteen-year term) for planning to escape the Soviet Union in a hijacked plane. Avital Scharansky is the wife of Anatoly Scharansky, Jewish activist and Helsinki Monitor, now imprisoned in the Soviet Union. The appeal, made March 16, 1980, from Jerusalem, was issued on behalf of the *Shomer Achi Anochi* (I Am My Brother's Keeper) organization. The following is its full text.

The United States government has recently stated that it will boycott the Moscow Olympic Games in protest of the recent Soviet expansion in Afghanistan, as well as their disregard for human rights as witnessed in the exile of Andrei Sakharov. This is only a single example of what the Soviets will do to those citizens who wish to exercise freedom of speech, which is a fundamental right in all free countries.

The United States has long carried the torch of liberty and human rights in the world. We appeal to you to urge your government to include in its reasoning for boycotting the Moscow Olympics the plight of the Prisoners of Zion. The world must be reminded that the Soviet Union continues to torture humans and deny their fundamental rights as outlined in the U.N. charter to which the USSR is a signator. The

treatment of the Prisoners of Zion by the Soviet jailers is a matter of universal concern. They cry out to all of us to intercede on their behalf before their Soviet captors.

We must not allow the Moscow Olympics of 1980 to serve as a showpiece for the Soviets as the Berlin Olympics of 1939 served the Nazis. If a country as powerful as the United States raises the banner for human rights, hopefully other free world countries will follow.

Your prompt action on behalf of the Prisoners of Zion is appreciated.

Thanking you for your cooperation and hoping that our joint efforts will bring freedom for all,

Eduard Kuznetzov      Michael Shtiegitz  
Avital Scharansky

with Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry.

"Growing up in the 1960s no doubt had a lot to do with it," the bearded Appelbaum said recently in his Cambridge apartment. Still, he pointed out, physicians are not usually amenable to the type of mass organizing that was so effective in antiwar protests. "We deal with the primary identification of doctors as doctors, and ask them to respond to the medical needs of people who may need their expertise even more than the patients who walk into their offices. Who can protest the abysmal health conditions in Soviet labor camps with more authority than a doctor who faces and treats the diseases that are ignored there every day? I'm a psychiatrist. When the Soviets use psychiatric facilities as prisons for dissidents, my profession is being degraded."

Yet creating the Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry was not easy. Appelbaum and his colleagues had to contend with incredulity and even anger from the people around them. Classmates, he said, did not see his activism as humanitarian, but thought he was acting childish when "serious" people were learning anatomy.

He remembered one painful incident during the summer of 1974 when he was leafletting an appearance of the Boston Ballet in Boston wearing his white coat with the hospital's insignia on the pocket. Some passersby were curious whether he was a "real doctor," but others confronted him and asked how he "dared" use the respect of the medical profession and the hospital's reputation for political purposes. Some classmates even pretended not to recognize him as they made their way into the theater. Appelbaum was saddened by their response. "People feel that hospitals are somehow removed from the political considerations that run the outside world," he said. Yet he feels that doctors, whose reputations bear so much weight in the international community, must speak out against injustice and identify situations where medicine is being misused for political ends.

Appelbaum refers to his group's work as "trage... who do you help first?" he asked rhetorically. "I've stayed awake nights." Medical

Yaakov Suslansky, Yuri Vudka, and Yosef Mishiner—in Vladimir Prison located just east of Moscow. He noted that all four men were ill and yet were denied medical treatment in harsh conditions.

Appelbaum is a fourth-year psychiatric resident at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center and a 1976 graduate of Harvard Medical School. In the spring of 1973, in the midst of his medical training, he began to hear about the medical needs of Jews in the Soviet Union, the abuse of hospitals and psychiatric treatments, and the trials of health professionals whose crimes were nothing more than attempting to leave the USSR. Appelbaum had not been politically active before, and certainly had no more free time than any other harried medical student. But a part of him felt that it was his responsibility to get involved.

Appelbaum gathered a few like-minded physicians and medical students around him. They drafted a letter to the *New England Journal of Medicine* explaining the plight of two Russian doctors. It was an odd letter to write to the prestigious medical journal, but one that had its precedent years before in a letter that had brought the bombing of a Vietnamese hospital to the attention of American physicians. To the group's surprise, it was printed. In the next few months they received more than 80 responses, some from prominent doctors, all asking what they could do to help. The Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry had taken its first steps.

In the following years there has been struggle, frustration, and even success. The group has remained centered in the Boston area, but affiliated groups have sprung up in Miami, San Francisco, Washington, New Haven, and Montgomery, Ala.

By Appelbaum's count, approximately 1,200 medical students and young physicians are now working

movement because the descriptions of cases in the popular press look farcical to professionals. The nature of Soviet medicine is also more secretive than its American counterpart, and patients often cannot get their own records. If they are laypeople, they can be confused and frightened when they relay medical information.

Medical Mobilization has devised a system for cross-checking and corroborating reports—one by a tourist, another in a letter written to a relative in the West—to get the most complete medical descriptions possible. On occasion, the group has even been allowed to send written questionnaires to patients. No one favors long distance diagnoses, but in the case of Jessica Kats, the involvement of Dr. Feinblom and the Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry probably kept the child from starvation.

For some Soviet Jews the Mobilization has meant freedom and new life. But, of course, for Appelbaum and his fellow activists, it has also meant, at times, overwork and exhaustion. Appelbaum and his wife did the organization's mailings for years from their living room, where they also kept the files. But now the Mobilization has an office in Waltham, Mass., with one paid employee. Still small, it at least frees the physicians of many clerical tasks so they may act in more of an advisory role. Appelbaum sees the Mobilization as a way to increase public awareness of the problem requested by Soviet Jews, determining if it is safe to send the drugs into medically unsupervised situations, and then coordinating their collection and shipment.

Appelbaum said he perceives some improvement in the plight of Soviet Jews since he cofounded the Mobilization, but mostly in terms of increased public awareness of the problem. He especially lauds the American Psychiatric Association for the attention it has focused on Soviet psychiatric hospital abuses.

"As far as the general situation goes, there is some encouragement because of world attention, more than 50,000 people were allowed to leave last year," said Appelbaum.

"But we continue to receive a steady flow of letters complaining of the terrible medical treatment of Jews there. so I can't say that there looks to be an end to the problem."

Mobilization has had to settle on the cases that would most likely raise a response from other doctors and those of people who have the best chance of surviving. They have had some notable successes.

When Soviet physician Mikhail Shtern applied to leave the Soviet Union, he was arrested and accused of poisoning his patients. Medical Mobilization appealed to Dr. Thomas Ballantine, who was then a candidate for the presidency of the A.M.A. With Ballantine's support, the Massachusetts Medical Society passed a formal resolution citing the absurdity of the charges against Shtern and urging his release. That resolution, with political pressure from other quarters, was one of the factors leading up to Shtern's eventual emigration.

More recently, infant Jessica Kats was allowed to leave the Soviet Union with her parents and newborn sister. Medical Mobilization had been contacted by the child's family who realized that the child was rapidly losing weight. Richard Feinblom, director of the Family Health Care Program of the Harvard Medical School, is a board member of Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry. His appeals to the Soviet Minister of Health and Jessica's Russian-speaking wife, Feinblom spoke to the family, who described Jessica's symptoms over the phone. His educated guess was that Jessica suffered from malabsorption syndrome. Soon, American tourists began to appear at Boris and Natalya Kats' apartment with suitcases full of formula, condoned by the Soviet customs officials.

The case attracted international attention. Jessica improved, but the press persisted in describing her as critically ill. Feinblom says that he tried to inform the press that the infant was better and that she was being weaned from the formula. Yet when the Kats were released and arrived at Logan Airport in Boston in December of 1978, with Jessica looking healthy, the press charged that her illness had been a hoax.

The Kats case points up another

The New Physician/February 1980

# Mobilizing for Soviet Jewry

An M.D. Activist and his Organization Battle Medical Oppression

Debra Cash

When the prisoner arrives, he spends the first month in his cell and survives on 800 calories of poor bread and thin gruel a day. After two months he can walk for half an hour a day outside of his cell; after six months, he reaches his maximum of one hour per day, one letter a month, and the sumptuous diet of 1,800 calories of rotten groats, potatoes, and cabbage each day. Up to 15 people are placed in cells meant for three. They are asked to do fine sorting work in poor light. And, for the slightest infraction, they are placed in the dreaded solitary cell, or, maybe worse, in a cell with common criminals who will rob them, steal their food, and beat them if they dare to fight back."

That is how Dr. Paul Appelbaum once described the plight of four Jewish prisoners—Hillel Butman,

# Caviar, day of talk with Shcharansky

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The mother and brother of Anatoly Shcharansky reported yesterday they had spent 24 hours with the imprisoned Soviet Jewish dissident, forcing three days' worth of food on him and talking through the entire visit.

Leonid Shcharansky and Mrs. Ida Milgrom told reporters in Moscow that Shcharansky's health seemed to be improving since he was transferred recently to a Ural mountain labor camp, although he still looked haggard. They said he is learning to be a metalworker for \$7 a month and is using "every free minute to walk under the sun."

Shcharansky, 32, was convicted in 1978 of spying for the United States, and until late March was imprisoned at Chistopol Prison, 500 miles east of Moscow, in a sunless cell.

The visit last week was the first by relatives since his brother and mother spoke to him for two hours through a glass barrier in August at Chistopol. If Shcharansky's behavior suits authorities, the relatives said, another visit may be permitted in August.

Milgrom said she took caviar, fruit juices, oranges and meat cutlets. She and Leonid spent from Friday to Saturday evening in a special visiting apartment attached to the labor camp.

"When Tolia (Anatoly) learned we had only 24 hours he said, 'all right, we'll talk right through the night.' We talked for 24 hours nonstop," Leonid Shcharansky said. "He wanted to know about Natasha (his wife, now in Israel), about his friends and about who was emigrating."

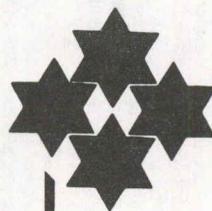
## Union of Councils for Soviet Jews

24 Crescent St., Suite 3A, Waltham, Ma 02154

May 2, 1980

### INSIDE THIS WEEK'S ALERT

- \* Details of a visit with Anatoly Shcharansky appear above.
- \* Refusenik Leonid Volgovsky has disappeared since he was picked up by the Kishinev militia. See our lead story.
- \* There may be more trials coming up. On page 1, information about attempts to fabricate cases against Brailovsky and Yelistratov. On page 2, a trial planned for Moisei Zats, although he was previously cleared of wrong-doing. On page 3, a non-refusenik family to be tried.
- \* A special on Soviet Anti-Semitism by Olga Hruba is reprinted on pages 5 and 6.
- \* "The Olympic Dilemma" from a Ukrainian nationalist viewpoint on page 7.
- \*\*STOP PRESS: Ivan Oleinik, recently given a one-year sentence on trumped up charges of hooliganism, is being allowed to serve his sentence living at home working "on the Soviet economy."



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