

**SOVIET
JEWRY**

**AND
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

**by
ISI LEIBLER**

**A HUMAN RIGHTS
RESEARCH PUBLICATION**

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

The author of this study, Mr. Isi Leibler, graduated at Melbourne University in 1956 with first class honours in political science. He is recognised as one of the younger leaders of the Australian Jewish Community. He was honorary secretary of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry until November 1964, when the headquarters of that body alternated to New South Wales. At present, he is a member of the executive of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies and Chairman of its Public Relations Committee.

In recent years, Mr. Leibler has figured prominently in efforts to arouse Australian public opinion to the plight of Soviet Jewry. He played a major role in the Jewish community's campaign culminating with the Australian Government's significant U.N. intervention over the question of Soviet anti-semitism.

Mr. Leibler's activities in this field were criticised by sections within the Jewish community who maintained that he was unduly militant and that more could be achieved by avoiding open confrontations and relying on unpublicised appeals to the Soviet authorities. Others alleged that his activities were motivated by anti-Communism and he was therefore alienating the "left".

Until about June 1964, the Australian Communist press carried on a vicious campaign designed to discredit and villify Mr. Leibler. Amongst other matters he was accused of fabricating documents and of initiating a "reckless campaign" of "slander against the Soviet Union" in order to "serve" the interests of his "reactionary masters".

Following the furore over the *Kichko* book, Mr. Leibler was approached by leaders of the Australian Communist Party. A number of meetings were arranged. In November 1964, Mr. Leibler released the text of two statements received from Mr. Bernard Taft and Mr. Rex Mortimer, both members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia. Extracts from these significant statements appear elsewhere in this study.

The discussions between Mr. Leibler and Mr. Mortimer led to the preparation of this study, which was originally intended for publication in *Arena*, a Marxist quarterly of which Mr. Mortimer is a co-editor. This explains Mr. Leibler's heavy concentration on Soviet sources, and statements and evaluations from individuals recognised as friends of the Soviet Union.

Although *Arena* declined to publish the study because of its length, Mr. Leibler received a personal letter from Mr. Mortimer which warrants reproduction in full.

205 Lennox St.,
Richmond.
20 February, 1965.

Dear Mr. Leibler:

Thank you for your manuscript. After very careful consideration, the Editorial Board of Arena have had to decide that in view of its great length your study in its present form could not be incorporated in Arena.

However, speaking personally, I am sure you are aware from our private discussions and my publicly expressed views that the question of Soviet Jewry is one that concerns me seriously. As a Communist, I cannot but react to any manifestations of discrimination and prejudice wherever they may occur.

I do not share your political views. I am also aware that people of notoriously inhumane views have involved themselves in campaigns about Soviet Jewry for the sole purpose of discrediting the U.S.S.R., whose general contribution to the welfare and progress of mankind is, in my opinion, profound and unassailable. Needless to say, I will not associate myself with these individuals, and their purposes, under any circumstances.

However, having carefully read your article, and having also made independent studies of the subject, I am convinced that the massive documentation you have assembled poses a substantial and disturbing problem for Marxists and people of the left everywhere, even though they may challenge your interpretation at various points. This is already evidenced by material that has appeared in Communist publications here and overseas. On such a basic humanitarian issue, we cannot rest satisfied while there is any cause for questioning whether Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union have fully the same rights and security as any other nationality group. For this reason I consider that material of the kind contained in your study should be widely read and probed particularly by friends of the Soviet Union.

I have been asked by the Arena Board to inform you that it is prepared to accept a shorter version of your study for publication in a forthcoming issue, to a maximum length of 6,000 words.

Yours faithfully,
REX MORTIMER.

Mr. Mortimer's letter, in essence, commends Mr. Leibler's study as a valuable documented work which should be "read and probed particularly by friends of the Soviet Union". Mr. Mortimer also states in no uncertain terms that the question of Soviet Jewry is "a basic humanitarian issue" which "poses a substantial and disturbing problem for Marxists and people of the left everywhere".

This is the first time that a prominent Communist leader has so closely associated himself with those endeavouring to ameliorate the plight of Soviet Jewry.

It should be borne in mind that Mr. Mortimer, a non-Jew, is not merely an obscure member of the Australian Communist Party. He is today editor of the weekly *Guardian*, one of the two major official organs of the Australian Communist Party. He is also a leading member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia and generally recognised as one of the most able Australian Communist intellectuals.

He has participated in a number of international Communist conferences on behalf of the C.P.A. In November 1964, he represented the Communist Party of Australia at an international Communist conference held in Moscow to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First International. During his visit to the Soviet Union he conducted discussions with leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

N.H.R.

"Wherever one looks, whether at the conditions of the Africans in South Africa, the Negroes in the United States of America, the Jews in the Soviet Union, the Nagas in India, the semi-starvation of two-thirds of mankind, the fanatical conflicts which rack whole areas of the globe, one is faced with the menace of authoritarianism and the manner in which it contributes to the danger of extinction for our species.

"If men are unfree to question those who hold power, and if those who do so are tormented, there is small hope that humanity will survive".

*Bertrand Russell,
Sussex,
September 29th, 1963.*

INTRODUCTION

SOVIET JEWRY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This survey is designed to demonstrate that Jews in the USSR are denied the same rights as other Soviet nationalities and religious denominations; that as a group, Soviet Jews are discriminated against in certain areas of Soviet society, and that the general image of the Jew is being blackened by the projection of anti-semitic stereotypes throughout the Soviet mass media.

It is not intended to convey an overall picture of Jewish life in the USSR. The positive achievements of the early period of the Soviet Government compared to Jewish life as it was in Russia prior to the Revolution, are dealt with only superficially. The essay does deal mainly with the discrimination that Soviet Jewry experiences in 1965.

This survey is also based on the premise that the nature of Soviet society is such that articles appearing consistently in the Party and Government press cannot be dismissed as mere personal aberrations. It is implicitly suggested that analogies to anti-semitic articles and literature and the existence of anti-semitic discrimination in countries of the West do not provide an alibi for progressives* turning a blind eye on what is taking place in the USSR. In Marxist-Leninist terms, the oppressive function of the State is confined to eliminating socially pernicious activities and doctrines. The restricted golf club and the swastika dauber are blots on any society. But the portrayal of the Jew by Government instrumentalities as a corrupt, subversive, and anti-State element is qualitatively far more dangerous, particularly in a centralised society.

It should also be stressed at the outset that exaggerations of the plight of Soviet Jewry serve no good purpose. Hence analogies between Hitler's racial paranoia and the policies of the Soviet Government must be resisted and rejected as hysterical and not in accord with reality. Only an irresponsible propagandist could suggest that the present Soviet leadership intends physically (in contrast to culturally) to exterminate three million Jews.

Yet at the same time, Stalin was quite right when he de-

* The term "progressive" is used here, and throughout the essay, in the narrowest manner employed by Communists and others to designate those favourably disposed towards the Soviet Union and its social, economic and political goals.

scribed anti-semitism as a form of cannibalism.¹ For the Nazi Final Solution to the Jewish Question had its origins centuries before Nazism was ever dreamt of. Its roots lay in the mediaeval equivalents of Kichko and his other Soviet counterparts. Any form of racism or anti-semitism invariably lends itself to ultimate physical violence and murder.

Finally, it must be emphasized that questions appertaining to human rights have no bearing on one's individual attitude to the cold war as such. Theoretically, as progressives themselves have stressed time and time again, Communism and anti-semitism as indeed any oppression of minorities, are contradictory terms. This is confirmed by the early Soviet approach to the Jewish Question. It is also of some significance to note that today, East European Communist countries do not emulate the prevailing pattern in the USSR with regard to the Jews.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The lot of Russian Jewry under Tsarism can be summed up as that of a mediaeval outcast ghetto group. Subjected to legal discrimination, restricted to ghettos known as Pales of Settlement, and periodically utilised by reactionary forces indulging in pogroms as a social diversion and safety valve, Jews until 1917 experienced feudal conditions. This was accentuated by Tsarism and Church sponsored "popular" anti-semitism designed to imbue the Russian masses with strong anti-semitic tendencies.²

The 1917 Revolutions were heralded by Russia's most oppressed nationality group as the beginning of a new era. They were especially welcomed with messianic fervour by those Jews who had contributed out of proportion to their numbers to the general revolutionary movement and the various Jewish socialist groups.³

Whilst the overwhelming majority of organised Jewish socialists and liberals were initially anti-Bolshevik, they gradually

1 In 1931, in reply to an enquiry by the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* of the United States, Stalin said:

"Anti-semitism is a most dangerous vestige of cannibalism . . . Communists cannot but be irreconcilably sworn enemies of anti-semitism . . . In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, anti-semitism is strictly prosecuted under the law as a phenomenon deeply hostile to the Socialist system. Active anti-semites are under Soviet law subject to capital punishment."

This statement was reproduced five years later in *Pravda* on January 30th, 1936. Stalin himself never made any public statements that could be regarded as anti-semitic.

2 The best available English language history of Russian Jewry up to 1917 is still S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (Three Volumes) Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1920.

3 For a colorful background see A. L. Patkin, *The Origins of the Russian Jewish Labour Movement*. Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1947.

gave their support to the Government because of the violent atrocities and pogroms conducted by the White Russians and the sincere efforts by the Leninist Administration to educate the masses against anti-semitism.

Despite Lenin's fierce polemics with Bundists and Zionists,⁴ he did insist that Jews be granted the same cultural rights in respect of the Yiddish language as were conferred on other nationalities. Any excesses committed in this field during the early stages were brought about by over-zealous Jewish Communist functionaries interpreting the call for culture—"national in form, socialist in content"—more rigidly than for other nationalities.

The militant atheistic campaign was also applied equally to all denominations, but care was taken to ensure that it never assumed anti-semitic overtones.

Stalin's succession was to have catastrophic repercussions on the Jews. From the outset, even theoretically, Stalin displayed little patience with the concept of the Jews other than as a minority cult ordained to "assimilate".

The Jewish commissariats and Jewish sections which had temporarily replaced the pre-revolutionary Jewish communal bodies were dissolved, and the remaining vestiges of "reactionary" Jewish nationalism—Zionism and anti-Zionist Bundism—were stamped out.

In 1928, an area adjacent to China was selected as an autonomous Jewish region. Biro Bidjan was to be the Soviet answer to Zionism as well as halting Chinese infiltrations in a border area. It failed and was quietly dropped, although it continued to be used as an external propaganda vehicle until the death of Stalin. Despite the failure of Biro Bidjan, the Yiddish educational and publishing network in the USSR until about 1936 was easily the largest in the world.

From 1936 onwards, when anti-semitism flared up in conjunction with the "Great Purges", the Yiddish network came under pressure. The Hitler-Stalin Pact intensified these trends. Molotov's cynical remark to the effect that Fascism is merely a

4 For a detailed survey of the suppression of Zionism in the USSR, see Guido Goldman, *Zionism Under Soviet Rule 1917-1928*. New York: Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1960.

5 The whole course of Jewish history under Lenin and Stalin until about 1950 is covered by Solomon Schwartz, *The Jews in the Soviet Union*. Syracuse University Press, 1951. Although the author is hostile to the Soviet Government, the work is heavily documented and generally regarded as the standard text in this field in English.

6 See Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1947.

matter of taste,^{6a} was correctly interpreted by the press as a warning not to highlight Nazi anti-semitic atrocities.

However, during the war, from 1941 onwards, efforts were made to bolster the loyalty of the Jews, as of all other Soviet cultural and religious groups.

Whilst all Soviet citizens suffered cruelly at the hands of the Nazis, no nationality fared as badly as the Jews, who were automatically exterminated in Nazi occupied Soviet territories. It is estimated that about two and a half million Jews perished in these areas.

After the war, the Jewish survivors looked forward to better times. But they had not reckoned with Stalin's anti-semitic mania. Virtually overnight, in 1948, all Yiddish cultural institutions were dismantled and the Jewish cultural movement stifled. A clearly anti-semitic campaign was initiated against "rootless cosmopolitans" which implied that Soviet Jews were disloyal and could not be trusted.

The elites of the surviving Jewish creative intelligentsia were liquidated. On August 12, 1952, after a bogus secret trial, twenty-six leading Jewish intellectuals were judicially murdered. Throughout the "Black Years" period (1948-1953), numerous Jews including leading Jewish political cadres, were rounded up by the NKVD and executed as "cosmopolitans" or sent to concentration camps from which few survived.

The climax to Stalin's anti-semitic mania came in January 1953 when Pravda virtually created a "pogrom" atmosphere by accusing Jewish "murder physicians" of planning to assassinate Soviet leaders in what has now become known as the infamous "Doctors' Plot". Stalin's fortuitous death shortly after this, came at a time when large numbers of Soviet Jews were anticipating deportation to the Far East.

When the "Doctors' Plot" was subsequently denounced as a "sinister Beria conspiracy" and the "thaw" began setting in,

6a See Alexander Werth, *Russia at War*. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1964, p. 63.

7 See *The Second Soviet Jewish Anti Fascist Meeting Moscow*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1942. With few exceptions, all the contributors to this booklet were murdered by Stalin between 1948 and 1953.

8 For details see:—
The Black Book compiled by the Jewish Anti Fascist Committee, World Jewish Congress and other Jewish bodies. New York: Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1946.
Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*. New York: Beechurst Press, 1953.
Paul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, London: W. H. Allen, 1961.

Soviet Jewry was again filled with hope. It was anticipated that the wider miscarriages of justice would be denounced and the new Soviet leadership would restore Jewish rights and make restitution of Jewish culture and institutions. A great many Jews also looked forward with keen anticipation to the possibility that they would be able to reunite with their close kinsmen in Israel and other countries.

When Khrushchev took the reins of power and further liberalisation set in, with survivors from Siberian penal settlements (including many Jews) returning, Soviet Jews were confident that complete restitution would be made.⁹

KHRUSHCHEV'S DENUNCIATION OF STALIN AND ITS RELEVANCE TO SOVIET JEWRY

It was a paradox that Soviet Jewry's hopes were dashed by Premier Khrushchev when he made his celebrated secret speech to the "Twentieth Congress of the CPSU" in February 1956, denouncing Stalin and the apparatus of terror. Whilst Khrushchev made detailed reference to the injustices meted out to specific nationalities and individuals, not a single word was uttered relating to Stalinist anti-semitism, the suppression of Jewish cultural rights and the murder of leaders of the Jewish intelligentsia.

Surprisingly, the first official Communist reaction came from *Folks Shtimme*—the Polish Yiddish Communist daily and only journal of its type in the whole Communist bloc despite the fact that there are only about 25,000 Jews in Poland compared with three million in the USSR. *Folks Shtimme* protested in its leading editorial and demanded a return to the Leninist policy for Jews and Jewish culture as practised between 1917 and 1936.¹⁰ The Soviet authorities reacted by prohibiting further circulation of *Folks Shtimme* inside the USSR on the grounds that it was slanderously anti-Soviet.

9 B. Z. Goldberg, *The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1961.

This is an excellent socialist analysis of the Stalin and early Khrushchev period in relation to Soviet Jewry. Goldberg was closely associated with the "Jewish Anti Fascist Committee" and did much for this group during the war in the United States. He knew the leaders personally and is thus in a position to convey the personal nightmare element of Stalinist anti-semitism. In Marxist terms he paints a very gloomy picture of the situation as he saw it during his visit in 1959.

10 *Folks Shtimme* April 4, 1956: editorial, "Our Pain and Our Consolation". November 3, 1956: editorial, "An Open Letter to Comrade Leonid Ilychev".

Folks Shtimme's cry was taken up for a short period by other Communists. Leading Western Communist leaders who had poured ridicule on persistent reports that Jewish writers had been executed, were stunned. In many cases, Soviet spokesmen and writers like Ilya Ehrenburg and Boris Polevoi had lied shamelessly to them, claiming that they were in social contact with the writers years after they had been liquidated.

In September 1957, just prior to its extinction, the New York Communist *Daily Worker* published an article by Chaim Suller, a leading American Jewish Communist, castigating the Soviet Government for failing to make good its undertakings with regard to Soviet Jewry.

Suller stated that:

there are still false theories [relating to the Jews] •among leading forces of the Soviet Government . . . Smaller states than the Soviet Union—Poland and Rumania—have Yiddish publishing houses, schools and theatres . . . We must therefore conclude that this failure to satisfy the cultural needs of the Jewish population is a violation of the fundamental principles of socialism as they relate to the national question. No socialist and no friend of the Soviet Union can overlook this or condone it.¹¹

In Britain an official Communist weekly published the report of an eight man Communist Party delegation to the Soviet Union. The report was signed by the leading Communist functionary, J. R. Campbell and other prominent British Communists.

After reprimanding the Soviet Government for its failure to reinstate Jewish culture, it concluded by stating:

that many Soviet intellectuals must themselves be puzzled and confused and indeed ashamed of it [the criminal treatment of the Jews under the Beria period] seems clear from a uniform attitude adopted everywhere when the question was raised . . . Crimes and distortions of this type cannot be the work of one man. It must have been the case that sectors of the administrative personnel must have been aware of what was taking place, and must have taken the steps necessary to implement it. This argues a certain level of degeneration in this sector; a certain measure of indifference to human values which does violence to those of us brought up in bourgeois capitalist society, who have given our support to the Socialist cause. Rightly or wrongly we have expected something vastly different from this.¹²

Professor Hyman Levy, a leading British Jewish Communist and member of the eight man CP. delegation to the Soviet Union, was so shocked with what he had seen that he published an even more outspoken account of his findings.¹³ He said that Suslov

11 *Daily Worker* September 22, 1957.

12 *World News* January 12, 1957.

13 Hyman Levy, *Jews and the National Question*. London: Hillway Publishing Company, 1958.

"spoke like an anti-semite" and other Soviet leaders treated his concern with insulting disregard. He was subsequently expelled from the British Communist Party.

After a visit to the Soviet Union and a two hour conference with Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders, J. B. Salsberg, a leading Canadian Jewish Communist who later left the Party, wrote a series of bitterly critical articles which were published in the American and Canadian Communist press late in 1956. Khrushchev had lectured him at length about "the negative traits" of the Jewish people, told him that he considered the maintenance of separate Jewish group existence as "reactionary", and implied that Jews could not be trusted.

Salsberg wrote indignantly that Khrushchev's views:

reflect a backward prejudice against the Jewish group as a people—a prejudice which sharply contradicts the Marxist mode of thought. . . . Khrushchev's statements smack of Great Russian chauvinism . . . his approach to the problem of Jewish nationality is an unforgivable violation of socialist democracy. It can lead only to forced assimilation rather than to voluntary integration . . . If Khrushchev's distrust of the Jewish people is warranted, then this is a terrible indictment, not of Soviet Jewry, but of Stalinist crimes and of distortions in the nationalities policy, in particular as it is applied to the Jewish people . . . The time has come for plain talk and public debate with the Soviet leaders on this question."

This debate was carried on for about a year and caused considerable consternation within Western Communist Parties. However, by June 1957, as the counter reaction to the "thaw" was setting in and the monolithic unity of the World Communist movement was re-asserted, the old dogmatism* re-emerged. The Soviet press agencies began to publish regular despatches relating to Soviet Jewry which highlighted individual Jewish participation in Soviet public life whilst avoiding the central issue of discrimination. These were reproduced throughout the Communist presses outside the Soviet Bloc, and those unwilling to accept

14 Salsberg's articles appeared concurrently from October to December 1956 in the Canadian Jewish Weekly *Vochenblatt* and the New York Yiddish daily *Morgen Freiheit*. A full exposition of Salsberg's views appeared in *Documents on the Position of Jews in the Soviet Union*, a roneoed pamphlet produced in Australia in 1958.

* The term "dogmatic" is used here and throughout this essay in accordance with current Communist usage. In other usage dogmatic means strict adherence to laid down teaching. In Communist terminology it denotes adoption of narrow doctrinal attitudes and an unwillingness to discard outworn or outdated ideas. It is applied today especially to those who continue to exhibit Stalinist behaviour patterns and is a common euphemism for the Chinese Communist Party leaders. It should be noted that a Communist Government pursuing anti-semitic policies would be the opposite of dogmatic in the ordinary sense of the word because anti-semitism is certainly not a Marxist-Leninist dogma.

this approach resigned or were expelled from the Party. It was not until June 1964 that Western Communist Parties again publicly demanded that Leninist principles be applied to Soviet Jewry.

In the meantime, whilst conditions for most Soviet citizens improved materially and politically, the Jewish group position remained at a low status quo, and with regard to the incidence of "popular" anti-semitism, their status actually deteriorated.

ANALYSIS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SOVIET JEWRY

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Judaism and "Popular" Anti-Semitism

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, firmly committed to "scientific materialism" conducts a vigorous ideological and propaganda campaign against all religions. At the same time, Soviet law guarantees freedom of assembly and worship to all citizens. The November 1st, 1954 C.P.S.U. Central Committee directive calls for a "tactful" and "considerate" attitude to those who "still remain under the influence of various religious beliefs". It specifically warns against putting "Soviet citizens under political suspicion because of their religious convictions".¹⁵

When applied to Jews, these laws and directives, as will be demonstrated below, are mere paper laws with little relevance to reality.

The virulent Soviet press campaign against Judaism has no parallel with the treatment of any other religion. When the religion of the Russian Orthodox, the Armenian Orthodox, the Georgian Orthodox, the Baptist, or the Moslem, is assailed, he does not come under political suspicion, nor does he have his loyalty as a Soviet citizen questioned. Unlike the Jews, the mass of non-believing Russians, Armenians, Georgians or Uzbeks do not regard themselves involved when the religious members of their nationality come under attack in official propaganda. In other words, attacks on religions, other than Jewish are conducted without ethnic overtones, implications or innuendoes.

Yet the Jews and their non-Jewish neighbours can only interpret "anti-Judaic" propaganda as an assault upon the entire Jewish group. For the composite image of the Jew emerging from "anti-Judaic" propaganda is that of the traditional anti-semitic stereotype, which "clicks in" with centuries of conditioning under oppressive regimes of the Tsars and the Popes.

The campaign against Judaism is concentrated in the Russian Republic, the Ukraine, and White Russia—the regions where the bulk of Soviet Jewry live and where "popular" anti-semitism has always been widespread and endemic.

Since 1961, the campaign throughout the Soviet mass media has been intensified to such an extent that it has equalled that of

¹⁵ Quoted from *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. 1 No. 4, April 1960, p. 4.

the Stalinist "Black Years". A good example of this is the following not unusual excerpt from a Ukrainian Radio Broadcast:

Judaic sermons are the sermons of bourgeois Zionists. Such sermons are tools in the hands of the nationalistic Israeli cosmopolitans, and American bourgeoisie . . . With their tentacles the Jewish bourgeois nationalists, making use of Judaism, try to penetrate into our Soviet Garden.

Another example is the popular *Origin and Class Essence of Jewish Rituals and Holidays* published in 1961 by the Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific Knowledge in the Ukraine:

The chauvinistic Passover slogans stand in contradiction to the feelings of Soviet patriotism and boundless love to the Soviet Motherland.

In a similar vein is an article which appeared in *Sovietskaya Moldavia*, titled "Judaism kills love for the Soviet Motherland".¹⁷ Or again, from *Volzhkaia Kommuna*, an article entitled "The character of the Jewish religion serves the political aims of the Zionists—the awakening of a nationalistic frame of mind".¹⁸

In recent years, particular attention has been concentrated in presenting the synagogue as the centre for debauchery, currency manipulation (economic crimes), and outright subversion and espionage. Synagogue worshippers and Rabbis are depicted as "ticks", "lice", "money grubbers" and "exploiters". Jewish circumcisers are accused of spreading venereal disease.¹⁹

The closing of a synagogue is frequently preceded by an intense press campaign designed to sow suspicion and hostility. The synagogue in the old Jewish Centre of Chernovtsy (Bukovina) was locked after the local newspaper *Radianska Bukovina* charged that it was being used for "shady profiteering agreements" and was a centre of Israeli intrigue.

The great synagogue of Lvov, with a glorious tradition, was closed on November 5, 1962 after a year long press campaign

16 From Kirovograd Radio Broadcast in Ukrainian language titled "Swindlers Under the Mask of God's Servants", December 9, 1959. Quoted from *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. I, No. 4, p. 40.

17 *Sovietskaya Moldavia* July 29, 1959. These and subsequent quotations from the Soviet mass media, unless noted to the contrary, are all quoted from various issues of *Jews in Eastern Europe*.

18 *Volzhkaia Kommuna* September 30, 1961.

19 A. S. Karlzuk, *Outlines of Scientific Atheism*. Minsk, 1961, p. 162. *Sovietskaya Moldavia* April 28, 1960, in an article titled "Under the Synagogue Canopy", likewise implied a correlation between circumcision and disease. The link between the dissemination of racial hatred and the spread of ingrained sexual fears is well known to sociological investigators.

charging it with being a centre for "currency speculators" and their "criminal machinations".²⁰

In June and July 1961, six leading lay religious leaders in Moscow and Leningrad were arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms for having allegedly indulged in espionage. In January 1962, *Trud* published a long article portraying these devout religious leaders as agents of American Intelligence.²¹

In March 1964, *Trud* warned that Israeli diplomats were distributing "national Zionist literature . . . hostile to the Soviet people" at the Moscow Synagogue.²²

On June 10, 1964, the K.G.B. (Security Police) moved in and replaced the three man governing body of the Synagogue.²³

The above extracts from the Soviet press are culled at random and not exceptional. In the context in which such "anti-religious" propaganda appears, and in view of the fact that it is in no way countered by positive educational campaigns against anti-semitism, it is not surprising that it serves to fan widespread hatred and distrust of Jews. The wretched written and illustrated caricatures of evil looking, hooked nosed Rabbis indulging in debauchery, speculation and subversion, do nothing to influence believing Jews against religion. They do encourage hatred of all Jews amongst the non-Jews among whom the propaganda is primarily circulated and who do not perceive a non-existent demarcation between "scientific atheistic propaganda" and actual crude anti-semitic denigration of Jews.

Legalised Religious Discrimination

Apart from the nature of the "anti-religious" press campaign, it can be clearly demonstrated that in other aspects, the Jewish religion experiences special discrimination not faced by other Soviet religions.

The widespread closure of synagogues in recent years is a case in point. Reference has already been made in the previous section to the manner in which these closures are usually preceded and accompanied by an intensive press campaign humiliating and denigrating Rabbis and worshippers by accusing them of speculation and subversion.

20 *Lvovskaya Pravda* February 16 and October 26, 1962. For a detailed translation of the entire press campaign see "The Lvov Case", published in the American Jewish Quarterly *Midstream*, Vol. IX No. 2, June 1963.

21 *Trud* January 19, 1962.

22 *Trud* March 11, 1964.

23 On October 1, 1938, *Pravda* carried a similar story about anti-

Soviet statistics tell their own story. In July 1956, the Soviet Government officially informed the United Nations of the existence of 450 synagogues in the USSR.²⁴ In April 1963, the Moscow Chief Rabbi was quoted as giving the number of existing synagogues as 96.²⁵ Thus, since Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, 354 or four-fifths of all Soviet Synagogues were closed down. This has meant that many cities with substantial Jewish populations do not have a single house of worship for believers. To attribute this radical trend exclusively to the success of the "campaigners against superstition" over a period of about seven years is hard to accept.

Unlike all other major Soviet religions, and despite constitutional guarantees to the contrary, Jewish congregations are not permitted to organise themselves on a nationwide basis and are therefore unable to have effective religious administration.

Jews are denied teaching the young their sacred language because Hebrew is the tongue of the "Zionist reactionaries". Unlike other religions, Jews have no facilities for publishing essential religious literature like prayerbooks. No Hebrew Bible has been printed since 1917. Jews are prevented by laws against "speculation" from manufacturing vital ritual prerequisites. Jewish cemeteries have been closed and alternative facilities for consecrated burial denied (e.g. in Moscow and Minsk).

In contrast to other religions, there is no genuine seminary for training Rabbis or other religious officials. The "token" Moscow theological school is designed to act as a tourist show-piece and has only two or three students—other would-be students were denied permits to reside in Moscow under the pretext of "shortage of living accommodation" in the capital.

Jews do not have official approval for formal contact with their co-religionists abroad—not even with congregations in other Communist countries. In this sense they are the most isolated Jewish community in the world. This situation contrasts with the innumerable exchange visits permitted to other religious groups

Soviet subversive activity designed to frustrate the project of Biro Bidjan. The "agent of imperialism" on this occasion was Rabbi Medalia, then spiritual head of the Moscow Synagogue. He too "cheated and stole from believers and speculated in matzot [unleavened bread], sale of seats, burials" etc., as well as "indulging in night orgies of drunkenness". Rabbi Medalia disappeared shortly after the *Pravda* article and was not heard of again until 1964 when he was rehabilitated without publicity. In April his widow was informed that her husband had been unjustly executed and the Government tendered its regrets.

²⁴ July 11, 1956.

²⁵ Quoted from April 1963 issue of *USSR*, published by the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

since 1956—Russian Orthodox, Baptists and Moslems between the USSR and Western Europe, the United States and the Middle East. Soviet Moslems are associated with a World Congress of Moslems and permitted to undertake pilgrimages to Mecca and study in Cairo theological seminaries.

The prohibitions against baking unleavened bread required for the Passover are an inexplicable scandal. On March 17, 1962, a total ban on the baking of unleavened bread in State bakeries was imposed for Passover.²⁶ It was the first time Jews in the Soviet Union had faced such a restriction—even Stalin had not imposed it. In fact, the Soviet Jewish community is probably the first Jewish community in history (with the exception of those held in Nazi captivity) to be officially prevented from celebrating their ancient festival of freedom.

Even the progressive American journal *Jewish Currents* felt impelled to protest pointing out that "even non-religious secular Jews eat matzot (unleavened bread) because of the historical meaning of Passover as a freedom festival, one of the earliest such festivals in human history".²⁷

But Soviet authorities either ignored foreign protests or told lies designed to placate Western public opinion.²⁸ Jews who baked privately were charged with indulging in "speculative activities" or infringing "sanitary regulations" and given prison sentences.²⁹ In March 1964, after the imposition of another total ban on unleavened bread, Jewish communities abroad organised an airlift of unleavened bread for the Passover needs of their Soviet kinsmen. The Soviet Government reacted by doubling the airmail charges, but parcels were still shipped. Most consignments were then impounded at airports. A press campaign, combined

26 For further background see:

Jews in Eastern Europe Vol. II No. 1, December 1962, pp. 33-36.
Jews in Eastern Europe Vol. II No. 3, September 1963, pp. 26-31.
Jews in Eastern Europe Vol. II No. 5, July 1964, pp. 52-62.

27 *Jewish Currents* October 1963 (New York monthly).

28 *The Socialist International Study Group Report* drew attention to the contradictory explanations given by Soviet spokesmen. The reports were:

(a) denied as being without any foundation at all by the Soviet Embassy in Australia.
(b) Confirmed by the Soviet Embassy in Canada and,
(c) explained by the *Novosti Press Agency* as being due, in the case of Moscow, to the reconstruction of the State bakery.

29 See *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 3, September 1963, for the trial of those charged with "illegal profiteering" for baking unleavened bread. The trial took place on July 16, 1963 in a Moscow "Peoples' Court" and the report of the trial proceedings are reproduced. The 82 year old "ringleader" was set free but all the other defendants were given prison sentences.

with "spontaneous demonstrations" was initiated, warning Jews that "these presents are . . . mere ideological subversions . . . And they do not come from philanthropists but saboteurs".³⁰ As a result, religious Jews had to be given an unprecedented Rabbinical dispensation to eat peas and beans over Passover in order to supplement their diet in lieu of unleavened bread.

With this brief background, it is clear that in the religious field, Jews are facing discriminatory treatment unequalled by any other Soviet religious community.

CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION

Soviet Jews are technically classified as a nationality and their internal passports stamped *Yevrei* (Jewish).³¹ According to the 1959 census, 472,000 of the approximately three million Jews in the USSR declared Yiddish as their mother tongue.

The "CPSU Party Program" adopted by the Twenty Second Congress in October 1961, stipulates that "the Communist Party guarantees the complete freedom of each citizen of the USSR to speak and rear and educate his children in any language—ruling out all privileges, restrictions or compulsion in the case of this or that language". Soviet law also permits any ten parents who request it, to organise instruction for their children in their own language. All individual cultures are to be fostered, the only prerequisite being that they be "national in form and socialist in content".

So far as Soviet Jews are concerned, all these lofty declarations and laws are worthless scraps of paper.

This was not always the case. Until 1936, Soviet Jewry had by far the largest autonomous Yiddish network of cultural institutions in the world. There were courts conducted in Yiddish, thousands of books published yearly in Yiddish, and a vibrant Yiddish press.

In 1948, virtually overnight, Stalin ruthlessly suppressed all Jewish culture. No recognition of this was made by Premier Khrushchev in his speech denouncing Stalin. Nor to this day are there any indications that Soviet authorities intend any overall restitution.

30 *Pravda Vostoka* March 17, 1964. Similar articles appeared in *Izvestia* March 21, 1964, *Sovetskaya Belorussia* March 22, *Sovetskaya Moldavia* March 26, *Sovetskaya Litva* March 26, *Sovetskaya Latvia* March 27, etc.

31 In March 1964, Premier Khrushchev indicated that the internal passport might be superseded by "a labour identification document" which would not identify nationality. To date, Khrushchev's statement has not been acted upon.

Today there is not one single Yiddish or Hebrew school in the Soviet Union. Nor are there any classes in Russian language covering Jewish history or culture. Instead, Mr. Khrushchev stated in 1957 that "to set up separate Jewish schools all over Russia would be expensive".³² Yet there are many examples of smaller and more widely dispersed groups receiving educational facilities.³³

In 1913, before the Revolution, 73 Yiddish books were published. Between 1933 and 1937, one single Yiddish publishing house turned out 852 books (6,250,000 copies). In 1939, 339 Yiddish books were published. Between 1948 and 1959 none. Since 1956 only about six books in Yiddish, by writers long dead, were published. They were produced in editions of 30,000 primarily intended for foreign consumption. Copies available to Jews inside the USSR were eagerly snapped up.³⁴ Between 1948 and 1964 no living Yiddish writer in the Soviet Union was able to publish his work in book form in its original language. Late in 1964 following strong pressure from progressives and other groups in the West, Soviet spokesmen announced the impending publication of a Yiddish volume—*Azoy Leben Mir* consisting of seventeen essays by living Jewish writers.

The only Yiddish newspaper catering for three million Soviet Jews is a small mediocre sheet appearing thrice weekly in Biro Bidjan—the so-called Jewish autonomous province.³⁵ It has a circulation of a few thousand and has about as much Jewish content as the *Peking Review*.³⁶

32 In 1957 to Professor Jerome Davis, quoted from *Socialist International Report*.

33 The Tadzhik minority in the Uzbek Republic—312,000 out of a total population of 8,106,000; the Poles in White Russia—539,000 out of 8,055,000; and the Germans in Alma Ata, to name only a few, are secured in their cultural rights. In addition, tiny minorities like the Chechens (418,000), Ossetians (410,000) and Komis (431,000), which do not have their own territories, still have their own newspapers and literatures in their own languages and schools where their languages are taught. (1959 Soviet census).

34 In contrast, the Maris and Yakuts are two tiny primitive Asian groups which number 504,000 and 236,000 respectively. In 1961 alone, Soviet printing presses produced 62 books for the Maris and 144 for the Yakuts in their own language.

35 In an interview with Serge Groussard, published in *Le Figaro* April 9, 1958, Khrushchev quite clearly stated: "All that is now left in Biro Bidjan are signs in Yiddish at the railway station. There are no Jews there".

36 For a while, *Folks Shtimme*, the Warsaw Jewish Communist paper, was subscribed to by thousands of Soviet Jews. Soviet authorities prohibited its circulation within the USSR after the 1956 editorial

In 1961, for the first time in fourteen years, a bi-monthly Yiddish literary journal was launched. It appeared with a limited press run of 25,000 copies and was recently transformed into a monthly. Unfortunately, the bulk of its circulation appears to find its way outside the USSR. Nevertheless, even taking account of the fact that most of the material is Communist theory, some of the stories by over a hundred Yiddish writers have a meaningful Jewish content. It is significant that official Soviet spokesmen have publicly conceded that the launching of *Sovietish Heimland* and other minor cultural concessions came about as a result of external pressures.³⁷

With regard to the once flourishing Yiddish theatre, there have been various conflicting reports in Western Communist Jewish newspapers since 1956 that the re-establishment of a Yiddish State Theatre was imminent. But whilst performances in Yiddish have been given occasionally by a few touring companies, the active theatrical tradition of Soviet Jewry has not been given an opportunity to resurrect itself from 1948.

Soviet spokesmen on Jewish affairs have frequently claimed that Soviet Jews themselves desire to "assimilate", lose their identity, and are disinterested in Jewish life and culture. This is contradicted by the widespread popularity of the only cultural medium accessible to Soviet Jews—Yiddish concerts. In 1957 alone, *Novosti Press Agency* maintained that there were 3,000 such concerts each averaging 1,000 paid admissions—a total attendance of three million!

In his book *Jews and the National Question*, Professor Hyman Levy, the distinguished Marxist intellectual who visited the Soviet Union in 1956 as a member of the delegation of the British Communist Party, made a trenchant criticism of the Soviet claim that Jews themselves show no desire for maintaining a separate cultural tradition. On pages 91 to 92, he states:

expressing disappointment that Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinist crimes did not deal with the injustices meted out to the Jews. In recent times it has again been permitted to circulate in restricted numbers by direct subscription.

37 In Moscow, in 1960, Soviet Minister for Culture, Madame Furtseva, told Andre Blumel, Vice Chairman of the Franco Soviet Friendship Society, that if the Soviet Union "did anything at all" for Yiddish culture, "it would not be for domestic reasons but to please our friends abroad". In 1961, General David Dragunsky, a Soviet spokesman on Jewish issues, made the same admission when interviewed in Paris. Referring to the five Yiddish books published since 1948, the General said:

"Frankly speaking, they are being published more for political reasons than in answer to a real need".

To offer as an excuse for its closure of a Yiddish Printing press and for its lack of encouragement of a Yiddish paper or of a Yiddish theatre (when even New York alone has several daily papers of this nature) that these ventures were not being adequately supported by the Jews themselves, is suspicious. It is the kind of answer one might expect from a capitalist business government, when approached to support the arts. . . . The Soviet Union, not based on a commodity view of human beings, legitimately boasts of the fact that its arts are very liberally supported by grants in aid What then are we to make of the excuse that has been offered for its lack of encouragement of Jewish art forms? Why is a Yiddish Theatre expected to be self supporting? Can the Soviet Union not afford to publish Yiddish poetry in the original language? The suggestion is ridiculous, and there is no escape from the conclusion that it is a set and deliberate policy.

The recently published *Socialist International Study Group Report on Soviet Jewry* concludes its analysis of Jewish culture by stating that:

The disappearance of the great Jewish cultural complex, parallel with the remarkable development of cultural activities among other Soviet nationalities or minorities cannot be explained in terms of natural assimilation particularly as the 1959 Soviet census clearly established that Soviet Jews still constitute a significant cultural minority. We are therefore led to the conclusion that discrimination exists and hastens the disappearance of Jewish culture in the USSR."³⁸

EDUCATION AND JOB DISCRIMINATION

In a letter to Bertrand Russell published in *Pravda*, Premier Khrushchev emphasised that, "our constitution proclaims the equality of the citizens of the USSR irrespective of their nationality and race".³⁹ The Soviet constitution also specifically prohibits "any direct or indirect restriction of the rights . . . of citizens on account of their race or nationality".

But in its application to Soviet Jewry, Khrushchev's words are only words and the Soviet constitution a dead letter.

Jews in Soviet society are today still represented well in excess of their proportion of the general population in such fields as science, medicine, architecture, music, the arts, etc.⁴⁰ It is

38 *Socialist International Study Group Report on Soviet Jewry*, April 1964, published in Australia in November 1964 as a special *Dissent* pamphlet.

39 February 28, 1963.

40 A letter signed by five prominent Jews and widely publicised by the *Novosti Press Agency* in April 1962 listed Jews as comprising 14.7% of the USSR's physicians; 10.4% of its lawyers and judges; 8.5% of its writers and journalists; 7% of its actors, sculptors, musicians and other artists. A 1963 *Novosti* release estimated that 9% of Soviet scientists were Jews. About one eighth of the 1964 Lenin prize winners in science and technology have Jewish names although in contrast to Jews being tried for alleged economic crimes, the

inevitable that this would tend to even out as members of other nationalities improve their level of education.

But it is disconcerting to note that the Soviet authorities have recently introduced a "numerus clausus" formula primarily directed against Jews and rationalised on the principle of "equivalent balance".

This is shown in the recently published study prepared by Professor Nicholas De Witt, an internationally recognised specialist on higher education in the USSR.⁴¹ Professor De Witt emphasises that overall statistics of the Jewish position in Soviet higher education are misleading because of the high degree of urbanisation amongst Jews (95%) and the high percentage of Jews speaking Russian, the language used most in Universities in Soviet Republics other than the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

Professor De Witt contrasts the 8.2% of university graduates who are Jews with the present enrolment of 3.22%. He concludes that according to all available figures the Soviet Government is succeeding in its effort to limit the number of Jews in higher education. He demonstrates that today a lower percentage of Jews are permitted to attend universities than was the case in Tsarist Russia.⁴²

Thus, although Jewish university enrolment is still the highest pro rata overall statistical analysis confirms that there is a policy of quotas directed towards remedying this.

The same trend is in motion with regard to job placement for Jewish graduates, particularly scientists. According to the *International Socialist Study Group Report*, "from the ratio of academically educated people, especially students, to practising

Jewish origin of these prize-winners is emphasized in overseas hand-outs rather than within the Soviet Union .

Even allowing for the fact that the Soviet estimate of Jews representing 1.09% percentage of the population is based on the two and a half million Jews who voluntarily classified themselves as such in the 1959 census (it has been estimated that in reality there would be at least 3 million Jews in the USSR), it is clear that Jews are represented far out of proportion to their percentage of the general population in many highly regarded sectors of Soviet society.

41 *The Status of Jews in Soviet Education* by Nicholas De Witt published by the Commission on International Affairs: American Jewish Congress, May 1964 (in roneoed form).

42 In 1917 the Jewish University quota was 10% of the Christian university population within the Pale of Settlement, 5% outside the Pale, and 3% in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

scientists, Jews have the lowest ratio in the USSR, indicating the rapidly dwindling participation in this field."⁴³

What gives rise to further concern is the frank and open manner in which Soviet leaders justify this and thus contradict Soviet constitutional guarantees concerning equal rights to all nationalities.

The pro-Communist *National Guardian* quoted Madame Furtseva, the Soviet Minister of Culture, as stating that on occasion, steps had to be taken to transfer Jews to other jobs because they were found to be too concentrated in certain departments.⁴⁴

Khrushchev gave a clear cut justification to discrimination in his May 1956 interview with a French Socialist delegation:

At the outset of the Revolution [said Khrushchev] we had many Jews in the leadership of the Party and the State. In due course we created new cadres. Should the Jews want to occupy the foremost position in our Republics now, it would naturally be taken amiss by the indigenous inhabitants. The latter would not accept these pretensions at all well, especially since they do not regard themselves less intelligent or less capable than the Jews.⁴⁵

On December 17 1962, Khrushchev repeated this theme at a meeting of Soviet artists and intellectuals, adding that the prominence of too many Jews in top positions would create anti-semitism.⁴⁶

This clearly indicates that Communist leaders believed that Soviet Jews fulfilled a socially useful role in Soviet society during the early stages of the Bolshevik administration. However, Khrush-

43 The report reproduces an illuminating table showing the percentage of Jews in urban population and comparing it with the percentage of Jews amongst full time students.

44 *National Guardian* June 1956. (New York).

45 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. I No. 8, July 1961, p. 6.

46 See *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 2, May 1963, p. 44.

It is rather grotesque that Khrushchev's views in this regard, closely resemble those of the Tsarist Minister of the Interior Von Plehve who was regarded as the notorious architect of the Kishinev Pogrom. In a conference with Herzl in 1903, Von Plehve expressed pain that anyone should suggest that "the Russian Government had been abetting or even passively tolerating excesses against the Jews". But "the Russian State is bound to desire a homogeneity amongst its population and to demand of all the people which compose our Empire, and therefore also of the Jews, that they look positively upon the Russian State as an integral part of their life . . . We want to assimilate them, and to this end we are employing two means; higher education and economic betterment . . . Unfortunately we can admit to the benefits of a higher education only a limited number of Jews, as otherwise we should have no positions left to give Christians"!

Conference with Theodor Herzl August 10, 1903 quoted from *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*. New York: Dial 1956, pp. 388-390.

chev determined that the time had arrived for the Jews to make way for indigenous (sic) elements. The absurdity and inconsistency of such a policy in a socialist society requires little elaboration.

Academician Konstantin Skriabin knew what he was saying when in March 1962, in the course of a speech at the Party's Central Committee of Agriculture, he declared that "from my point of view, a scientist should not be evaluated by his passport but by his head, from the point of view of his ability and social usefulness".

J. B. Salsberg, the Canadian Jewish Communist leader who discussed these matters personally with Soviet leaders, indignantly wrote in the American and Canadian Communist Press⁴⁷ asking Khrushchev, "What is the meaning of 'their own' [indigenous elements] in a socialist country? Why yield to the demands of undemocratic elements?" Salsberg claimed that the official explanations conveyed directly to him by Premier Khrushchev were full of "enormous contradictions". "How does it jibe with the 'integration theory' and with the assertion that Jews are expressing themselves in the culture of the people among whom they live . . . Are there two classes of citizens in the Soviet Union?"⁴⁸

A similar situation is discernible in the dwindling Jewish role in the political field, especially on the higher levels. Soviet spokesmen try to evade this question by producing dazzling statistics which are quite misleading. For example, *Novosti Press Agency* frequently glowingly refers to the fact that 7,623 Jews were elected to local Soviets in one year. But this impressive figure can only be evaluated when it is realised that over 1,800,000 such deputies were elected, giving a Jewish representation of less than one half of one per cent.

The discrimination in education, job placement and the political arena, will really only be felt over the next few decades. For the time being, misleading statistics can be presented for external consumption. It is the Soviet Jewish youth of the post Stalin era that will experience the bitter fruits of a "numerous clausus" system and quotas in a Communist society.

ECONOMIC CRIMES AND SOVIET JEWRY

In May 1961, the Soviet Government re-introduced the death penalty for "economic crimes" as an "emergency" measure.

47 Quoted from articles which appeared between October and December 1956 simultaneously in the Canadian Jewish Communist weekly *Vocheblatt* and the New York Communist daily *Morgen Freiheit*.

48 See also Professor Hyman Levy, *Jews and the National Question*. London: Hillway Publishing Company, 1956, pp. 80-81.

There is little doubt that the Government was confronted with a serious crisis within the productive and distributive structure. With food shortages and a chronic agricultural lag the illegal "grey market" had mushroomed into a vast "black market" in which wide sections of the upper and middle levels of the civil service were implicated.

Jews figure prominently in the "middle level" of the civil service, as accountants, clerks, etc. Although Jews only make up 1.09% of the general population, it has been estimated that they could represent up to 10% of the total labour force in this sector. Taking account of the fact that accountants and clerks frequently bear the brunt of such "clean up" operations, one would expect to find a fairly high proportion of Jews amongst those facing prosecution.

But when 55 to 60 per cent of all those shot for speculation and allied economic crimes are Jews, there is considerable ground for concern.⁴⁹ This concern is heightened when it is noted that in an area with a long tradition of anti-semitism such as the Ukraine, the percentage of Jews sentenced to death is as high as 90%.⁵⁰

This even prompted a friend of the Soviet Union like Earl Russell to write to *Izvestia* in 1963, stating:

I consider the fact that 60% of those executed were Jews to be greatly disturbing. I fervently hope that nothing will take place which obliges us to believe that the Jews are receiving unjust treatment in contradiction to the law.⁵¹

Izvestia refused to publish the letter.

What makes this situation even more alarming, is the manner in which the Soviet press has highlighted the Jewish origins of those accused. Many of the trials are public "show trials" in which Jews are portrayed as the "ringleaders" even when official trial transcripts clearly show that they played subsidiary roles to the other defendants. Synagogues are frequently depicted as the "depots" or "centres" for the nefarious activities, and the defendants dubbed "servants of the golden calf"—commonly accepted as a Soviet euphemism for Jews.⁵²

The lining of the Torah (holy parchment scrolls utilised in synagogues) has been described as the receptacle for hiding

49 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 2, May 1963, pp. 27-33, pp. 83-94.

50 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 4, February 1964, pp. 17-18.

51 March 24, 1963.

52 *Literaturna Ukraina* June 15, 1962.

illegal money⁵³ and on occasion, accused Jews have been referred to as "Shylock cockroaches".⁵⁴

A number of cases show an unbelievable harshness in the manner in which the accused Jews were publicly denigrated. An example was the "Vilna trial" when Batya Reznitsky became the first woman to be sentenced to death by a Soviet court since the death of Stalin. Her husband, Aaron had already been executed. The fact that Mrs. Reznitsky and her husband had been slave labourers for the Nazis, seen both their young daughters murdered, and themselves narrowly escaped a mass execution, was ignored as grounds for mitigation. Instead, at the trial the unfortunate woman was characterised as an enemy of the Soviet Motherland for having endeavoured to emigrate illegally to Israel at the end of the war—a "crime" for which she and her husband were despatched to Siberia. According to *Le Figaro*, Mrs. Reznitsky courageously told the Court that she made no apologies for her attempts to get to Israel because she had no desire to live in a country where hate-mongers enjoyed immunity.⁵⁵

Other cases on record suggest that charges are frequently trumped up and evidence fabricated. Thus an 82 year old Ukrainian Jewish "ringleader"—Alter Bronstein—was accused and sentenced to death for a host of alleged economic crimes including holding foreign currency and "open cheques to be drawn on the Bank of England".⁵⁶ Yet it is a well known fact that the Bank of England has not accepted private accounts since 1920 and the only people with accounts at the Bank of England are other banks.

All this background is even more significant when one takes account of the fact that the Soviet press only reports and highlights those trials which are considered as useful to "educate" the general public.

It is also noteworthy that the chief instrumentality dealing with these cases is the K.G.B. (Internal Security Police) and that it is only since this body took over from the Soviet Economic Police, that Jews began being projected as the prime culprits. The K.G.B. like its predecessor, the N.K.V.D. has considerable influ-

53 *Zaria Vostoka* November 30, 1961. *Lvovskaya Pravda* on February 16, 1962 was even more specific—"Crooks and speculators of all stripes gather in the synagogue which has been turned into a sort of black market."

54 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* September 10, 1963. The Jewish "cockroach" referred to (Benjamin Gulko) was reported in *Pravda Ukrainy* June 12, 1962 as having been executed by shooting.

55 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 1, December 1962, pp. 19-20.

56 *Pravda Ukrainy* October 10, 1962.

ence in the Government and Party. It initiates press campaigns, controls investigations and prepares prosecutions. Many of its personnel are the same people who faithfully implemented Stalin's instructions and are consequently "well versed" in Jewish affairs. Furthermore, the K.G.B. is regarded as a bastion of the conservative elements in Soviet society and has supported efforts to curtail liberal trends among the younger intelligentsia.⁵⁷

There is therefore some evidence to suggest that Soviet Jews may well be reverting to their traditional role in Russian society, of acting as scapegoats during a period of economic stress and also helping to divert attention from unpalatable domestic re-organisation. In this sense the K.G.B. would be fulfilling the same role employed by the Tsarist Okhrana and Stalin's N.K.V.D.

This is not a substantially different conclusion to that reached in a detailed and scholarly analysis on *Economic Crimes in the Soviet Union* by the International Commission of Jurists—a body by no means regarded as a "Cold War Front". The I.C.J. Report concludes by stating:

Jews are portrayed as people whose only God is gold, who flit through the interstices of the economy, cunningly manipulate naive, unvigilant non-Jewish officials, prey upon honest Soviet workers and cheat them of their patrimony . . . It is a simple matter to link the picture of the money grubbing Jew of anti-semitic fancy with the picture of the archvillains of capitalist cupidity . . . the most that can safely be said is that the picture of the moral malaise in the Soviet Union diverts attention towards the Jews because the primary object of Soviet policy to divert attention from the real truth, to find scapegoats. The real truth is . . . capitalist corruption even within the Party and in local economic administration . . . It is a tragedy for the Soviet Jewish people that they have been made the scapegoat for the transgressions of those whose guilt it would be dangerous to make public.⁵⁸

"POPULAR" ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE MASS MEDIA AND ANTI-JEWISH VANDALISM

Article II of the Penal Code of the USSR states that "propaganda or agitation aimed at inciting national or racial hostility or discord . . . is punishable by deprivation of freedom for a period from two to five years."

From the negative stereotyping of Jews which has already been partially covered in the chapters on "Religious Discrimination" and "Economic Crimes", it is clear that if the above

57 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 5, July 1964, pp. 11-12.

Jews in Eastern Europe Vol. II No. 6, November 1964, pp. 56-57.

58 *International Commission of Jurists Journal* Vol. V No. 1, Summer 1964. Reprints of this 44 page staff study of economic trials in the Soviet Union are available in Australia.

quoted law was in fact to be enforced, a host of leading Communist newspaper editors, journalists, academicians, policemen, specialists on religion, and plain bigots would be forming sizeable "exile" colonies.

To cover the entire field of anti-semitic stereotyping in the Soviet mass media and in "official", "scholarly" publications would take up volumes. Ample documentary evidence can be seen in the highly respected London journal *Jews in Eastern Europe* edited by the distinguished poet and writer, Emanuel Litvinoff.⁵⁹ For those still sceptical, twelve large volumes of photostatic reproductions of articles from the Soviet press dealing with Jews, are also available.

The picture is fairly consistent. Novels and short stories appear, with Jews representing the arch villains and tricking the gullible non-Jews;⁶⁰ there are constant satirical attacks on persons real or imaginary, with Jewish sounding names who are accused of anti-social behaviour;⁶¹ and synagogue leaders and religious Jews are referred to as "ticks . . . loathsome and filthy creatures".⁶²

Occasionally, in the provincial press, the denigration of Jews becomes indistinguishable from the typical obscene anti-semitic propaganda produced by Julius Streicher and the Nazis. In 1960 there was the notorious case of the blood libel alleging that Jews drank the blood of non-Jews for ritual purposes which appeared in the official Communist Party journal in Dagestan,⁶³ and was also broadcast on the local radio. The article appeared as part of a press campaign to close the only remaining synagogue in the area.

Action was only taken after the article had been publicised in the Western press. Andre Blumel, the leader of the Franco Soviet Friendship Society was told in Moscow that the paper had dismissed the author D. Mahmoudov and issued a statement that the blood libel article was "a political error".⁶⁴ Mahmoudov was described by Soviet apologists as "an old age pensioner" of

59 *Jews in Eastern Europe* published by European Jewish Publications Ltd., 31 Percy Street, London W.1. The current issue and some back numbers are available in Australia.

60 *Dnipro* No. 10 1963—organ of the Ukrainian Komsomol carries a vicious Nazi style novel by Anatoli Dimarev.

61 *Krokodil* January 30, 1964; *Krokodil* May 30, 1964; *Molod Ukrainy* June 27, 1962.

62 *Prikarpatskaya Pravda* September 24, 1958. See also section on "religious discrimination" for amplifications on this theme.

63 *Buinaksk Kommunist* August 9, 1960.

64 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. I No. 6, December 1960, pp. 3-5.

no significance.⁶⁵ Yet the progressive American journal *Jewish Currents*, bitterly draw attention to the fact that the "old age pensioner" was reported in the Dagestan press⁶⁶ as having been appointed a correspondent for the news service *Rabselcor*.

The repercussions from constant anti-semitic stereotyping are also reflected by occasional "popular" physical acts of violence against Jews in isolated communities.

On September 14, 1961 in Margelan, Uzbekistan, violent riots took place against the local Jews when the word was spread that a Jewish woman had participated in a "ritual blood murder". The woman was acquitted at a trial on November 14, 1961 but no action was taken against the local police who had stood by passively while anti-Jewish riots took place. On May 9, 1962 "blood libel" riots also took place in Tashkent, the Uzbek capital with a Jewish population of 50,000. The matter was not reported in the Soviet press.⁶⁷ The pro-Soviet New York *Jewish Currents* bitterly criticised the Soviet attempt to play down these cases as matters of no consequence.⁶⁸

Another incident took place in Spring 1962 in the small town of Taskhaltubo, Georgia, when a Jewish dentist was jailed and beaten up for having allegedly used the blood of a Georgian boy for baking unleavened bread. The case was subsequently dismissed but the dentist was advised by the authorities to leave Georgia and forced to take up residence in Moscow. In March 1963, a story was spread in Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, that a young child had been murdered by Jews to obtain "Christian blood" and hooligan assaults against Jews took place until the real murderer was apprehended.⁶⁹

Numerous other cases of vandalism against Jews and Synagogues have occurred.⁷⁰ The real tragedy of these episodes lies particularly in the failure of Soviet authorities to expose their fraudulent origins and conduct educational campaigns designed to neutralise the influence of "backward" anti-semitic elements in Soviet society.

The *Kichko* book was the only recent incident in which the Soviet authorities belatedly acted, as a result of the world wide protests spearheaded by outcries from Western Communist Par-

65 *Jewish Chronicle* March 10, 1961, in a letter from Pat Sloan, Secretary of the British Soviet Friendship Society.

66 *Buinaksk Kommunist* August 23, 1960.

67 For further details, see *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 2, May 1963, pp. 34-37.

68 *Jewish Currents* March 1963.

69 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. II No. 3, September 1963, pp. 37-38.

70 *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. I No. 2, November 1959, pp. 8-13.

ties.⁷¹ Yet Kichko's book was similar to other books published previously and books which are still being published. These publications apparently remain unaffected by the reluctant Soviet withdrawal of Kichko's volume and the CPSU Ideological Commission's half-hearted condemnation of the book. For the Kichko syndrome is a general rather than particular condition of Soviet writings on Jews. It is in fact characteristic.⁷²

It is therefore not entirely surprising that the Soviet Union is today, the only country in the world where Jews have been

71 See chapter "Kichko—a traumatic experience for Western Communists", below.

72 This can be illustrated by quotations from the following sampling of books still circulating freely within the USSR. These books also carry the imprimatur of the Communist Party and Government through the medium of "Scientific Academies" and "State Publishing Houses":—

What is the Talmud? by M. S. Belenki, published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1964 in an edition of 7,000 copies.

The Talmud teaches "reactionary ideas, propogating morals of exploitation . . . it preaches hostility to workers who are inferior beings . . . Rabbis sanction the killing of the unschooled on Yom Kippur [the Day of Atonement]."

The Reactionary Essence of Judaism by Mikhail Shakhnovich, published by the USSR Academy of Sciences.

"Judaism has always been an instrument of class and racial oppression".

In the December 1963 issue of the Moscow journal *Agitator* (circulation 728,000) Shakhnovich expanded this theme:—

"Jewish religion has always been an enemy of science and hampered social progress . . . The racist ravings used by the fascist cannibals as an ideological basis for the extermination of millions of Jews, are a weapon for the Zionists who spread fables on the existence of some particular Jewish race . . . Rabbis support a programme of war and colonialism".

He also attacks Judaism as being "in the service of American Imperialism" and an expression of "Jewish chauvanism" which opposes Soviet patriotism.

Catechism in its True Colours by A. Osipov, published by the Moscow State Publishing House for Political Literature in 1963 in an edition of 105,000 copies.

The April 4, 1964 CPSU repudiation of *Kichko* recommends Osipov's work as a "useful publication". Yet in some respects it is as bad as *Kichko*. It states that:

"Where Jews are concerned, the principal blood sucker turns out to be God himself" (p. 276).

"The first thing we come across is the preaching of intolerance, the bloody extermination of people of other faiths . . . God recommends real racial discrimination to the Jews . . . God promises the Jews he'll cast out and destroy other nations and advises them . . . to outrage other religions" (p. 281).

A Gallery of Saints by Baron Holbach, published by the Government Publishing House for Political Literature in 1962 in an edition of 175,000 copies.

Holbach is well known to Marxists as one of the eighteenth century founders of modern materialism. Yet, apart from this interesting

attacked and even arrested on the ground that they used the blood of non-Jewish children for religious ritual purposes.

Precisely in those areas where endemic anti-semitic forces are strongest—such as the Ukraine, the birthplace of the Pogrom—we find the heaviest concentration of articles, books and radio broadcasts subjecting the Jew to constant verbal and visual assault and portraying him as obscurantist, anti-social and subversive.

The Soviet authorities have not tolerated similar vicious negative stereotyping of any other Soviet nationality or religion.

COUNTERING ANTI-SEMITISM

Perhaps Soviet authorities justify the absence of any organised educational campaign against anti-semitism by accepting literally, the constant official refrain that anti-semitism does not and cannot exist in the USSR. In his correspondence with Bertrand Russell, Khrushchev by implication, even went so far as to acquit Stalin of having conducted an anti-Jewish policy.⁷³

Yet even this does not explain why positive references to Jews in publications and encyclopaedias are minimised and even eliminated.

For example, Soviet history textbooks for pre-university grade levels published in 1958 to 1960 simply omit the contribution of Jewry to Soviet culture and life. This even applies to sections of the volumes dealing specifically with the culture of minority nationalities in the USSR.

In the same way, the tragic martyrdom of Soviet Jewry as a group, during the Nazi holocaust, is greatly played down.⁷⁴

The specifically Jewish contribution to the war effort is also minimised. The official statistical nationality breakdown of World War II "Heroes of the Soviet Union"—the nation's highest

intellectual role in the history of ideas, he was a leading anti-semitic.

A Gallery of Saints, one of his least important works, is a vicious anti-semitic tract. It teaches that Jews "always were the enemies of the human species" and "prescribed cruelty, inhumanity, intolerance, thievery, treason, and perfidy".

73 In his letter to Bertrand Russell, February 2, 1963, which was also published in *Izvestia* on February 28, 1963. Khrushchev expressed similar sentiments in a speech to a large gathering of intellectuals at the Kremlin Conference on Art and Literature on March 8, 1963.

74 For example, the controversy with Yevtushenko over *Babi Yar* which is covered in the following chapter.

award for bravery—makes no reference to Jews despite the fact that over 100 Jews were so honoured.⁷⁵

The book, dealing with the achievements of the Soviet system over forty years, deletes all references to Jews although all other nationalities are covered. In a similar vein, the first edition of the large Soviet Encyclopaedia carried 116 pages about Jews. The second and present edition reduced this to two pages and deleted all references to Marx's Jewish origins!⁷⁶

It is also significant that the long exhortations of praise for the cultural, social, economic, and political contributions of Soviet Jewry which are continually made in official handouts denying anti-semitism to the outside world, are rarely reproduced in the internal Soviet press.

75 See also *Jews in Eastern Europe* Vol. III No. 1, November 1964, pp. 51-52.

76 From the report of the British Communist Party delegation published in *World News* January 12, 1957. Surprisingly, the new Ukrainian Encyclopaedia devotes considerable space to Jewish writers and culture and incorporates a history of the Jews in the Ukraine. This is indicative of the occasional inexplicable exceptions to the general rule that occur from time to time and are eagerly exploited by blind pro Soviet apologists.