

TOWARD A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

With a Jewish problem undeniably existent, with the Soviet effort to deny or suppress it obviously futile, what can be done about it?

The Jewish problem in the Soviet Union is not unique. It is the Soviet attitude toward it that makes it appear so. Jews lived in many other lands before they ever came to Russia; they are found today in all the countries represented in the United Nations. And they have lived under various social systems. There have been Jewish problems in other lands and other times. But, with good will and a sense of justice, both the Jews and the non-Jews have managed to file away the sharp edges of the problem and to live together without hostility, in cooperation, to their mutual benefit.

Basically, the problem was reduced to nullity by a triple process. The country involved accorded its Jewish population the same freedom and equality enjoyed by the others, expecting from the Jews the same loyalty and love of country as from the others. This led to assimilation in the positive sense of the term, the Jews becoming an integrated part of the people of the land, an integral part of their political, social, economic, and cultural environment, enriching it with their talents and energies and being enriched by it. The patriotism of the Jews, their devotion to their fatherland, their contribution to the various fields of endeavor, have been demonstrated in all times and lands, and need no elaboration here.

Simultaneously, the Jewish population were given the freedom and opportunity to follow their own religion, and to enjoy and further their national culture in its historic language and in the tongue of the land. The Jews are one of the rare peoples in history who have acquired the capacity to live and express themselves in two cultures. Whether it was ancient Persia or medieval Spain or modern United States, the Jews living there have spoken the language of the land, contributed greatly to its economic and cultural development, helped to extend its influ-

ence in other parts of the world, at the same time that they followed, enjoyed, and developed their own religion and natural culture.

Finally, there has always been the safety valve of emigration. Those who could not function satisfactorily under dual cultural conditions, who wanted to live wholly and exclusively a Jewish life, could leave for another place, primarily the Holy Land, where they could find peace of mind in the absolute integrality they were seeking. Those who could not or would not adjust, left.

There is no incompatibility between being integrated into the general community and leading a traditional Jewish way of life. And it is no reflection on one's attitude toward one's native land if he leaves it for such a spiritual reason.

The same Jews who helped to arrange the marriage between Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, prepared the stage for the grandeur of Spain, organized and supervised the finances of the new united state, aided its scientific academies, encouraged Columbus, and provided the money for his voyage of discovery were simultaneously good Jews in the traditional sense, true to the God of their fathers, versed in Hebrew, learned in the Talmud, and wrote treatises on Judaism. The Spain of the late fifteenth century had no more dedicated citizens than Abraham Senior, Luis de Santangel, and Don Joseph Abravanel. No German did more for his country in the first third of this century than Walter Rathenau, who was deeply Jewish. His scientific inventions, engineering skill, and administrative ability were instrumental in establishing Germany's industrial greatness before the First World War. (At one time he was a leading director in eighty-six major concerns in Germany and in twenty-one German concerns abroad.) His additional political acumen and statesmanship helped to raise Germany from the ashes of defeat in that war and restart her on the road to recovery. All this did not exclude his interest in Hassidism and his preoccupation with the mission of the Jewish people among the nations of the world, which he expressed in these words: "Do you know why we Jews were born into this world? In order to call every human being to Sinai. You don't want to go there? If I don't call you, Marx will call you. If Marx does not call

you, Spinoza will. If Spinoza does not call you, Christ will call you."

No one fought more doggedly for the cause of the South in the American Civil War than the Jew Judah P. Benjamin. Called the "brains of the Confederacy," he was first attorney general, then secretary of war, then secretary of state, in the cabinet of Jefferson Davis. Though married to a Catholic and buried in a churchyard, he always carried a Hebrew psalter with him. He addressed a synagogue in San Francisco, and on one occasion manifested a deeper understanding of the essence of Judaism than the founder of Reform Judaism.

A Jew need not deny his own soul in order to be a good citizen of his country. Psychologically, the more a Jew is integrated within his Jewishness the easier he may find it to give himself to the general cause. At peace with himself, there is no inner conflict, no frustration, to hamper him. The opportunity for self-expression Jewishly is thus another factor in dissolving the Jewish problem.

Similarly, for the Jew emigration for nationalist reasons never meant hostility or resentment toward their homeland. On the contrary, emigrating Jews have always carried away with them a tender feeling for their native land, even when it was worse than a stepmother to them. Even ancient Egypt. The Children of Israel had been enslaved in Egypt for many generations—the Bible speaks of a period of four hundred years. Yet what was the Israelites' attitude toward Egypt after their liberation? The Bible commanded the Jews: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian because thou wast a stranger in his land." In fact, the experience in Egypt resulted in a greater regard for other people rather than an increased hostility. The Jews were ordered: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Jews have never completely departed from a native country by their own choice. Some have always remained behind. Even in the Exodus from Egypt not all the Children of Israel followed Moses into the wilderness. Many chose to stay on under Pharaoh. Only a minority of the Jews in Babylon left to rebuild the second Temple and establish the second Commonwealth. But numbers of Jews have left their native lands, in all parts

of the world and at all times, for the Holy Land with no ill feeling toward their native lands, or restraint from their native lands; the freedom to emigrate gained more for their native lands in good will and influence in the lands they settled, than was lost through their departure. The Return to Jerusalem has generally been regarded with respect and understanding by the countries of emigration.

The foremost Hebrew poet and philosopher since the Prophets, Yehudah Halevi, was known as Abu al-Hassan al-Lawi in his native Toledo. His mother tongue was Arabic; his magnum opus he wrote in that language, *Kitab Al Khazari*. He was also called "the Castilian" for his proficiency in Spanish, Alfonso VI of Castile having taken Toledo in the year of his birth (1085). His intimate friends were high officials at the court of Alfonso VI, and he himself practiced medicine in the royal circles. Yehudah Halevi was no stranger in the land of his birth or to the civilization in which he lived. Yet he sang: "My heart is in the East and I in the uttermost West," and he finally departed for the Holy Land. Many other Jewish celebrities, sometimes with a number of followers, have gone to Palestine at various times. One might say that the Return to Jerusalem has never stopped completely, and has always been associated with new spiritual movements in the Jewish world or disturbing events in their immediate environment. Among these people may be mentioned the codifier of Jewish law, Joseph Caro, who went to Palestine from Turkey in the sixteenth century; Judah Hasid, with several hundred followers, from Poland in the seventeenth century (in the wake of the Messianic Sabbatai Zvi movement); Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, Russia, with a few hundred followers, in the eighteenth century, associated with the Hassidic movement; a group of the anti-Hassidic movement from Lithuania in the early nineteenth century, and the Zionist groups in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primarily from Russia. These latter *émigrés* from Russia succeeded in laying the foundation for a renewed Jewish homeland and in establishing the new State of Israel, the only modern, economically developed, and politically democratic state in the Near East. But Russia suffered no loss thereby, either. You hear more Russian spoken, and encounter a greater

interest in Russian culture, not to speak of more friendship for the Russian people, in Israel than in many other lands just because of these *émigrés*.

Now, there is nothing in this threefold process of Jewish adjustment that is repugnant to the Soviet system. There is nothing in it that conflicts with Socialist theory or is detrimental to Soviet interest. On the contrary, it would redound to the benefit of the Soviet Union, in good will and sympathy abroad, if the Jewish problem were permitted its natural process of solution. In the early 1930's, when the Jewish problem seemed to be on the road to solution, however imperfectly, by the indicated process, with resettlement in Birobidjan expected to take the place of the safety valve of emigration, not only Jews, but also many non-Jews, abroad gave the Soviet leaders due praise. They would do so again if the Soviet leaders faced up to the Jewish problem and undertook honestly to solve it.

Let us take the first phase of the adjustment process, the matter of freedom, equality, and equal opportunity. The March Bourgeois Revolution in 1917 abolished all the restrictive laws of the Czarist regime against the Jews and gave Jews equal rights with the others. The October Bolshevik Revolution reinforced this equality, making its violation a statutory crime. Nothing being perfect in this imperfect world, it may be said that for a quarter of a century Soviet Jews did enjoy full equality and equal opportunity. The crack came from the bottom during the war years, with the emergence of anti-Semitism among the masses. It reached the top, and all but shattered Soviet Jewry in the years 1948-53. Equality was restored after Stalin's death, but only partly. The crack remained, and it seems to be widening. Is it really so difficult, not to say impossible, to restore full equality?

The Kremlin washes its hands of the abuse and the ugly accusations against Jews. These are supposedly acts of imprudence by irresponsible local functionaries. It would be unfair to charge the Kremlin with having a hand in the Malakhovka outrage and pogrom leaflets or in the Moslem version of the ritual blood libel in Buinask. But one may justly ask why no such thing happened during the Stalin regime up to the time of his change? The Russian populace was then closer to the Czarist

anti-Semitic days than they are now. Since as many as seventy-seven such articles appeared in a single year (1959) in only fifteen of the newspapers, something must have gone amiss, if not wrong, in respect to Jews right there in the Kremlin.

Time and again, as I met with people in the Soviet Union who spoke frankly about the Jewish situation, I was told that one speech of Khrushchev's could put an end to the anti-Jewish manifestations. All he would have to do was what Lenin did in his day: identify anti-Semitism with hooliganism and subversion, and call upon all Party members to uproot it mercilessly. But he has never said a word about it. I was told by the same people that right after Stalin's death Khrushchev sent out a confidential circular to all Party functionaries to cease firing Jews from the Party apparatus, fearing this might disrupt the Party machine at a critical time. He could do just that now, in regard to the abuse of and discrimination against Jews. In fact, it should be easier to suppress anti-Jewishness in a centralized, authoritative state like the Soviet Union than in the free-wheeling Capitalist world. A circular sent out to all executives and directors bearing an order that Jews must be treated absolutely like the rest and that any evasion or subterfuge would be punished would restore the full equality of the years before the war. If the Ukrainians of the 1930's could accept the fact that Jews were their equals in any social station, including the top echelons, why should not the Ukrainians of the 1960's accept this fact?

The restoration of the full (not the so-called proportionate) equality of the Jew would reinstate also his individuality. He would again be personally on his own, advancing or falling behind according to his individual talents and merits, not as member of a herd (a thing he regards with misgiving) sharing the fate of the herd. This would be a triple blessing for the Soviet Union. It would relieve a considerable number of its citizens of a sense of frustration and resentment, and would open to Soviet society a potential of abilities and energies not being fully utilized now. Above all, it would create a wholesome atmosphere for all. A continuing social injustice corrodes the moral fiber of any society. Hate gnaws at the heart of the hater as well as hurting the hated. Discrimination, however veiled or ration-

alized, is a festering wound. Soviet propagandists would have the world believe that *homo Sovieticus* is a happy creature. How happy can a victim of discrimination be?

Fair-minded people in the Soviet Union may more readily agree to taking summary action against discrimination than to putting an end to the campaigns in the press. They may ask: Are Jews caught in nefarious acts to be spared because they are Jews? If atheists are to fight religious superstition, can they bypass the synagogue? Equality, they may insist, cuts both ways. It prohibits discrimination, but also eliminates special privilege. But this is no plea for special privilege. It is a call for justice. Jews, like others, may commit crimes or other anti-social acts. Like others, too, they should get their due under the law. But when the press singles a few culprits out of many for public castigation, a delicate psychological problem arises. If the names of the persons in pillory are Russian, they are regarded by the readers as individuals, not as Russians whose misdeeds are a reflection on the Russian people. But if the names are Jewish, they are considered as Jews whose actions cast a shadow on all Jews. Moreover, the Soviet readers do not see the nationality of a Jew identified if he is mentioned for praise and adulation. Only recently the wife of General and onetime President Voroshilov died. She was a Jewess. Not only was her nationality omitted in the obituary, but all details about her origin and family that could suggest her being a Jewess went unmentioned; such details are generally given in cases where the wife is not Jewish.

The non-Jewish readers of the Soviet press have, therefore, no means of balancing their image of the Jew. They hear about him only in association with unpleasant and anti-social activities. In the United States most newspapers have discontinued, in the interest of improving race relations, identifying criminals of the Negro race as "Negro," even though they do so identify prominent people of the Negro race. When the Soviet authorities learned, a few years ago, that the six best young musicians selected to go abroad to participate in an international competition were all Jews, non-Jews were substituted for four of them in the interest of better national relations. Could they not also, in the interest of better national relations, omit the Jewish

identification in exposing social evils? Or at least eliminate the extra venom not found in similar articles about non-Jews? Definitely, in the Capitalist world such articles would be regarded as anti-Semitic. Ryasanov, the head of the state committee on religion, promised André Blumel to look into the matter of the scurrilous articles. Will this be another courteous promise to a friendly foreign visitor, forgotten after he leaves the country, or will Ryasanov really take effective action?

The second phase of the adjustment process, the opportunity to follow their own religion and enjoy their national culture, should offer no difficulties whatever. Here not even a declaration or a radio announcement would be required. All the Soviet authorities need do is obey their own laws, take their foot off the lid, and keep their own promises, given only a few years ago.

Nothing is asked here for Soviet Jewry that is not due them according to the constitution of the Soviet Union, under the laws of the Soviet state, and by the official resolutions of the Communist party. What is asked is no more than is already given to other religions in the Soviet Union, which is solemnly bound to treat all religions alike. If Judaism were given the same rights and opportunities as are enjoyed today by the Christian and Moslem faiths, it could have all the following, none of which it possesses: a central body for all the synagogues in the land, with a chief rabbi; a bakery for matzohs owned and operated by the central body or an individual synagogue; a plant producing prayer shawls and fringes (*arba kanfoths*) owned and operated by the central religious body or a synagogue; an establishment, or a recognized artel of scribes, to produce phylacteries; Hebrew Bibles, talmudic texts, prayer books, and calendars as needed by the synagogues, printed by the state at the expense of the central body or individual synagogues; a religious publication in Yiddish or Hebrew reflecting the religious activities and thinking of the believers, printed by the state at the expense of the central body or an individual synagogue. It could also send theological students to Jerusalem to perfect themselves in the knowledge of the Bible and Talmud; have several theological schools (*yeshivas*) instead of one, with a limitless number of students, instead of the current limit,

in practice, of fifteen, so that the number of rabbis would proportionately approximate the number of priests of the Greek Orthodox church and the ministers of the Baptist denomination—per capita of estimated believers. (The current proportion is one priest for 1,180 Greek Orthodox believers, one minister for every 1,100 Baptist believers, and one rabbi for 23,000 Judaic believers.)

Similar privileges and opportunities are granted to and enjoyed by the other faiths in the Soviet Union. If Judaism were put on the same footing, there would be no Jewish religious issue.

There should be no difficulty in restoring the Jewish national cultural life, as has been promised variously to foreign visitors during the past several years. This, too, would require no new departure, no straining of theory or principle, no special treatment. It would not even require the public admission of the Stalinist crime which Khrushchev has not hesitated to make in regard to other peoples, but to this day he has stubbornly barred its mention in respect to the Jews. All that need be done is to drop a private word to the officials concerned that the ban is off; the rest would follow naturally.

The suppression of Jewish culture in 1948 did not come about on a matter of principle or on the charge that a crying sin had been committed against Communism. It was part of a major security action taken in a prefabricated plot of treason. Certain ideas in some works of literature were used as corroborative evidence of the criminal intent of the accused. And the literature shared the fate of the accused. But the rehabilitation of the victims of the plot necessarily washed away the guilt of the corroborative evidence of the plot. So there can be no reason for the continued suppression of Jewish culture, and hence no need to resort to the untenable position that there is no demand for it. This statement has been disproved by Soviet figures. In 1958, N. N. Danilov, Vice-Minister for Culture, told a French Jewish delegation that 3,000,000 people attend annually the concerts of Yiddish folk songs and readings. Is not this number a sufficient potential reservoir of audience for at least one Yiddish theatre? In the 1959 census, close to a half-million Jews reported Yiddish as their mother tongue, when they could

easily have reported otherwise. Is not this number a potential reservoir of readers for a Yiddish publication? The state publishing house issued three volumes of the Yiddish classics in editions of 30,000. If there are so many Yiddish readers for the works of dead Yiddish writers, should there not be, say, 10,000, or 5,000 for Yiddish books by living Yiddish writers? Or for a Yiddish literary journal? Large circulations have never been a major consideration. The Chukchi people are no more than 12,000, yet they have a newspaper in their own language. There are only 230,000 Yakuts in the Soviet Union, yet they have twenty-eight newspapers and a book publishing house issuing about a hundred new titles a year, all in their own language.

There is, then, no valid reason nor practical hindrance against turning the clock of Yiddish culture back to where it was before the war. Indeed, there is good precedent for doing just that. In the early 1930's, the Soviet Germans, who are about one-third as numerous as the Soviet Jews, had an autonomous republic on the Volga, where they were mostly concentrated, and German schools wherever they lived in a sufficient number. In the late 1930's the German schools outside the autonomous republic were closed, but the German autonomy on the Volga continued until August, 1941, when the Germans were forcibly transferred to the Urals and parts of Siberia, and the use of German in schools or publications was suppressed. In 1955 the ban on German was removed. Since then, two German newspapers have begun publication, *Arbeiter* and *Neues Leben*, and German schools have been reopened. Moreover, where German children attend a general Russian school, they receive on request special instruction in German. Why cannot this precedent be followed in the case of the Soviet Jew?

If the Soviet authorities treated their Jews culturally as they do their Germans, there would be no Jewish cultural problem.

The third phase of the adjustment process, the safety valve of emigration, is more complicated for the Soviet Union, but this, too, is quite possible within the range of the Soviet theory and practice.

In the Western world there is no bar to emigration except in case of war. An American, an Englishman, a Frenchman, may leave his country at any time to settle permanently elsewhere.

Whether he retains his native citizenship or becomes a naturalized citizen of his new homeland is his own affair. The limitation that exists in connection with migration is on immigration—that is, the admission of foreigners for permanent residence, like the immigration quotas of the United States. Socialist Eastern Europe has for the present no immigration problem. Very few foreigners from the Capitalist world choose to settle there, and those who do are naturally good Communists and welcome. But there is a bar on emigration. No Soviet citizen may leave the country except by special permission, which is given very rarely indeed. The rationale for the bar to emigration in the Socialist countries is the same as for imposing a similar bar in time of war in the West: the state needs every citizen for the common national effort in time of danger. The building of Socialism is no less an urgent matter than mobilization in a war effort. There is a shortage of hands, and no one can be spared. But there are other reasons as well. Too many might want to leave, and this would be regarded abroad as a reflection upon the Socialist system. The *émigrés* might tell tales and assist in anti-Soviet propaganda. Also, the hope of emigration might keep many people in the Soviet Union from adjusting themselves to the new social order and from exerting themselves for its welfare. The Soviet citizen must be made to realize that he is there for better or worse, and he may as well try to make it for the better. Furthermore, permission for a special group or nationality to emigrate could bring additional complications. It might be regarded by some as an act of favoritism and by others as an effort to get rid of undesirables. It might arouse the jealousy of other groups and pressure for the same privilege. At best, it would be a disturbing element.

Notwithstanding these complexities and predicaments, I submit that the road is open for Soviet authorities to permit many Jews to leave their land. The exceptional action could be taken in the context of an exceptional situation. It would be one thing for the Soviet Union to let Jews leave for just any country; it would be quite another to permit them to leave for Israel. In the latter case, they would not be leaving their Soviet fatherland because they regarded it as not as good for them as another country. They would be returning to their ancient homeland.

And the Soviet Union gave recognition to historic sentiments of this kind when the situation was in the reverse. Years after the establishment of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, appeals came from Moscow to Armenians born in the United States and other lands to return to their national home in the Soviet Union. Occasionally, the appeal reached out to Armenians whose parents had never lived in Armenia. Now, why should these Americans of Armenian nationality have wanted to go to Soviet Armenia? The reason given was that they were of Armenian nationality, and they would be returning to their national home. Over 200,000 Armenians so returned to their homeland. Similarly, Ukrainians born in Latin America were invited by some bodies in the Ukraine to return to their native land. But their native land was right there where they were. They were citizens of the country their parents, in some cases their grandparents, had adopted as their own; they spoke the language of that country; they were assimilated into it. Yet they were called upon to return to the Ukraine because they were ethnically Ukrainians and the Ukraine was their national home. If it made sense for a native American of Armenian nationality to "return" to the Armenian state in the Soviet Union, why should it appear bizarre and forbidding for a native Soviet citizen of the Jewish nationality to "return" to Israel?

The question of whether Soviet Jews would want to go to Israel is beside the point. Naturally, those who did not want to go would not be going. It is those who might want and need to go who are the issue. How many these may be is, again, immaterial. It is the principle that matters. At this time the motivation is the reunion of families. Mr. Khrushchev is reported to have said in July, 1959, in answer to a question about permitting Soviet Jews to go to Israel, that "there are in the files of our Foreign Ministry no applications by persons of the Jewish or other nations wanting to emigrate to Israel." Mrs. Golda Meir, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, replied to this statement by saying that "thousands of residents of Israel are incessantly appealing to the Israel Government, urgently seeking help to bring their kin from the Soviet Union to be reunited with their families in Israel . . . In the last five years, residents of Israel have sent to their relatives in the Soviet Union, at the

latter's request, 9,236 *visors* (the document required in applying for an exit visa in the Soviet Union). . . . Only a few out of this total have as yet had the good fortune to be united with their families in Israel."

There can be no doubt about Mrs. Meir's figures, and perhaps Mr. Khrushchev was right too, but only technically. The procedure for obtaining the exit visa in such a case is as follows: The relative in the Soviet Union asks his kin in Israel for a visor—that is, a form stating the relationship and answering certain other questions. This visor is taken to the Soviet consul in Israel, who certifies it. Then it is sent privately to the relative in the Soviet Union. There the relative takes it to the office of the Ovir, the local police department, an agency of the ministry of the interior, where the application for the exit visa is made. It is the Ovir that has to approve the application. If and when the Ovir does approve a visor, the papers are sent to the Soviet foreign ministry, which issues the formal exit visa on the passport. The passport with the exit visa is then sent to the Israeli consul in Moscow for the entrance visa to Israel. The Israeli Consul does not even see the person to whom he grants this entrance visa.

Now, there may be no applications on file at the foreign ministry in Moscow, as Khrushchev said, but this would be so only because Ovir had refused, or had taken no action on, the visors. The Ovir, of course, follows the direction of the foreign ministry in this respect. So, Mr. Khrushchev is telling a half-truth when he cites the lack of pending applications as evidence that no Jews in the Soviet Union have expressed a desire to join their kin in Israel. The proof lies in the *requests* for visors, and the foreign office in Moscow must know from the routine consular reports from Israel that over 10,000 requests for visors have come from the Soviet Union.

Requests for reunion with kin, particularly by persons who lost most of their nearest relatives in the Nazi camps, are, of course, a humane consideration. Governments, like the people behind them, are expected to have hearts and compassion. There are many thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union whose only living kin are in Israel. There should be no question about their permission to leave. But the issue of emigration transcends

this field of emergency. Emigration was historically a safety valve because it helped the adjustment process by the exit of the unadjustable. The Jew who could not take it packed up and left. Those who remained were glad to stay, were happy where they were. No country is made happier by forcibly retaining citizens who are unhappy and want to leave.

How many unadjustable Jews there are in the Soviet Union who might want to go to Israel, nobody can estimate. It would be preposterous to say that if the gates were opened, all—or most—Soviet Jews would rush to Israel. Large numbers of Jews are too deeply rooted in their native soil and too imbued with the Communist way of life to think of going to Israel, or anywhere else, even though they may have their grievances against the current regime. Others have a vague, warm feeling for the Land of Israel and might go to settle there if they did not have economic, social, and family bonds with their own homeland. But there are definitely Jews in the Soviet Union who would go to Israel today if they could, and who deep in their hearts cherish the hope of someday going there. These are not necessarily old people. In fact, the old would be least likely to go. They are now receiving fairly good pensions, and would not leave their children and grandchildren. The would-be *émigré* is more likely to be young, intelligent, with a decent job and an attachment to his homeland. He would leave it with love and regret. But there are all kinds, of course. Here are a few typical *émigrés*, actual and potential.

Case One: A family of five, father and mother in their forties and three children, repatriated to Poland in order to reach Israel. They went without illusions about material benefits. They would have it harder at first, but might have it better eventually. Their reason for leaving the Soviet Union was religion. All are very religious. The children can speak Yiddish and read the prayers in Hebrew; some of these they are able to recite by heart. The family had not had meat in fifteen years, ever since they returned to their native town from evacuation in Tashkent. No kosher meat was obtainable in their town. There had been a slaughterer for chickens, and they ate kosher chickens. But the slaughterer had been terrorized by the local atheists, and had retired. There had been a synagogue in town,

but it was closed. For years they prayed at a *minyan*; now that had been closed too. What was the family to do? Go elsewhere? It was bad everywhere. It had become impossible to lead a Jewish life. Thank God, they managed to get out.

Case Two: An old woman with two daughters, one with her husband, the other a widow with a son of sixteen. They are not religious. Only the old woman can speak Yiddish, and just barely, with a harsh Russian accent. The old woman was a physician, now retired on a pension. One of the daughters, the widow, had been graduated from two faculties and was a professor of economics. The other daughter was an accountant, her husband an engineer; the boy was in school. They were not poor. They left the Soviet Union in their own automobile, brand-new, and shipped cases and cartons by freight. They arrived with radios, television sets, a motorcycle, photographic paraphernalia, an X-ray machine. It was all legitimate. Why did they leave? They were exuberant about their new life in Israel, but avoided talking about life in the Soviet Union. They would not say a word in the presence of strangers, but even among friends they would not speak ill, merely hint. From one good place you don't go seeking another, the old woman quoted an old Russian saying. Only the boy seemed bitter about the past. "You have to understand him," his mother apologized. "His father was taken away in the middle of the night and never heard from. He grew up in the black years, was abused, beaten by the boys in his school yard because he was a Jew. Listen, we had it up to here—" She points to her neck. The only man in the family, the engineer, is equally laconic, crisp. Just between us, why did he leave home. Leave home? *Here* was home.

Case Three: A man in his forties in Moscow. He is a lucky one—he has an apartment in the new modern houses, with elevator, central heating, incinerator, terrace, and it costs next to nothing. He is an accountant, but a bug on geography. "The world is getting smaller, but it is still very very big," he says with a wry smile. Chiefly, however, he is occupied with the geography of Israel. At the narrowest point, he tells me, Israel is only ten miles wide; Beersheba is less than seventy miles from Tel Aviv. And in a further attempt to impress me with his knowledge of the geography of Israel, he remarks that the high-

est mountain there is Mount Meiron, 1,200 meters above sea level. "Must be very sunny there," he says, looking askance. "Lots of shade here—" He drops his voice and looks toward the door. "Lots of shade everywhere," I respond. "True," he replies, avoiding my eyes, "but here it's special, just for us." His wife enters the room, and we change the subject. In parting, he says to me: "Someday I will be in the sun up on the mountain."

Case Four: A young man, a student. He was anxious to hear about Jews everywhere and especially about Israel. He was not so much concerned about anti-Semitism in the United States and other countries as most others were. He wanted to know if there were any books on Jews and Judaism in English—he was studying the English language. He wondered how he could get such a book. He had recently read, in Russian, a book on Uriel Acosta, a fascinating man. Was there really such a man? As we talked more freely, he confided to me that he was determined to go to Israel. How could he, possibly? Well, much more was possible in his country than people abroad realized. Was he against Communism? No. Was he against the Soviet regime? No, but he was being crowded out—psychologically, that is. They said he was a Jew. Maybe they were right. He was a Jew. But what was a Jew? He was trying to find out. Yes, he wanted to be a Jew, a real, full Jew. For this you had to go to Israel.

These were my encounters with actual and would-be Soviet Jewish *émigrés* to Israel. Others may have run into other types. Essentially, their motivation is the same. They have been made to feel they are Jews, yet they have no outlet, no vehicle of expression, for their Jewishness. They dare not cry out, so they gripe in "the shade" and dream of getting "out in the sun." The young generation, generally more impetuous and rebellious, is here too more impatient with the situation and more avid for a break-through. A young British girl of leftist background, Sally Belfrage, who spent considerable time in the Soviet Union mixing with young people of her own age (the twenties), told of the anti-Jewish jokes she heard so often, "always Abramovich this and Abramovich that," and of the state of mind of the Jewish youth, their "biggest resentment" being that three millions of them have to be identified as, yet enjoy none of the privileges of, a separate nationality.

Soviet authorities must be aware of this frame of mind in a considerable segment of their Jewish population. Their counteraction, however, is as wrongly conceived and crudely executed as in the case of religion. They let loose a flood of anti-Israel propaganda that is manifestly one-sided and quite unbelievable. Soviet Jews resent this insult to their intelligence and seek other sources of information on Israel. These are not too difficult to find. The Soviet Union is no longer completely insulated from the rest of the world. People come and go; short wave radios are common, and those who are interested can obtain a realistic picture of the situation in Israel from broadcasts of the Western countries and direct from Israel as well. You cannot make a young, intelligent Soviet Jewish boy believe that Zionism is an imperialistic contrivance of the cold war when he knows his own grandfather was a Zionist long before Lenin. Neither can you make him accept as real an Israel where people do nothing but starve and a million and a half Jews are the willing slaves of a clique of warmongers. Such countries simply do not exist. Naturally he will try to learn the other side of the story. As he is learning the truth, he acquires the knack of reading between the lines of the calumnies and getting the facts by reflection from the fabrications. The result is a deeper and more general preoccupation with Israel, making it a central point in the thinking and feeling of the Soviet Jew.

A realistic approach to the situation calls for the use of the historically proved safety valve. Let those who want to go, who need to go, leave. They cannot be so many as to have an adverse effect on the economy of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, this move would relieve the strain among the Soviet Jews. With the door open, those who really do not belong elsewhere would not have the urge to get out. Furthermore, those who left under such circumstances would go as friends of the Soviet Union, and remain such. As to the apparent exception in the general emigration policy in favor of the Jews, the exceptional situation of the rise of a national Jewish state, as already indicated, should be sufficient justification, if justification were really necessary.

Some have raised the specter of Arab protest. In view of strong Arab opposition to an influx of Jews into Israel, it is argued, the Soviet Union could not jeopardize its good relations

with the Arab world by permitting a number of its Jews to emigrate. But anyone acquainted with actual Soviet-Arab relations, not as these are served up in the propaganda, knows that there is a tacit agreement to disagree. No concern for the feelings of Moscow is discernible in Arab countries when a matter is of importance for internal affairs, like the suppression of a Communist publication or party. Similarly, the Soviet Union has on occasion taken positions that could not be to the liking of the Arab states. Moreover, the Soviet leaders know that Arab opposition to Jewish immigration into Israel is a propaganda piece rather than a real issue. The Arab masses do not care a hoot about Jewish immigration or, indeed, about Palestine. In fact, the Arab countries themselves permitted Jews to leave; even Nasser did so until the Sinai campaign. Of the Arab politicians, only Nasser might have real concern, and he is not the darling of the Arab politicians of other lands. Even Nasser's concern would be more for appearances—whether the Jewish immigration would not be used in propaganda against him by his Arab adversaries. Certainly there is not enough weight there to keep the Soviet Union from effectuating an internal policy which it deemed necessary.

In the matter of Jewish emigration, as in the case of Jewish national culture and religion, as in respectful treatment and full equality of opportunity, there is no inherent, insurmountable handicap to keep the Soviet leaders from righting the wrong. They need do nothing that is not consonant with their own social theories or practices. All that is required of them is to face the reality of the Jewish situation in their country and accept the facts of life. They do have a Jewish people of some 3,000,000 souls who have not been assimilated in the sense of having lost their identity and national spirit, who stubbornly refuse to be assimilated, and who, judged by historic experience, cannot be assimilated. Except for any who may want to emigrate to Israel and are permitted to do so, those people are there to stay. Their problem is the problem of the Soviet Union, and it is up to the Soviet leaders to guide that problem to a solution. Fortunately, there is a historic pattern of solution, fully compatible with the Soviet system, that worked well where it was applied honestly and wholeheartedly.