

2-1988

American Jewish Concern for Soviet Jews

Nora Levin
Gratz College, Philadelphia

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Levin, Nora (1988) "American Jewish Concern for Soviet Jews," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol8/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University.

American Jewish Concern for Soviet Jews

by Nora Levin

Nora Levin (Jewish) is a professor of Jewish history and director of the Holocaust Archive at Gratz College in Philadelphia. She is the author of *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933-45*. Professor Levin is a participant in Jewish-Christian dialogues and a member of the Advisory Editorial Board of *OPREE*. This article was a presentation to a training seminar of the National Council of Churches at St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, NY, July 7, 1987. A slightly different version of this article was published in *Commonweal* (October 23, 1987)

The Jewish issue seems very marginal to the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church and our numbers in the United States as well as the Soviet Union are very small, yet it is good to share problems and hopes. Christian-Jewish understanding of their respective views on global issues as well as the issues of broadening cultural and religious expression for all ethnic and national minorities in the Soviet Union, including Jews, may help to defuse misunderstandings and enlarge our grasp of each other's perspectives.

Dr. Bruce Rigdon and Dr. Alan Geyer spoke at the seminar of achievement, promise and vision in the mission of the National Council of Churches, but also of struggle, dilemmas and ambiguity in the search for reconciliation and peace. In these efforts, American Christians have had partners to talk with and recognized channels of contact. We American Jews, however, have no comparable Soviet partners to engage in dialogue and no Soviet channels through which to make proposals which are listened to with any degree of seriousness. Yet, ironically, there is a Soviet view that American Jews have the kind of political leverage which can influence the American government in its relations with the Soviet Union—an extremely exaggerated view. Numerically, Soviet Jews are a tiny segment of the population—under 3 million—and the religious association is not to an old respected tradition of Russian Orthodoxy, but to a reviled and persecuted Judaism. We would have to go very far back in history indeed to pre-Russian history, to find a congenial time for Jews on Russian soil. Records left by historians of Armenia and Georgia tell us that Jewish settlements appeared in the Caucasus and in Transcaucasia soon after the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and that by the end of the 4th century B.C., cities of Armenia had large Jewish populations. In the Crimea, more than 2000 years ago, there were also well-organized Jewish communities. A powerful kingdom of the Khazars flourished between the 7th and 10th centuries and sometime around 750 the king and many of the inhabitants embraced Judaism. For a brief time, Jews were held in high esteem by nearby peoples and Jewish life prospered even as far as Kiev, but after Vladimir's conversion, conditions changed. Jews were looked upon as a competing, rival faith community, both hated

and feared. When some prominent Russians converted to Judaism, the so-called "Judaizing heresy" intensified anti-Jewish feeling that has persisted throughout Russian history.

Thus there are many a-symmetrical elements in our respective relationships to the old and new regimes. Yet, it is valuable to understand different histories, traditions, problems and outlooks, a process that may enable us to enlarge our perspectives and work toward reconciliation among ourselves. In this search together, we may also find some common goals. In recent years, American non-Jewish readers may have noticed a great deal of public action in behalf of emigration rights for Soviet Jews, but this activity is fairly new, going back to the early and middle 1970s. We know a great deal about Soviet Jewry now, and much has been published. However, its survival within Soviet structures is doubted by many observers not only because of officially sanctioned and promoted anti-Semitism, but because of the wholesale destruction of Jewish cultural institutions and Jewish and political intellectual leaders under Stalin and the refusal of the regime since the end of World War II to allow Jewish cultural life to be rebuilt.

The call to choose life is a deeply felt Jewish impulse and command, but try as we do to look into the future of Soviet Jews with hopefulness and balance, the effort—at least until recently—has seemed futile. As a result of this bleak outlook, most Western Jews have seen emigration as the only solution to the problem of Soviet Jewish survival.

The great American Jewish anxiety about Soviet Jewry has been mainly conditioned by the Holocaust—the evidence that Jews were abandoned to their tragic fate, that we did not do enough to save European Jewry during World War II. We now are determined to do everything possible to prevent the destruction of Jewish life elsewhere. "Never again," we say. This determination has been bound up with the creation of the State of Israel, home for the remnant of the concentration camps and DP camps and for Jews who are unwanted elsewhere. "Never again" is also bound up with a sense that Jews, instead of being powerless, now had a political and military force to protect Jewish lives and interests everywhere. The interests of Israel and world Jewry were seen to be identical. Out of deep pride and vicarious power, and fear of breaking Jewish solidarity, American Jews deferred to Israel's political wisdom and decision-making, although from time to time there was criticism. During and after the Begin years, criticism has been much more open in Jewish circles, and now— with the fear of an Israeli shift to the Right, religious and political, the criticism is wide open. The American Jewish deference to Israel also grew out of fears for Israel's security and the many wars of survival. Domestically, we needed to articulate Jewish issues and press the American government to concern itself with them—again activities we did not press during the war. Since the 1950s—the period of the Cold War—as the Soviet Union took a more aggressive pro-Arab position, and the United States, a more pro-Israeli position, and as we learned more and more of Soviet oppression of Jews, the Jewish reliance on the America government became stronger. Arab-Israeli hostilities became

globalized and the United States became Israel's chief defender and protector. In recent years we have seen some of these molds crack open.

In trying to understand the forces that have shaped Soviet Jewry over the past seventy years, we have a complex history, involving the inheritance from tsarist Russia of many centuries of anti-Semitism and residual nationality problems which the Soviet Union has not been able to resolve, including the problems of national minority cultures, and, thus of Jewish culture. But, whereas other ethnic minorities have their own republics and can at least teach their own languages and history on a territorial base, the Jews are a floating, dispersed population.

Their predicament today is partly the result of the dragweight of the past and partly the result of inner contradictions and inconsistencies in Soviet ideology regarding the status of Jewish nationality and culture in a Marxist, secular society. No Soviet ideologue has undertaken a review or elaboration of Lenin's condemnation of anti-Semitism, or of his ideas regarding minority cultural rights and his strong warnings against Great Russian chauvinism.

Since 1917, the issue of Jewish nationality has been entangled in shifting Soviet formulations of domestic and foreign policy needs, or, as some scholars have viewed it, strategic as against tactical considerations. The long-term strategy is aimed at complete assimilation into a Soviet proletarian culture, and, thus, the elimination of any Jewish or other identifiable culture. However, there have been many tactical shifts in Soviet policy involving the promotion of Jewish non-religious cultural and organizational projects, including Yiddish schools, theaters, publications and Yiddish-speaking Soviets—all in the Soviet mold, all receiving official support, and indicating continuity of Jewish culture. For a time, in the 1920s and early thirties until collectivization, there were highly successful compact Jewish farm settlements in the Ukraine, White Russia, Crimea. Later, there was an autonomous Jewish region called Birobidzhan. These, too, had strong official endorsement. During World War II, there was an important organization called the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which rallied Jews to the Soviet war effort and organized financial and moral support of American Jews in behalf of the Soviet Union during the war against Nazi Germany. This committee also served as an important organizational and cultural center for Soviet Jews after all of the others were closed down. But all of these projects including the JAC were dismantled, generally with great suddenness and accompanied by persecution and intense and frightening campaigns of state-inspired or state-condemned anti-Semitism, first under Stalin, then Khrushchev, and escalating especially since the Six Day War.

Today, all channels of Jewish expression have been officially closed down, with the exception of some synagogues, which are used mainly by old Jews, one Yiddish journal and a few musical and dramatic touring groups—mostly amateur.

Yet, ironically the legal category "Jewish nationality" has remained and finds expression in all official Soviet publications that deal with nationalities. An individual born of Jewish parents has been formally considered a Jewish national since 1932 when a new internal passport system was adopted. A Jew in the Soviet Union is in fact a juridically defined person who is part of the Jewish nationality. The legal criterion is the simple biological fact of having been born of Jewish parents. At the age 16, every Soviet citizen is required to produce papers that indicate the nationality of each of his parents. If both parents are Jewish, the 16-year old is registered as *Yevrei-Jewish*. If the parents are of different nationalities, he may select one national identity or the other. The anti-Semitism in Soviet society in recent years has persuaded many Jews to intermarry so that their children may possibly escape the stigma and often physical abuse of being a Jew. Some Jews, moreover, are known to have had their Jewish-sounding names changed on their passports. As to the Jewish population as a whole, it is legally a distinct nationality in the USSR, and thus theoretically entitled to enjoy a complex of national rights and equality of rights inscribed in Soviet laws, the federal constitution, the constitutions of the individual republics, and international conventions including guarantees of the Helsinki Accords. However, after almost 70 years of Soviet transformations, although the Jew has become more and more negatively visible, Jewish culture has been virtually obliterated and the Jewish past erased. The 1970 edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* has reduced centuries of Jewish history and culture to two columns of print. This development is in marked contrast with the Jewish experience in other Communist countries, such as Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary.

The gyrations of Soviet policy have created many illusions and hopes among Jews that were suddenly dashed. During the war, for example, after having been cut off from all contacts with Jews in the diaspora, Soviet Jews were encouraged to feel part of world Jewry in the struggle against Nazism. Stalin permitted and promoted a flowering of Yiddish literature with a strong Jewish national tone. Attacks on religious observance ceased. In 1948, Alexei Gromyko, the Soviet spokesman at the United Nations spoke with great compassion of the needs of Jews to have their own homeland after the Holocaust. The Soviet Union was indeed the first power to give *de jure* recognition to the state of Israel. It also directed Czechoslovakia to sell critically needed arms to the new state. These were strong signals of Soviet support. There followed the tumultuous crowds of Soviet Jews that greeted Golda Myerson Meir when she came to Moscow as Israel's first minister to the U.S.S.R. But, fearing too strong an identification of Soviet Jews with the new state, Stalin liquidated the Anti-Fascist Committee and began a campaign of vilification, arrests and execution of Jews, including the greatest Yiddish writers of the time. Thus began the terrible "Black Years" from 1948 to 1953. Soviet Jews had miscalculated badly. Soviet recognition of Israel was meant primarily to embarrass England, not a signal that Soviet Jews could openly express their curiosity and pride in the creation of a Jewish state, or enjoy cultural rights, but Jews misunderstood official Soviet

support for Israel and paid bitterly. Just before his death, Stalin concocted the notorious "Doctors' Plot," in which Jewish physicians were accused of having murdered Soviet leaders and of planning to murder Stalin himself. Massive deportations of all Soviet Jews to Siberia were about to start when Stalin died in March 1953.

In the early 1950s, while the Cold War raged, the Soviet Union decided on a pro-Arab orientation. Israel became identified with the United States and in the polarization of people and issues, Soviet Jews were cast out of the circle of loyal patriots. There began Jewish quotas for admission to schools and universities, baiting of Jewish workers and students and diminished roles in the party and government. Soviet Jews were described as strangers and aliens. Khrushchev himself used the distinction *they* and *we*. Khrushchev also aligned his anti-Israel policy with a harsh propaganda drive against Judaism, featuring some of the most vulgar and frightening anti-Semitic books of all time which have gone through many printings and have been even awarded official prizes.

Since 1967, Soviet Middle East policy has become more aggressively pro-Arab and anti-Israel, and Soviet propaganda has increasingly linked its crusade against Judaism and Jewish national identity with Zionism and Israel. It is of course possible to be anti-Zionist without being anti-Semitic, but Soviet propaganda has to a large extent blurred the distinction. Jews are presented in cartoons and caricatures with racial features reminiscent of Nazi propaganda. Pictorially, Zionists appear as poisonous mushrooms, serpents, and satanic figures—images that are too familiar in classical anti-Semitism. Moreover, the sins of Zionists are supposed to derive from the teachings of Judaism, and Zionism now is equated with nazism, fascism, moral degeneracy, racism and the Jewish conspiracy to control the world. Judaism is compared to "the fundamentals of jungle law"; the Torah is described as "an unsurpassed textbook of blood thirstiness, hypocrisy, treachery, perfidy, and moral degeneracy." The Jewish belief in the coming of the Messiah is intended to "establish Jewish hegemony over the people of the entire world." "The racist concept of Judaism served as a prototype of European racism."

These ideas constitute a drumbeat in newspapers, periodicals, TV shows, radio broadcasts and large printings of the works of anti-Jewish writers such as Yuri Ivanov, Lev Korneyev, Vladimir Begun, Trofim Kichko and others. These materials have now spread throughout the Eastern Bloc, the Arab world, and Third world countries.

The Soviet attack on the Hebrew language since the early 1920s is perhaps most incomprehensible of all anti-Jewish measures. In the Soviet Union, Hebrew is an outlawed language—perhaps the only language in the world that is illegal. Non-Jewish Soviet linguistic scholars, theologians and diplomats—even KGB agents—study the language, but Jews may not. The usual Soviet constraints on religious activity also obtain regarding Judaism, but because only Jews practice Judaism, the restrictions have been

particularly heavy. The Jewish religion remains the only registered denomination which is not permitted to maintain regular links with co-religionists outside of the U.S.S.R. The only contacts of this type are very occasional exchanges with communities in the Soviet bloc countries and rare visits abroad as members of ecumenical delegations—spokesmen for regime. There have been no new registered Jewish religious communities in 25 years. Western Jews who attend Soviet synagogues are carefully watched and often searched and Soviet Jews who speak to them are at risk. There has been a long-standing shortage of prayer books, Bibles, Jewish calendars and religious objects, and when they are brought in by Western visitors they are often confiscated.

It is estimated that there are only 55 synagogues left for a population of 3 million or so. Almost no young Jews are seen in synagogues except at the holidays and Simchat Torah—The Rejoicing of the Torah. If they come to regular services they are stigmatized and often punished. Yet there has been a religious reawakening among some young Soviet Jewish students who pray and study in small groups in private apartments. Some young parents have tried to set up classes for children, but the persecution of these Jews has been very severe. Jews have no central religious body or facilities for training rabbis. Thus the future of Judaism in the Soviet Union is very bleak.

Most people are familiar with the struggle of some Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union, largely out of their frustration in their search to be Jews—to learn about Jewish religious customs, Jewish history and literature, Jewish life abroad—and because of anti-Jewish hostility. From 1968 to 1980, about 260,000 Jews have been allowed to leave, but despite the Helsinki guarantees regarding freedom to emigrate, emigration has virtually stopped until recently—yet it is estimated that up to 400,000 Jews have requested permission to leave. Many of these have faced harsh repercussions for even beginning this process. Another 12,000 to 15,000 are so-called refuseniks—those who have been denied permission to leave many times. Some are in prison, camps, psychiatric hospitals. All are treated as social outcasts, isolated, often without work. Many despair of any change.

What of the others—perhaps 2.5 million? Not all Soviet Jews want to leave or will be able to if they want to. These Jews are sometimes spoken of as a silent majority. About 75 percent of them live in the heartland of Russia—in those areas which have been under Soviet rule for more than two generations. They are overwhelmingly urban, better educated than non-Jews about them, and concentrated in technical-cultural-scientific occupations, described as upper socio-economic levels in Soviet terms. More than a half million of them live in Moscow, Odessa, Kiev and Leningrad. They tried to cluster in professional or occupational groups. About 200,000 are members of the Communist Party. The demographic profile is that of an aging population, with a low birth rate, quite high rate of intermarriage and cultural assimilation.

Since the end of the war, they have been excluded from positions in defense, foreign policy, the courts, national security organs, party and government. And in recent years, there has been a sharp drop in the number of Jewish university students and graduate students and declining opportunities in high level scientific and cultural fields. Facing obvious and growing discriminatory competition for advancement, some Soviet Jews must lower their own aspirations, or, they can seek a place in new development projects and scientific institutions in the cities of Siberia, such as Yakutsk. We also know that more and more Jewish children, facing a hostile environment and even abusive anti-Semitism, are applying to technical institutes and universities in Siberia and Asiatic Russia.

The emigration movement itself seems to have injured the condition of those left behind in ways that were not anticipated. In approaching this problem, we must first note that Soviet authorities have been caught in a fundamental contradiction. They have permitted many Germans, Poles, Armenians and Greeks to leave on the basis of repatriation or reunification of families—without undermining the status of those who remain. In the case of the Jews, however, because of Soviet hostility to Israel, which is considered an agent of American imperialism—Soviet Jews have become hostages. They are often perceived and described as disloyal, unreliable, even traitorous. These official descriptions fill the media and harm those Jews who feel that the Soviet Union is their home, who love the Russian language and have made Russian culture their own, despite difficulties. In many cases, in fact, the parents of refuseniks are themselves members of the Communist Party who refuse to give permission to their own children to leave.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of interest in Jewish culture among this so-called silent majority, but we know that among them are some who join other Jews at synagogues at *Simchat Torah*; who come in flocks to the Moscow Book Fairs to look at books of Jewish interest; who attend performances of the traveling Yiddish musical and dramatic troupes. Visitors have reported small groups struggling to observe orthodox Judaism. Some may also be learning Yiddish or Hebrew.

Over the years, since the death of Stalin and increasingly in the past fifteen years, all manner of Western intercessions and pressures—private and public—have been tried to have some vestiges of Jewish culture restored. These efforts have been largely futile. Virtually all meaningful Jewish cultural and religious life has been forced underground. Can one hope for changes improving the Jewish condition under Gorbachev? Perhaps. I know that most of us feel heartened by the evidence of greater cultural and economical loosening in the Soviet Union—as a result of Gorbachev's policy of "openness." There are a number of encouraging signs! The Soviet literary establishment, for example, has permitted publication of Akhmatova's great poem "Requiem," which for years was the underground anthem of those who suffered under Stalin; and publication of Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago*. The literary journal *Znamya* has published previously censored verses by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. The poet Andrei Voznesensky has been

appointed to head a commission that would restore Boris Pasternak to his proper place in Russian poetry. A major show of Mark Chagall's work in Moscow took place and his home in Vitebsk may be restored as a museum. Films that were formerly banned have now been released. There is a good possibility that the names of some of the great early leaders of the Revolution, such as Bukharin, may be rehabilitated. In January, 1987, a four-part series on Lenin made twenty years ago, appeared on Soviet television for the first time, with Bukharin played sympathetically by a well-known Soviet actor. A long-suppressed 1962 play called *The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*, which portrays Bukharin and Trotsky as devoted associates of Lenin, opened in the fall of 1987, for the 70th anniversary of the Revolution. Gorbachev himself has asked that "forgotten names and blank spots" in Soviet history be filled in. Conceivably, some of these spots would include early Jewish Bolshevik leaders who contributed much to the consolidation of the regime.

Gorbachev seems to recognize the need for the expression of a diversity of groups and interests. There have already been debates on television, complaints of citizens in the press, conflicting approaches to current social and economic problems and a new atmosphere away from homogeneity and uniformity. At the 1987 Central Committee Plenum, Gorbachev criticized what he called a "schematic and dogmatic approach" to Party ideology. He has called for greater participation at the grass roots level and more local initiatives. But so far he has not addressed any of the issues so important to Soviet Jews, especially the reality of anti-Semitism, and cultural religious and emigration rights. Moreover, we must be aware that his interpretation of democracy is not ours.

Of very deep and immediate concern is the anti-Semitic agenda of a nationalist group called *Pamiat* [Memory], organized in 1980 by officials of the Soviet Ministry of Civil Aviation. Members have close ties to the Soviet army and the arms industries, and have support of scientific bodies and academic centers such as the Moscow Mathematical Institute. The group's stated aim is to protect old buildings, monuments, and other objects of Russia's cultural heritage, but it is considered to be a dangerously chauvinistic, anti-Semitic organization. Critics claim that *Pamiat* uses anti-Semitism for internal political ends. Like the Nazis, members subscribe to the "conspiracy" theory of the notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and blame Jews for everything, from destroying Russian culture to the Chernobyl disaster. Although some Soviet journalists have criticized *Pamiat*, the lax official attitude toward it so far has caused some Jews to fear a pogrom atmosphere. Gorbachev himself has not reacted to *Pamiat's* threats.

With a few exceptions, the mainline Soviet Jewry advocacy organizations in the United States have viewed Gorbachev's "reform" program skeptically, or cynically. We surely have witnessed many deceptions and disappointments in Soviet history. However, under Gorbachev, Jewish emigration figures have increased—500 permits in March, and 700 in April—already more than were permitted to leave in the

whole year of 1986. These figures may be an encouraging sign that emigration permits will continue to increase—perhaps as many as 10-12,000 for 1987. All of the Jewish Prisoners of Conscience except Alexei Magarik have been released. Six young Soviet Jews will be able to study for ordination at rabbinical seminaries in the United States, according to a promise made by Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the Soviet Council of Religious Affairs. Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Interfaith Foundation Appeal of Conscience was able to secure permission to have 5000 Bibles and 5000 prayer books sent to the Soviet Union. Some Jewish leaders are now calling for Soviet participation in Middle East peace talks and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres has had significant talks with Soviet officials about the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which have been broken since 1967. Were this to happen, it is possible that conditions of life for Soviet Jews would improve. But not necessarily.

In recent months, there also seems to be growing awareness that a hard-line toward the Soviet Union and pursuit of Cold War strategies such as embargoes and the Jackson-Vanik amendment may have short-term benefits and help vent intense Jewish anger and frustration over reprehensible Soviet oppression, but, in the long run, do not help Soviet Jews or improve Soviet-U.S. relations. In the past, Soviet Jews have been pushed onto the tilting chessboard of American-Soviet diplomacy and have been used as counters in American-Soviet negotiations. Since their fate fell to the whims and interests of the two superpowers, the strategy has been largely in terms of trade-offs: American technology, credits and trade in return for increased Jewish emigration. In this regrettable process, Soviet and Western Jews have depended upon the American government for leverage in gaining Soviet concessions for Jewish emigration, but none in the terms of reducing internal anti-Semitism or gaining larger cultural and religious opportunities for Soviet Jews who do not emigrate.

Israeli security has also been linked to dependence on the United States. Thus, the post-Holocaust Jewish obsession with survival has narrowed our perspective and drawn us to focus mainly on Jewish interests. Yet at the same time, our illusions about the end of Jewish powerlessness and a new hope for Jewish security everywhere have been shaken. The Jewish issue has become a sub-issue in a super power global, geo-political struggle and serious questions are now being raised about our past reliance on the American government and thus our involvement in confrontational policy. We don't know all of the elements that contribute to Soviet anti-Semitism—we haven't mentioned its usefulness to the regime as a lightning rod to absorb and discharge domestic grievances and a way of unifying a nation suffering from divisions, deferred hopes and discontents and serious, unresolved social and economic problems. However, it is just possible that an easing of Jewish anti-Soviet approaches may ease the condition of Soviet Jews. The Reagan years of Cold War politics have surely worsened their condition while American-Soviet tensions are not in Israel's interests.

It seems that the time has come when American Jewry must fully join the struggle to foster detente and reconciliation, to encourage religious, cultural and educational exchanges, to strive for nuclear disarmament. Some movement along these lines is already taking place in Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, New Jewish Agenda, American Jewish Committee and the Reconstructionist Movement and in Jewish publications such as *Jewish Currents* and *Genesis II*.

To date, there has been some conflict between those who advocate the airing of human rights abuses and those on missions of peace and reconciliation. Soviet officials argue that human rights issues are internal matters, yet there should be a way of discussing the issues of rights and peace together. Perhaps some modest changes in this regard will be observable, a slightly greater openness to enable to mention the difficulties of some Baptists, Evangelicals, Jehovan's Witnesses, and Jews. One will, of course, have to evaluate the possible risks in raising such matters. If Gorbachev's openness is genuine, however, and if he sincerely wants the airing of problems, the suffering of large numbers of Soviet citizens who have not bent to Soviet orthodoxies must also be addressed. They must be part of the "multiplicity of voices" Gorbachev has called for.

Possibly one may also find the time and inclination to visit with several of the Jewish refuseniks who are greatly comforted and reassured by knowing that there is Western concern for them—Jewish as well as non-Jewish—and with members of unregistered Christian churches. These would be new initiatives to probe—very carefully and slowly. But they would, I believe, strengthen the image Gorbachev wants to project of a Soviet power of moderation and good-neighborliness.