

REPORT OF OUR MISSION TO THE SOVIET UNION
ON BEHALF OF RUSSIAN JEWRY

--Current Situation, Suggestions, Summary of Meetings--

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July 18, 1989

INFORMATIONAL COPIES TO:

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Angeles
Selma and Sam Rosen, Committee on Soviet Jewry, Orange
County

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a two-week fact finding mission to the USSR to assess the current situation of Soviet Jewry in general, and in particular, the situation of our Temple Beth El's adopted Refusenik family, the Kellmans. The mission lasted from May 18 to May 30, included visits to three cities--Leningrad, Riga, Moscow-- and involved meetings with 22 individuals. The paper reports on meetings with those individuals, summarizes the current situation as we observed it within the Soviet Union, and offers practical guidelines and suggestions for our Temple and the U.S. based Committee on Soviet Jewry.

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--SECTION ONE--

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

This paper reports the results of our mission to the Soviet Union on behalf of Russian Jewry. This mission was initiated, sponsored, and due to the fund raising efforts of the Committee on Oppressed Jewry of Temple Beth-El of South Orange County, California. There were several charges given to us by the Temple's Committee, as well as the Los Angeles office of the Committee on Soviet Jewry: a) to meet with and assess the situation of the refusenik, Boris Kellman, on whose behalf Temple Beth-El had been campaigning; b) to take in supplies, provisions, Hebrew books and tapes; c) to meet with other Jewish leaders in the Soviet Union and try to assess the current situation and needs of Soviet Jewry.

The emotional impact of this trip on our own lives was quite strong. We returned feeling enormously blessed to have the opportunity to freely practice, experience and love Judaism with our community here in the United States. That emotional impact, as well as more "abstract" philosophical, psychological, and religious observations are being reported elsewhere. In this paper we address three topics: 1) an overview of the trip and our personal observations about the situation in the USSR as it affects Soviet Jewry; 2) practical suggestions that emerged from our trip in terms of what we feel can/should be done next regarding the question of Soviet Jewry. These observations will range from the organizational to the individual. We also offer a

few thoughts on issues of Orthodox and Reform Judaism in the USSR. Finally, in the third section, we give detailed summaries of meetings with the families and individuals we saw, including items brought in, assistance requested, etc.

OVERVIEW.

During the two weeks from May 18 to May 30, 1989, we visited 22 people, both individuals and families, in three cities--Leningrad, Riga, and Moscow. Meetings were with refuseniks (including Boris Kelman), poor relatives, Zionists, Hebrew teachers, leaders of the Jewish community (Riga, Leningrad), the co-founder of the Association of Humanistic Psychology in the USSR, and the head of crisis psychiatric services in Leningrad. We brought in the Russian edition of the Encyclopedia Judaica; non-prescription medicines; a letter to the Bat Mitzvah twin of one of our congregants; baby clothes; children's coloring pens Russian/Hebrew grammar books to Hebrew teachers; shabbat and Havdalah candles; Kosher food; challah covers; and kippot. Although we were harrassed by customs, (and the customs official even took some of the books and tapes to his supervisor to see if they were permitted)we were allowed to take everything in. The only things they declared on our customs receipts were blank tapes and blank video cassettes, which, therefore, we were forced to keep with us throughout the trip.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS: THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE USSR

By way of background, we would like to make a few personal observations about the situation of Jews generally in the Soviet Union. Clearly, our remarks are based on only the most superficial of evidence, and must be read in that light.

The twin phenomena of glasnost and perestroika appear substantive and sincere; that is, most Jews we met agreed that Gorbachev takes his reformist posture seriously; and that, indeed, society had become more open. Newspapers now carry real news. Politics suddenly has room for true dissent. Expression in the arts is flourishing. But "What does this mean for the Jews?"

We found no indication of systematic governmental persecution of Jews per se. In general, the climate is definitely more liberal or, as the Russians would say, more progressive as compared to even a few years ago. It is now possible to teach Hebrew, to hold adult educational meetings, to attend a synagogue service, to conduct a Bar Mitzvah, to be an observant Jew without fear of overt reprisal. These types of behaviors appear to be regarded as quixotic and somewhat silly, but are officially tolerated. It also appears possible to constitute formal organizations whose express purpose is the promotion of indigenous Jewish "culture," and/or friendship with Israel (a country with whom the Soviet Union has only the most minimal relations). Most significantly, for the vast majority of Soviet Jews who apply, it is even possible to emigrate. Of course, it is possible that such activities meet with implicit disapproval and condemnation from officials and the general citizenry; but the penalties appear random and unorganized.

Despite a lack of systematic persecution, there are strong signs of discrimination and anti-Semitism. We were told on several occasions of quota systems in choice universities and institutes; and job discrimination

as well. Further, the Pam Yat movement ("Memory"), a highly nationalistic, right-wing group with a virulent anti-Semitic bent, has found support not only among the common people, but in the intellectual class as well.

Finally, we were told of the prevalence of anti-Semitic jokes, envy and resentment against the Jews, and a willingness to blame all of the Soviet Union's problems on the "Zionist conspiracy." We even heard of a rumor that the current economic crisis had resulted because Gorbachev was part Jewish.

In addition, it must be recognized that glasnost is, at present, only the dominant of several competing political philosophies. While Russians currently appear to be intoxicated with democracy, there is also serious grumbling about food shortages and the general lack of consumer goods. Many long for a "strong leader," even (although this is not a popular viewpoint) for the steel of a Stalin. Several individuals expressed the fear that, should the political and economic chaos become too severe, the army, with the political backing of groups like Pamyat, would seize power. Then repressions would set in; and, of course, as was frequently expressed, the first to feel them would be the Jews.

There is a real debate in the Soviet Union among its Jews as to whether this country can ever again become the home of a truly vibrant Jewish culture. The majority opinion, epitomized by individuals such as Kellman (pp. 26-27), Koblentz (pp. 28-29) and Dikkor (pp. 14-15) think not. They do not trust the apparent liberalizations, and suspect that when the demands for freedom and democratization become too loud, the whole show will reveal itself as sham. Others, such as Lokshin (16-17), Bodhkin (22-23), Giozman (38-39) respect the historical imperative of this argument, but are not convinced. Thus, it is unclear whether the American Soviet Jewry movement should continue to make emigration and aliyah its primary goal; or whether it should shift direction and help the Jews of Russia to revive their ancient culture. Until the ramifications of glasnost and perestroika have become clearer to

us all, the former, more conservative posture seems preferable.

In the end, however, the two may be inextricably linked. Now that the government has espoused virtually an open-door policy toward Jewish emigration, most of the Jews who want to leave have left or are in the process of leaving. What we are faced with is the 1 million or so remaining Jews who are so alienated, so estranged and so unfamiliar with their own Jewishness that they do not even have real freedom to choose the risks of life in Russia or the risks of life in Israel or the United States (or elsewhere). If the current climate represents a substantive and permanent shift in the political and social essence of the Soviet Union, this indeed is a blessing. If it is no more than a window of opportunity, we owe it to the Jews of Russia, and we owe it to ourselves, to make the most of it. The best way to do that, it seems, in addition to addressing the remaining poor relative and refusenik situations on an individual basis, is to strengthen organizations which can reach out and rouse the slumbering Jewish community. We must support well-organized and systematic efforts to awaken the majority of Soviet Jews to their Jewish heritage and identity, so that they are at least in the position of making informed choices about where they decide to live their lives.

SECTION TWO: PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

BACKGROUND

Heretofore the efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry have been primarily on an individual, one to one basis. However, because of the more liberal government policies regarding emigration, teaching of Hebrew, etc, it appears that most of the "refuseniks" have been allowed to emigrate, and most of those who wish to leave, are being allowed to. Boris Kellman, (pp. 26-27) estimates the number of refuseniks left to be in the hundreds, and suggests a similar amount of poor relatives (those whose relative--e.g., spouse, parent-- won't sign off to allow emigration).

Therefore, Kellman argued that although individual humanitarian efforts on behalf of those people are still necessary, the focus of the US movement should now shift to organizational efforts. This is not because individual efforts in the past weren't successful, but precisely because they were so successful. It is no longer necessary to smuggle in Hebrew books and other Judaica. These can be sent through the mails. Further, as the movement matures, there need to be ways to identify and develop an organization so that overlapping books are not sent in; a centralized library is established; different books left with different people are circulated better, etc. Both Kellman (Leningrad) and Gaft (Riga) (pp. 34-35) stressed that what is now needed is organization to organization links. This new level of sophistication is necessary to expand the

movement and reach out to those nearly 80% of Jews, who through historical fear, inertia, apathy, or lack of knowledge, have not yet been touched by Judaism. One example of this new level of organizational maturity in the USSR among Soviet Jews was the May 18--21 conference in Riga which was attended by over 300 delegates representing Jewish groups from throughout the USSR (plus from the US and Israel). This was the first such Soviet-wide meeting and several people we spoke with--Gaft, Kellman, Zarud-- had attended. The meeting came up with a consensus position denouncing PamYat; and spent a considerable portion of the time discussing ways to reach the unaffiliated and uncommitted Jews in the USSR.

We now turn to the specific situations in Leningrad and Riga.

LENINGRAD. In Leningrad there are efforts to develop such an organizational structure, and have it given legitimacy and official state approval. Our thought here was that it might be helpful, rather than have individual members sent in, or even Hebrew teachers, to send in an organizational development consultant-- to help assist in the nature of organization, computer hardware and software needs for mailing lists, etc. Both adult and child education programs could be important targets. As Kellman noted, there is a need now to reach the 80% of the unaffiliated Jews in Leningrad. This can only be done with an organizational structure. This is essential so that, for example, when a speaker is scheduled there can be a newsletter or flier distributed to inform the community (rather than Kellman's picking up the phone and calling people one at a time).

There needs to be more visibility in media, etc, to increase the "twinning" process; Kellman admits that with all the immigration, the pool of "twins" has fallen to a dismally low number now, and the few twins remaining are overloaded by American counterparts. Further, the Bar Mitzvah can now be performed legally in the Soviet Union. The issue is getting people in the Soviet Union interested and involved in wanting to do such a ceremony and to ensure that there are the appropriate educational and institutional structures to handle it.

RIGA. Riga had the only "official" organization that we saw on our trip--the Latvian--Israeli friendship society (see Gaft, 34-35). They had established an "official" library (in the home of Zunshain and Sverdlov--pp. 36-37); had sponsored "dances" for Israeli Independence day, at which several hundred teen agers had attended; had sent Zarud (pp. 32-33) to Budapest to study with fellow Hebrew teachers); and were sending Gringauz (pp. 32-33) to Jerusalem to bring back ideas and thoughts on Jewish culture/religion to Latvia.

What the Latvian/Israeli society wanted from us is organizational links--not individual ones. This would be a way for them to have their organization validated (both for them, and in the eyes of Soviet society). Examples would include exchange of scholars, books; medical supplies for a medical clinic they want to establish, etc. Perhaps the Orange County Board of Rabbis could establish a sister-city arrangement with Riga.

It is also our recommendation that the Committee on Soviet Jewry, in dealing with Latvia/Riga, work through this

organization. For example, we brought some Hebrew/Russian grammar books to Riga, and left them with Koblentz (pp. 28-29). However, in the future, they should be left with the Organization, which is attempting to centralize and systematically train Hebrew teachers.

INDIVIDUAL.

One example where focus on individual efforts is still needed is the situation of Elizabeth Zunshain and Mikhail Sverdlov (pp. 36-37). They want to immigrate to Israel, but are being denied because her mother won't sign off. They specifically asked our help in a letter-writing campaign (Appendix B. pp. 43-48) details their efforts and their attempt to get legal representation). They feel that if their situation is made visible, their chances of being allowed to leave the Soviet Union will improve. Elizabeth was seven months pregnant when we saw them. They are a lovely couple, full of life and energy, and it was sad to see their frustration and heartache at not being able to contribute to the society of their choosing.

We also feel that we, as Americans, have a responsibility to help those who have been given the opportunity to immigrate, and choose to come to America. For example, the Bablina family (pp. 7-8) noted that they now have permission to leave, but are only allowed to take \$US150 with them. As our parents/grandparents were helped when they came, we have that responsibility to help those that follow--from efforts to improve the situation at L'Dispoli to efforts to welcome here in the US--financial, emotional, spiritual.

REFORM/ORTHODOX.

This is a potentially sensitive issue, and one in which there unfortunately exist some unhelpful stereotypes and "name calling" which do not necessarily seem "in the service of God." For example, before leaving for the USSR, we called individuals around the country to get their thoughts on what message they might send to Soviet Jews about the essence of Judaism. From one reform spokesperson, we were told "Tell them that Reform represents modernity, while Orthodox represents old age; Reform is easy to digest without the dogma of Orthodoxy." On the other hand, Alexander Lokshin (pp 16-17) expressed a view of Reform as typified by "quicky" conversions and spoke of a Reform Rabbi he had met as a "so called Rabbi." When asked his source regarding the quicky conversions, he said, "Orthodox colleagues."

Although certainly one person's actions and views should not and do not necessarily speak for a movement, the comments above and the incidents below suggest, for us, problems "on both sides." For example, Lokshin was unwilling to allow Johanna to pray and sing with us. Rather, she had to sit in the corner and wait until we were done, a painful and alienating experience for her.

We were also asked by the daughter, Maya, of the Bablina family, after we had said the HaMotzi before the meal, if Reform Rabbis do not say blessings before a meal. She said that she had met a reform Rabbi, and he had taken her to lunch, but had not said a blessing. Whatever the virtues of "radical" freedom espoused by reform, we felt--especially in the Soviet

Union with its scarcity of food-- that not to pause and feel the blessings of the One who brings forth food from the earth, was unfortunate.

Our view is to not to minimize differences between the various approaches, but to only examine those areas which are truly being argued for the sake of God; to find what it means to be, in Dennis Praeger's words, "A Serious Jew"; and finally, to heed well the lines in the Pirkey Avot (which we read during the Sabbath when we met Lokshin):

Ben Azzai said: Do not be scornful of any person and do not be disdainful of anything, for you have no person without his hour and no thing without its place.

Of all the people we met in the Soviet Union, Lokshin was as close to us in terms of our own views of Jewish spirituality as anyone we met. He clearly loved Judaism, felt the importance of "placing God before us always"; felt that cultural Judaism may be necessary, but was not sufficient unless the culture helped point the way toward God. He was a deeply committed person and gave freely of his time to teach other Jews. He also brought real spirit and joy to his Sabbath meal.

Our sense, from a psychological perspective, is that the Orthodox approach might be a necessary step in the Soviet Jewry movement. We say this because the Soviet "personality" and culture appears to be one that has historically been shaped by deference to leadership, and by authority from the top down. This has been true under communism, and before that, under the Czar. Being told "This is truth" and "This is what you must do to be religious" provides clearcut guidelines which may be comfortable for many in the Soviet Union.

We also believe there may be a place for Reform Judaism in the Soviet Union. We believe this approach might appeal to several groups. First, it could be attractive to the group of people who are existentially questioning regarding the nature of God. In a society which has been officially atheistic, a return to God, for some, may involve a struggle and search, and an openness to several different experiences/beliefs --i.e., "Our God" as well as "God of our Fathers" might be helpful (e.g., cf. Sonaino and Syme). Second, Reform might speak to individuals such as Zarud, who said, "I am reform in my observance, but Orthodox in my heart." A Reform Judaism in which mitzvot are not seen as "minimalist" but rather as existentially chosen based on one's values and understanding might appeal to a certain group. Finally, there are many mixed (international) marriages in the Soviet Union between Jew and non-Jew, as well as many women accustomed to working and being accorded (more or less) equal status. Without minimizing differences in male and female spirituality, the egalitarian approach of Reform, and its efforts at gentle outreach might find fertile soil in these areas as well. In that regard, there was interest, surprise, and even excitement among many people when we showed them pictures of our daughter's recent Bat Mitzvah (and pictures of our synagogue's female cantor).

SECTION THREE:**SUMMARY NOTES OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES VISITED**

As noted, there were twenty-two different individuals and families visited during our visit in the Soviet Union. In this section, two pages are devoted to each individual/family. The first page is a summary sheet from the Committee on Soviet Jewry providing basic address/phone information (an overview address list is provided in Appendix A); items left; requests for assistance.

The second page details and summarizes salient points from the conversation and meeting. This information is grouped by cities: Leningrad (pages 14-27); Riga (pages 28-37); and Moscow (pages 38-39).

Your Name: Deane & Johanna Shapiro
 Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
 City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
 (To be Completed for Each Visit)
 PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad
 NAME OF PERSON VISITED Dikkor, Grigori (Grisha), Olga, Katsia
 ADDRESS Volvostoy pr. 124 apt 19 Leningrad 192102
 PHONE 112-8017 LANGUAGE USED? English (poor)
 HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? telephoned from hotel
 TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?)

1. ITEMS LEFT:
Hebrew texts for children, books about Israel in English,
coffee, tuna, gum, Havdallah candle

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

Personal Needs none

For Community/Public Activities _____

Other Requests _____

3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT, IF ANY

4. REMARKS:

DIKKOR FAMILY

Grisha is one of the more established Hebrew teachers in Leningrad. His Hebrew (apparently) is excellent, but his English, and that of his wife, is very limited. We met with him, his second wife Olga (she is not Jewish), and their daughter Katsia, about 10 or 11, in their cramped, shabby apartment near a Moslem cemetery. There was also another couple there who spoke no English, but who were interested in making aliyah. Also while we were there, a woman came to discuss Israel with Grisha. He appears to be perceived as a source of reliable information.

The Dikkor family has been in a "poor relative" situation for several years, because of opposition from Olga's parents. The parents have now relented, and Grisha and Olga hope to make aliyah within the next few months. They have already been granted permission to leave from the government.

Grisha is a strong Zionist and very committed to Israel. He had had "3 or 4" visitors from the US this past year, but over 40 Israeli guests. A map of Israel is prominently displayed on his wall. Also, from Israeli sources, he has received an impressive audio and video tape library of Israeli songs, Hebrew language, documentaries about the country etc. He also has a large number of Hebrew books. Grisha stated that, when he reached Israel, he would be "right of Kahane." Both he and his wife were amazed that, with the freedom to do so, neither we nor our children spoke Hebrew. Grisha felt strongly that the only place Jews could really flourish was in Israel: America was too assimilationist and materialistic. However, he acknowledged that the great majority (maybe 90%) of Jews who leave the Soviet Union go to America.

We visited the Dikkors on Erev Shabbat. We were surprised that, given his fervent Zionism and fluent Hebrew, they did not light Shabbat candles, and did not know simple blessings.

When they were employed, Grisha worked in occupational health (he has a Ph.D. in some related field), and his wife worked as a surgical nurse. Now they have quit their jobs in anticipation of leaving.

He reported about 200 Hebrew students in Leningrad. He teaches adults primarily. Hebrew teaching is now allowed, and Grisha may advertise for students. He gave us names of two other individuals who will "take over" as the primary Hebrew teachers in Leningrad when he leaves. He, Kelman, and Sasha Loshkin (and about 10 others) are leaders of the Leningrad Jewish Cultural Society. However, this is not a formally recognized body, has no physical structure, and continues to hold meetings and classes in individual homes.

Your Name: Debra Johanna Shapiro
 Date of trip: 5/17-5/30 1989
 City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
 (To be Completed for Each Visit)
 PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad
 NAME OF PERSON VISITED Loshkin, Alexander (Sasha)
 ADDRESS Saltikova Skedrina 11-17
 PHONE 272-3600 LANGUAGE USED? English
 HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? telephone from hotel or Dikkor's apt.
 TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?) By tram to his apt.

1. ITEMS LEFT:
Books; Havdallah candle; food (kosher)
2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:
 Personal Needs _____
 For Community/Public Activities twinning (bar mitzvahs only)
with orthodox synagogues in U.S.
 Other Requests _____

3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT, IF ANY

4. REMARKS:

LOSHKIN, Alexander (Sasha)

At Kelman's arranging, we spent our first Erev Shabbat with Sasha, his girlfriend, and a 19 year old student who was planning to make aliyah in the next few months. Sasha had been taught by Chabad, and was extremely orthodox. He requested that we arrive at 10:21 (sunset), and was upset that, because we got lost, we arrived at 10:40. He lived in a small, dingy apartment, up a crumbling and unlit stairwell. A mezuzah was on the outside of the door (we were told many Soviet Jews place them inside the doorframe, so they cannot be seen from outside). The apartment was filled with Judaica - a shofar, a picture of the Lubavitcher rebbe, a map of Israel, kiddush cup, many religious books in Hebrew. Sasha spoke fluent Hebrew and very good English, as did the young student. The girlfriend apparently spoke no English, and we did not really communicate with her.

Sasha and the student were completing the Mincha service when we arrived. They invited Deane to join them, but refused to let me pray with them because I was a woman. I sat in a chair in the corner. Sasha prayed in a very orthodox fashion, very quickly, in fluent Hebrew, davvening, taking three steps back and forward at the appropriate places in the service. When we did the blessing over washing the hands, the student instructed me carefully on how to hold the pitcher so I wouldn't make a mistake. We kept silent after the hand-washing, as is traditionally correct, then the student (who was a flutist, and hoped to study at Julliard) began humming Shalom Aleichem in a very moving way. Sasha also was very inspired in his praying, and clearly loved Judaism passionately.

It was the second Pesach, as Sasha explained, so we ate matzah instead of challah. Sasha very much enjoyed being in a teaching role, and was extremely knowledgeable. He said that often he has up to 30 young people celebrating Shabbat with him. Although he has strong feelings for Eretz Israel, he is ambivalent about leaving, because he sees this as an exciting time in the Soviet Union, with the possibility of much change and the revival of Jewish culture.

Sasha had many negative stereotypes about reform Judaism. He had met a reform rabbi once, whom he described as "a nice Jew, but no rabbi." He also had heard of "quicky conversions," and the laxity of patrilineal descent. He described reform Judaism basically as social work, and said this was not applicable to the Soviet Jews' situation. His basic approach was that we could discuss, we could question all we wished, but your behavior must always conform to the law.

The young flutist talked of the "second Holocaust": the systematic persecution of Jews under Stalin, the formal atheism of the past communist regimes. To be a Jew in Russia one has to overcome so many obstacles that religious knowledge and observance are almost stifled.

I think the fact that we took our Judaism seriously, and yet we were reform, challenged some of Sasha's preconceptions. For all their differences, he and Deane discussed the appropriate chapter of the Pirkey Avot, and the counting of the omer (we were there between Pesach and Shavuot). We met with Sasha a second time, in which we discussed twinning. Sasha expressed some interest in organizing twinning between US and Leningrad communities - but, of course, only bar mitzvahs, and only with orthodox synagogues. Still, by the end, we were admitting that, if the USSR ever became a truly free society, he could see the value of many different options for expressing Judaism.

Your Name: Deane + Johanna Shapiro
 Date of trip: 5/17-5/30 1989
 City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
 (To be Completed for Each Visit)
 PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad

NAME OF PERSON VISITED LYOUSHKIN, Dmitri

ADDRESS Central P/O (Poste Restante) Leningrad 190000

PHONE — LANGUAGE USED? English

HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? met at Museum of Religion + Atheism

TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?) _____

1. ITEMS LEFT:

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

Personal Needs _____

For Community/Public Activities _____

Other Requests _____

3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT, IF ANY

4. REMARKS:

LYOUSHKIN, Dmitri

Dmitri was a young man whom we met accidentally outside the Museum of Religion and Atheism (Kazan Cathedral), and who became our guide. Dmitri was originally Jewish. As an adolescent, he had been a dissident and a rebel. Later, he had developed strongly religious feelings. However, he knew nothing about his religion of origin. He had rejected the Russian Orthodox faith because he was uncomfortable worshipping icons. Eventually, he had been converted by a Baptist evangelical from the United States. He reported that there are only about 4,000 Baptists in Leningrad (perhaps all of Russia?) and that they, along with other Protestant sects, are much persecuted. When he first experienced his religious conversion, his parents, who are both nuclear physicists, thought he was crazy and locked him in his room with no food. He says the Soviet Union is a crazy society. He wants very much to come to the U.S. He is unemployed, and works with an evangelical group of young people.

Dmitri pointed out to us that the whole purpose of the exhibit was to illustrate the primitiveness of religious belief, and the progressive, modern attributes of atheism. He translated the statements written about the Judaica (a menorah, a Torah), which emphasized the nationalistic, chauvinistic aspects of Judaism, and argued that its messianism was used to bolster the bourgeois, capitalist state.

Dmitri felt that there was much anti-semitic feeling in the Soviet Union, basically resentment at the perception that Jews were overrepresented in prestigious professions, and in government and cultural spheres. He told us a couple of popular antisemitic jokes which emphasized Jews' cleverness at making money. As Dmitri put it, "Russia has always blamed its troubles on the Jews."

Your Name: Deane & Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17-5/30 1989
City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
(To be Completed for Each Visit)
PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad

NAME OF PERSON VISITED Biblina, Maya (and parents)

ADDRESS ?

PHONE 178-0723 LANGUAGE USED? English

HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? telephone

TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?) Met at synagogue

1. ITEMS LEFT: coffee, tuna, other food items

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

Personal Needs Emigrating to U.S. in August; very concerned that they will be able to leave L'Dispoli

Public Activities _____

USSR-CCCP
192288
Leningrad -
ЛЕНИНГРАД

ДУНАЙСКИЙ ИР
953 К2 КВ196

БИБЛИНА М.

TEL 1780723

OUT, IF ANY

BIBLINA, Maya (and parents)

We met Maya at the Great Choral Synagogue in Leningrad. Later in our visit, we also had tea with her and her family. She is a 19 year old student of English, preparing to be a secondary school teacher. She and her parents were refused permission to leave last year. However, they have recently been granted permission, and intend to leave in August. The family was very proud of her grandfather, who was regarded as a Jewish scholar, and had been imprisoned in Siberia during Stalin's era.

The parents were extremely concerned about the situation in L'Dispoli and asked us many questions. They had difficulty understanding why the US was not being more receptive to the Jews let out of the Soviet Union. They were very worried at starting over again in the US, and tried to change money with us. It was heartbreaking to us, because the roubles they wished to give us were virtually worthless, while the couple of hundred dollars they hoped to acquire would be almost irrelevant in helping them settle in this society.

Previously, both parents had worked as chemical engineers. Now they have quit their jobs in preparation for leaving. Their apartment was one of the nicer we've seen, with relatively good quality furniture and knick-knacks. The mother had stood in line for two hours to buy the cake she served us. She also told us that a new edict had been issued that day limiting people in Leningrad to 1 bar of soap every 3 months, and 600 grams of laundry detergent.

The mother in particular seemed hungry to learn more about Judaism (it was her father who was the "scholar"). When we said the blessing over the cake, she had tears in her eyes, and said she remembered her grandmother saying this blessing. Maya asked whether reform rabbis ever said blessings; she had met one, and she had never observed him to do this. They were fascinated by the pictures of our daughter's bat mitzvah, and interested in the possibilities for religious education of children in the US. Maya said most Jews she knows are proud to be Jews, "because of all the great people who have been Jews, like Freud or Einstein." She didn't think most Jews in the Soviet Union were really interested in learning more about Judaism, but her mother disagreed.

Maya wants to become a doctor in the US. She appeared very confused by the almost limitless possibilities and options in American culture. Maya was currently a member of Komsomol (you can stop at 27), but said she just pays her dues, never attends meetings, and doesn't take it seriously. However, if you don't belong, it can hurt your career.

Your Name: Deanne Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17-5/30 1989
City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
(To be Completed for Each Visit)
PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad
NAME OF PERSON VISITED Bodkhin, Alexander (Sasha), Marina, Anya
ADDRESS Rakova St. 37 apt. 30 Leningrad 191011
PHONE 314-6161 LANGUAGE USED? English
HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? telephoned from hotel
TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?)

1. ITEMS LEFT: coffee, food, books

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:
Personal Needs ~~coffee~~

For Community/Public Activities _____

Other Requests _____

3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT, IF ANY book of fairytales

4. REMARKS:

BODKHIN, Alexander (Sasha), Marina, Anya, Sonya (baby), grandmother

Sasha Bodkhin, a practicing psychiatrist, and his 13 year old daughter Anya gave us a tour of the Hermitage Museum, then invited us to their apartment for dinner. Sasha is of Jewish origin, although he does not identify particularly as Jewish. He is more interested in Buddhism. His wife is Russian Orthodox, although does not formally observe her religion. He says his daughter will choose "Jew" for the fifth line of her identity card; but Anya says she does not know what she is, a little bit of everything.

Sasha works part-time for a state mental clinic, but also has a private practice run through a cooperative with 12 other psychiatrists. At the clinic, he focuses primarily on crisis counseling and suicide prevention. He only has about 15 minutes to spend with patients there. In the private practice, he has more control. He described his approach to therapy as eclectic, and appeared familiar with many different schools of psychotherapy. He says there is too much openness now in Soviet society to permit the sort of political abuses psychiatry was party to in the past.

Anya was an extremely intelligent and attractive young teenager, very mature for her years. She was definitely a free thinker, and described herself as a flower child and a hippy. She said she believed in love and peace. She wanted to be an artist, and was actually quite talented. She claimed that she was the second most passionate Beatle-maniac in Leningrad. She appeared equally skeptical about US and Soviet society. Her mother told the story of how she had been given a failing mark on an exam because she had quoted Ecclesiastes.

Anya said she had never heard anything bad said about Jews; they were never talked about. Her grandmother, however, told the story that she had been walking in the street during a Pamyat rally (Pamyat is a nationalistic, reactionary, and antisemitic movement). The grandmother protested, and the people began to jeer, "You must be Jewish," and would not believe her when she stated she was only a Russian and a Soviet citizen.

The Bodkhin flat was relatively spacious and located in a pleasant-looking part of the city. This family is definitely members of the intelligentsia. The grandmother has traveled with Anya to East Germany, and the mother hopes to take her to London next year. They own their own car (and, as all the books say, remove their windshield wipers so they won't be stolen). They also own many books and tapes. They see themselves as at least on the fringe of the intellectual elite of Russian society, and have no interest in leaving the country. They welcome Gorbachev's changes, but are skeptical that they will last. Still, they report it is now interesting to read Russian newspapers, because they can actually learn something from this source.

Marina is extremely well-educated (as is her mother, who speaks fluent German). She is a very spiritual person as well, interested in concepts of God. They had named their baby Sonya, which they explained was the Russian equivalent of Sarah, which sounded too Jewish. Sarah was the name of Sasha's mother.

Like many other Russians we met, they were very concerned about pollution of water and vegetables, and used a water purifier.

Your Name: Shapiro, Deane + Johanna
 Date of trip: 5/17-5/30 1989
 City: Leningrad

MEETINGS WITH REFUSENIKS
 (To be Completed for Each Visit)
 PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

CITY Leningrad
 NAME OF PERSON VISITED Perlman, Leah
 ADDRESS Saltikova-Shedrina 40/15 Leningrad 191123
 PHONE 272-8174 LANGUAGE USED? English
 HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? _____
 TRANSPORTATION? (Metro? Taxi? Met at hotel?) _____

1. ITEMS LEFT:
Kosher food, baby clothes, coloring pens, books
for children, coffee

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:
 Personal Needs _____

For Community/Public Activities books in Russian about
how to make a Jewish home

Other Requests _____

3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT, IF ANY _____

4. REMARKS:

PERLMAN, Leah

We met for about 1 1/2 hours with Leah Perlman in her one-room apartment, where she lives with her two children, her baby, and husband. She appears quite poverty-stricken. The apartment building itself is in a state of terrible disrepair. She shares a communal kitchen with two other non-Jewish families, but nevertheless is able to be strictly kosher. She is extremely worried about the food and air pollution in Leningrad. She reports that originally her parents opposed her making aliyah, but now they feel it will be better for the health of the children.

Leah is also a follower of the Lubavitcher rebbe. She is a sweet and lovely woman, with a tired pretty face, who conducts herself in accordance with strict orthodox observance. She is a Hebrew teacher of young children, and says that it is often through the children that she starts to reach the parents. Leah reported that the level of Jewish knowledge was still very low; that she was still explaining to people about shabbos candles and mezuzzot. She would very much like to have books in Russian about how to make a Jewish home.

Leah is also a poor relative. Her first husband, "a Jew, but a very hard man," will not agree to let her go to Israel, although he has very little contact with the two older children (his children by their first marriage). Leah is hoping to raise some money to bribe him to let her go. She believes that real Jews go to Israel, those who are more observant, who really want to build a country, and to live as Jews. Other Jews go to America, primarily to have a better life materially. She believed it would be hard to be a Jew in America because of pressures toward assimilation. Most of her contact is with Israeli groups and Chabad.

Your Name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Leningrad

CITY: Leningrad

Name of PERSON VISITED: KELLMAN, Boris

ADDRESS: Grazhdansky Prospect 85, apt. 15
Leningrad 198257 tel. 533-3472

LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH

How was APPOINTMENT ARRANGED?: Telephoned from hotel

TRANSPORTATION: He came to our hotel room

1. ITEMS LEFT: SHOES, BOOKS, ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA, COFFEE, CHALLAH COVER
HAVDALLAH CANDLE

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

Personal: fewer visitors

Community: Support for organizational programs - concerts, exchange of
scholars

KELMAN, Boris

Boris came right up to our hotel room, the only person who risked this in all our time in Leningrad. He was extremely busy, and had just returned from the first Conference on Soviet Jews which had been held earlier in the week. As is well known, Kelman is one of the most prominent and respected refusenik leaders in Leningrad. He was warm and personable, although he did not invite us to his home. We formed the impression that he was somewhat worn out by the numerous visitors he is obligated to entertain.

Boris brought us a striking message. He told us that, essentially, the refusenik movement was dead, that there remained all told possibly 100 families still in refusal in the USSR. He estimated the numbers of "poor relatives" at around 200 (In Riga, we heard estimates as high as 700). He counseled that we have compassion for their individual plight, and work to support political solutions for their release. However, he was convinced that the situation of the remaining refuseniks would resolve itself internally, within the Soviet Union. He was personally optimistic about his own circumstances, although when we spoke with him he still had not been given permission to leave.

Kelman felt that the most important step to be taken by the Soviet Jewry movement in the United States was to help and support the Russian Jewish community to develop an organizational infrastructure. Kelman was aware that Gorbachev's emigration window of opportunity might close at any moment. His primary concern was that as many Jews as possible take advantage of the possibility of leaving. Like many Jews we met, Kelman saw virtually no possibility of Jewish life flourishing in the Soviet Union. He commented with amazement on the difference in Jews he had known in Leningrad who had emigrated to Israel and the US, and had returned to attend this conference. When we asked him to describe the difference, he looked taken aback for a moment, then said very simply, "They are free now." Unfortunately, he felt that most Jews in the Soviet Union were so apathetic and ignorant that they lacked the motivation to emigrate. Therefore, what was essential was a movement to awaken them to the richness and promise of their ancient heritage.

Kelman believed that in the current climate of glasnost, such a movement was possible. He was involved in planning a concert by Shloime Carlebach, in an effort to arouse the interest and touch the hearts of the silent majority of Russian Jews. Kelman deplored the five generations of official atheism that have succeeded so well in severing the Jewish people of Russia from their religious identity. When we showed Boris the pictures of our daughter's bat mitzvah, and asked if Russian Jews were ready for this, he replied, "They aren't even ready for men to study Torah." His hope was that, if Jews become awakened to Judaism, it will eventually lead to their leaving the Soviet Union, as they realize how limited their opportunities for religious expression are in their own country. Thus, Kelman recommended that American Jewry support the development of a Soviet Jewry infrastructure which can promote community activities such as exchange of scholars, lectures, concerts, organization of yeshivas and study groups. He still believes in the importance of one-to-one contacts, but emphasizes that this should not be restricted to the refuseniks, but should include the "untouched" Jews as well.

Your Name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Riga

CITY: RIGA

NAME OF PERSON VISITED: KOBLENTZ, Rafael and Maya

ADDRESS: Lievardes 127 apt. 10

tel. 570 - 706

LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH

How was APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? Telephoned from hotel

TRANSPORTATION: TAXI

1. ITEMS LEFT: BOOKS IN RUSSIAN/HEBREW; food, coffee

2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE: NONE

KOBLENTZ, Rafael and Maya

We visited for about an hour with Rafi Koblentz very late on our first night in Riga. He works as a maintenance engineer, and was about to leave the city for a week. Frankly, he did not seem too happy to see us. His wife had just returned from a visit to Israel. Koblentz appeared tired and burnt out. The Koblentzes have been in refusal for 10 years. They have just reapplied, and hope this time to be successful. He reports the situation of Riga Jews is much improved. They now have a Cultural Center, which is teaching Hebrew to 250 students. The Center has official approval, which has resulted in people being less afraid, and more interested in using its resources. He gets most of his books from Israel. Like others, Koblentz asserts Jews have no future in the USSR. In Latvia, he fears "soft assimilation," because of a high rate of intermarriage, and the fact that the Latvian way of life is "so appealing." He also expressed fears that the anti-semitism rampant in the Pamyat movement was on the rise, and felt that it would be easy to blame the country's worsening economic conditions on the Jews. Now, Koblentz stated, Jews are weak and silent. But should they try to play a more active role in Latvian governance, stronger anti-semitism might be the response. He did not seem too interested in the possibilities for Reform Judaism in the Soviet Union. He is strongly Zionist. However, he is not at all observant, because "there are too many limitations." Felt overall young Jewish people were not interested in religion.

Your Name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Riga

CITY: RIGA
NAME OF PERSON VISITED: DEYCH, Roman, Raya, Anna
ADDRESS: Unknown
TELEPHONE: 246-506
LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH (limited)
HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED: TELEPHONED FROM HOTEL
TRANSPORTATION: MET AT HOTEL

1. ITEMS LEFT: Care package from sister; coffee; colored pens for child;
gum and pins
2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE: NONE
3. ITEMS BROUGHT OUT: LETTERS TO RELATIVES, GIFTS FOR RELATIVES

DEYCH, Roman, Raya, Anna

The Deych family met me in the lobby of our hotel twice during our stay in Riga. I delivered a care package from Roman's sister in Los Angeles. The Deych's are very lonely. All their siblings are in the US, as are their best friends. They have not applied to leave because they have aging, ill parents who do not want to leave. They intend to emigrate to the US one day. They were very upset about the situation in L'Dispoli, with which they were familiar. Roman works in a cooperative, which makes lipstick cases. He had never seen one before until a tourist showed him one made in America. He copied the idea, and apparently has turned it into a successful business. Raya is an engineer. Raya told me that Latvians and Jews get along fairly well because they are both intelligent (as opposed to Russians, was the implication). They mentioned that a Jewish school would be opening in Riga in the fall, but they did not plan to send their daughter, "because it was too far away." I think they would be receptive to meeting other visitors from the US.

Your Name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Riga

CITY: RIGA
NAME OF PERSON VISITED: ZARUD, Alexander (Sasha), Alla
ADDRESS: Stuchkas St. 41/43 apt. 5
TELEPHONE: 275 - 177
LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH (very poor)
HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? Telephoned from hotel
TRANSPORTATION: Met at hotel

1. ITEMS LEFT: Books on Israel, coffee, granola bars, Havdallah candle, kippah, Jewish music tape
2. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE: NONE

CITY: RIGA
NAME OF PERSON VISITED: GRINGAUZ, Michkael
ADDRESS: 44 Sarkanarmijas St. 46-12
Riga 226001
TELEPHONE: 291-291
LANGUAGED USED: ENGLISH (poor)
HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? Met at Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society
TRANSPORTATION: Foot

1. ITEMS LEFT: Books on Israel, Havdallah candle, food

ZARUD, Alexander (Sasha), Alla

We met Sasha Zarud several times in Riga, both at our hotel and at the Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society. Sasha is a young man in his early twenties who is married and has a new baby. He and his wife were refused last year, but he is trying again, and is hopeful that he can make aliyah soon. He is strongly Zionist, right-wing, and pro-Kahane. He speaks fluent Hebrew (he is one of the Riga teachers), but very little English. He is very spunky, openly weaking a button of the Israeli flag. He dismissed Pamyat contemptuously, and said of anti-semitism, "It's their problem, not mine." He described himself as reform in his practice (he observes holidays, fasts on Yom Kippur, lights shabbos candles), but Orthodox in his heart. He took us to see the old Jewish Theater, which is now a general cultural center. He reported there had been a demonstration of about 50 people to reclaim it for Jewish functions, but he said it had been "all demonstration, no results."

GRINGAUZ, Michkael

Michkael was another young man we also met briefly through the Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society. He spoke slightly better English than Sasha Zarud. He is an anesthesiologist, and very interested in the revival of Jewish culture. The Society is sending him to Jerusalem for a course on Judaic studies at Hebrew University. He is also interested in spiritual aspects of Judaism. He pointed out that while God is a difficult, abstract concept, Israel as a symbol, an idea, and an entity is very concrete. He says he will be religious after he gets to Israel.

Your Name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Riga

CITY: RIGA

NAME OF PERSON VISITED: GAFT, Boris

ADDRESS: Rypnicibas 11-19 (office)

TELEPHONE: 332 - 291

LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH (in translation)

HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED? Through member of LOD (Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society)

TRANSPORTATION: Foot (with guide)

1. ITEMS LEFT: Books on Israel, Hebrew language books

3. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

Personal: None

COMMUNITY: Funding, supplies, equipment for starting free medical clinic; correspondence with scholars interested in researching history of Latvian Jewish community; links with Jewish academic institutions in the United States; books for Center, especially in Russian, Hebrew

GAFT, Boris

Gaft is the rather mysterious head of LOD, the Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society (although if we understand correctly, someone named OX is the even more mysterious higher head). We met with him briefly twice, but unfortunately he did not speak any English, so we had to communicate through a translator. Gaft is very charismatic, with a big beard and penetrating eyes. He is full of ideas for the Friendship Society, which seems to be a gathering place for many of the activist young Jews of Riga. He is responsible for organizing the communal Channukah and Purim celebrations held this year. He has been able to get LOD successfully registered with the government. He has rented space for the Society (3 very shabby rooms rented from some business). He was responsible for sending Sasha Zarud to Budapest for a Conference of Hebrew Educators, and plans to send Michkael Gringauz to Jerusalem for a course of study at Hebrew University. He is starting a joint oral history project with some American scholar, collecting invaluable information from old Latvian Jews. He apparently has founded a scientific/technical branch of LOD. He wants to start a free medical clinic, to provide better quality health care in Riga, and would like to interface with groups in Israel and the US for supplies and equipment. He also would like to see an exchange of scholars program. He even suggested, only partly facetiously, selling women's "health products" (tampons, shampoo etc). They also have a small library in Hebrew and English.

Gaft himself seems a somewhat baffling person. He was the only individual we met who seemed uninterested in us personally, and apparently wished to share no personal details about himself. With him, it was strictly as spokesperson for his organization that he presented himself. We heard various rumors about him: that he was planning to make aliyah; that he was going to stay; that his wife was a Latvian; that his wife and children had already made aliyah. There was also some concern as to whether he could follow through on all his impressive ideas. On the whole, however, it appeared that he had instigated some remarkable things for the Jews of Riga.

Your name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Riga

CITY: RIGA

NAME OF PERSON VISITED: ZUNSHAIN, Elizabeth (Liza)
SVERDLOV, Michkael (Misha)

ADDRESS: 69 Bikernieku St. apt. 15
Riga 226059

TELEPHONE: 566 - 543

LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH (excellent)

HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED: Telephone from hotel

TRANSPORTATION: Met at hotel; then by tram

ITEMS LEFT: Books, food, coffee

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

PERSONAL NEEDS: They would like a letter-writing campaign on their
behalf; baby clothes, vitamins

COMMUNITY: More books for library, especially in Russian; floppy disks,
IBM compatible, for teaching Hebrew

ITEMS BROUGHT OUT: Letters to relatives in U.S. to be mailed

ZUNSHAIN, Elizabeth (Liza)
SVERDLOV, Michkael (Misha)

These were our "poster" refuseniks, young, beautiful, intelligent. Liza and Misha are a couple in their early twenties. Liza is 7 months pregnant. They have been unable to leave the USSR for two years because they are poor relatives. Misha is very worried about Liza's health, which has not been good during her pregnancy: she has "kidney problems." Misha is concerned about her delivery, and is very critical of the poor medical care in the USSR. He also is frightened of rumors they've heard ("I don't know whether they're true") that refusenik women are sometimes given inferior maternity care.

Theirs is a particularly bad "poor relative" situation. Misha's parents originally opposed their emigrating, but now have themselves been "converted," study Hebrew, and wish to make aliyah. These parents are concerned they will not be able to "get permission" from the mother's mother, who is a vigorous 75 and a committed socialist. Liza's mother is virulently opposed to their emigration, which she sees as a betrayal of everything her generation has worked and sacrificed for. Liza describes her mother as very patriotic and very "sovietistic." Liza and her mother no longer communicate: apparently the older woman rants and screams whenever Liza even attempts to send her a letter. However, Liza and Misha are adamant that this situation should not be blamed on interpersonal conflict, but rather that it is a byproduct of the "sickness" of the Soviet state.

Misha and Liza are the librarians for LOD (Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society) and have an extensive library, especially strong on English books about the Jewish life. Unfortunately, they report that it is mainly their friends who make use of it, although their membership is expanding a little now. They would appreciate more books, also tapes and floppy disks IBM compatible for use in teaching Hebrew. They were involved in printing a magazine on Jewish culture, which had 50,000 copies and was circulated in Leningrad and Moscow as well as Riga. But they pointed out they it had been forbidden to write about controversial topics such as aliyah and poor relatives; and that permission had not yet been given for a second issue.

Liza had some courses in journalism at Moscow State University. She says she had to leave because of her desire to emigrate. She currently works writing ad copy for various products. She describes it as a useless job, because either they don't have the products or they are no good, but an easy one because she only works a few hours a day and there are many Jews working there. Misha works with computers (he is some kind of engineer) in what he describes as an "international" job because Latvians, Jews, and Russians alike work at the same Institute.

Misha and especially Liza are very disillusioned with the USSR and want desperately to leave. They requested a letter-writing campaign on their behalf. Liza has many relatives currently living in the U.S. They are very afraid of Pamyat, and feel it is a potentially dangerous movement. They also strongly dislike the queues, the shortages, the closedness of Russian life, so much control over trivial things. Liza feels she has no future in the Soviet Union. All both of them want is a chance for a new life in a free country.

Your name: Deane and Johanna Shapiro
Date of trip: 5/17 - 5/30 1989
City: Moscow

CITY: MOSCOW
NAME OF PERSON VISITED: GOZMAN, Leonid
ADDRESS: Lomonov Ave. 14, apt. 563
Moscow 117296
TELEPHONE: 938-07-79
LANGUAGE USED: ENGLISH (excellent)
HOW WAS APPOINTMENT ARRANGED?: Telephone from hotel
TRANSPORTATION: Met in hotel lobby

ITEMS LEFT: Book

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:

PERSONAL: Leonid and his wife are coming to Northern California in fall, '89 as guest lecturers. They can bring very little money with them. They would very much appreciate speaking engagements with honoraria on topics such as "The Psychology of Glasnost."

ITEMS BROUGHT OUT: Article written by Gozman about being a Jew in USSR

GUZMAN (GIOZMAN), Leonid, Marina

I met with Leonid for about two hours the night before we left the Soviet Union. Leonid is an Associate Professor of social psychology at Moscow State University. He is well-connected with the Humanistic Psychology Association here in the U.S., and he and his wife, who is also a psychologist, are coming as guest lecturers to Northern California in the fall of '89.

Leonid is a rather visible Young Turk in the Russian academic psychology community, and one of the founders and chairman of the Association of Practical Psychologists (something like our American Psychological Association). He belongs to a small group of psychology activists, who are very involved in political change. For example, they called for an investigation of the Tsibilli "crimes," and also criticized how the Armenian earthquake situation was handled. They agitated for the election of certain progressive delegates to the National Congress.

Leonid is a Jew by birth, but not a "Jewish activist." He sees himself as an internationalist, and feels Judaism is "too narrow." However, he wants his one daughter, who is 15, to choose Jew as her nationality. He and his wife, who is Russian, believe that the experience of being identified as Jewish, although it will lead to discrimination and possible persecution, will make their daughter more sensitive to the sufferings of others.

Leonid verified that, while overt persecution of Jews has decreased, there is still discrimination in employment, and quota systems at the best universities and institutes. He also felt anti-semitism was growing more overt. He himself had been advised by several professional journal editors, some of whom themselves were Jewish, to publish his work under a Russian pseudonym, so that it would be taken more seriously.

Leonid described this period in the Soviet Union as a carnival - bad before, and maybe bad afterward, but now the people were happy. Although as a member of the intelligentsia, he wanted to stay in Russia, to make his voice heard and influence the government, he saw clearly that if things deteriorated, the first to suffer would be the Jews. Leonid confirmed that the Soviet economy is in shambles - he claimed that Leningrad, Riga, and Moscow are models of the best perestroika has to offer. He felt there was a serious threat of counter-revolution, that after awhile the army would not tolerate any longer the chaos and confusion inherent in a democratic movement, and would seize power. He compared these times now to 1933-37 in Germany, when so many Jews were attempting to flee. He said, "I cannot believe America will be so stupid and unfair again," in reference to current immigration policies.

Despite the precariousness of his current situation, he wishes to remain in the Soviet Union for the following reasons: 1) He feels he and his class really have an opportunity to make a difference - they are closer to power than they have ever been 2) He also feels emotional ties to rodina, the land. However, he also thinks of emigrating, perhaps predictably to the U.S.

APPENDIX A:

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES VISITED:

NAMES AND ADDRESSES

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES VISITED
USSR: MAY 18 - MAY 30, 1989

- LENINGRAD:.....pp. 14-27
- 14 DIKKOR, Grigori, Olga, Katsiapp. 14-15
Volkovsky pr. 124 apt. 19
Leningrad 192102 tel 1128017
- LOSHKIN, Alexander (Sasha)pp. 16-17
Saltikova Skedrina 11-17
Leningrad USSR tel 272-3600
- LYOUSHKIN, Dimitripp. 18-19
Central P/O (Poste Rest.)
Leningrad 190000 USSR
- BIBLINA, Maya (and parents)pp. 20-21
Leningrad 192288 USSR tel. 1780723
- BODKIN, (Badkhen) Alexander (Sasha), Marina, Anya (13)
Rakowa Str. 37 apt. 30pp. 22-23
Leningrad 191011 USSR tel. 3146161
- KUZNETZOV, Evgeni (English-speaking; Hebrew teacher)
We did not meet
Leningrad tel. 2136771
- PALATNYOE, Mickael (English-speaking; Hebrew teacher)
We did not meet
Leningrad tel. 1156612
- PERLMAN, Leah, husband and childrenpp. 24-25
Saltikova-Shedrina 40/15
Leningrad 191123 tel. 2728174
- KELMAN, Boris, wife and childrenpp. 26-27
Grazhdansky Prospect 85 apt. 15
Leningrad 198257 tel. 5333472
- RIGApp. 28-37
- KOBLINTZ, Rafael and Mayapp. 28-29
Lievardes 127 apt. 10
Riga tel. 570-706
- DEYCH, Roman, Raya, Ana (?)pp. 30-31
Riga tel. 246-506
- ZARUD, Sasha, Allapp. 32-33
Stuchkas St. 41/43 apt. 5

- ZUNSHAIN, Elizabeth (Liza)
 SVERDLOV, Mikhal (Misha)pp. 36-37
 69 Bikernieku St. apt. 15
 Riga 226059 tel. 566-543
- GAFT, Boris (head of Latvian-Israeli Friendship Society).....pp. 34-35
 Rypnicibas 11-19 (office)
 Riga 226010 tel. 332-291
- GRINGAUZ, Mickhaelpp. 32-33
 44 Sarkanarmijas Str. 46-12
 Riga 226001 tel. 291-291
- ZILBER, ?? (did not contact)
 tel. 257-062 (speaks English)
- URITSKY, Arthur and family (left for Israel)
- KRECHIN, Yoram (only Hebrew; did not meet)
 tel 579-069
- MOSCOWpp. 38-39
- GIOZMAN, Leonid, Marinapp. 38-39
 Lomonov Ave. 14 apt. 563
 Moscow 117296 tel. 938-07-79
- KARETSKY,
 We did not meet.
 English poor; prefers Hebrew
- USPIENSKY, Igor (English-speaking)
 We did not meet
 Moscow tel. 434-83-57
- CHERNOBLSKY, Boris (English-speaking)
 We did not meet
 Moscow tel. 420-62-13

APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING ASSISTANCE

FROM E. ZUNSHAIN AND M. SVERDLOV

Page 1

REGISTERED MAIL

May 17, 1989

Dear Mr. Mitchell A. Horwich:

We're glad you're serving as our legal representative. We're sure your help will be successful.

Here's the comprehensive information about us. We've answered precisely to your questionnaire:

1. You have our correct address:
69 Bikernieku Street, Apt. 15
Riga 226059
Latvian SSR, USSR
tel. 566543
2. We don't have other members of our family who are presently working with us to emigrate from the USSR.
M. Sverdlov is the head of our family.
3. Our dates of birth:
E. Zunshain - August 24, 1968;
M. Sverdlov - May 28, 1963.
4. We both had finished secondary school. M. Sverdlov had graduated Riga Politechnical Institute as civil engineer.
E. Zunshain had finished three courses of journalism department Moscow State University.
5. M. Sverdlov has been working at the Latvian State Project Institute from 1985 as an engineer. He earns 200-250 rubles monthly.
6. We both read and write English. Our level isn't high, but we get on in language. You haven't to translate your letter from English to Russian.

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1. We submitted the documents for exit visas to the local OVIR (visa office) on December 22, 1987.

Address of OVIR:
9 A. Barbusa Street,
Riga 226450
Latvian SSR, USSR

We haven't notarized affidavit from Baron Larisa, Lisa's mother. Instead of her notarized affidavit we submitted the document 1 from your second letter. The chief of OVIR A. Baltatcis said it was useless. He promised us refusal without the procedure. Then we sent the complaint to the Minister of Internal Affairs the document 2 from your second letter. We didn't get answer to this complaint.

February 22, 1988 we got the oral refusal. The only reason was the absence of notarized affidavit.

We began to send complaints to state officials and newspapers (the document 4). We accentuated in Soviet legal rules doesn't exist the legal procedure of the investigation about the financial claim of parents or former spouses, we can't make a lawsuit, we're rightless absolutely. We didn't get the right answers for our complaints. The only answers were: "Your complain (or letter) has been handing over to OVIR", though the soviet law forbids to hand over the complaints for investigation of eqaccused man.

February 26, 1988 E. Zunshain was in Central OVIR in Moscow. The inspector of OVIR said: "Well, soon you'll get the permission. We have a new law. We needn't your mother's notarized affidavit. But a month later (March 26, 1988) the same inspector said: "It was only joke".

During the President R. Reagan's visit (1988) we went to the demonstrations in Moscow.

February 22-26, 1989 M. Sverdlov had a hunger strike. It was the anniversary of our refusal (one year). We sent applications about it to state officials and newspapers (copy of this document was handed over to you by B'nai Brith group).

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March 3, 1989 we had the demonstration in Moscow with the group of "Poor relatives".

4. The other group of questions is connected with Baron Larisa.
 - A. Mrs. Baron was born on October 4, 1930.
We know her to be in a good state of health.
 - B. Her address:
74 Gazetnaja Street, Apt. 4
Nishny Tagil 622023
Sverdlovsk district, USSR
 - C. E. Zunshain's father P. Zunshain was died in 1985.
 - D. Mrs. Baron has graduated from the institute, she works in kindergarden as a methodist.
 - E. She earns approximately 180 rubles monthly and meanwhile has a pension approximately 100 rubles monthly.
 - F. Mrs. Baron hasn't any financial claims against E. Zunshain
She has never assisted E. Zunshain financially since her marriage.
 - G. E. Zunshain's parents were divorced. Mrs. Baron is from Nishny Tagil originally.
The last time E. Zunshain was living in Mrs. Baron's household 1985. It was in Nishny Tagil. After this time E. Zunshain has never lived in Mrs. Baron's household. From 1985 E. Zunshain had lived in household of her uncle M. Zunshain in Moscow. From 1987 E. Zunshain has been living in household of M. Sverdlov.
 - H. E. Zunshain doesn't have any siblings. Mrs. Baron's refusal is connected only with her crazy ideas about "the good soviet life". And her opinion: "M. Sverdlov and E. Zunshain are traitors and betray all the soviet ideals and all".

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- I. Mrs. Baron won't give the permission to E. Zunshain. She is very strict about soviet ideals. The only way to leave the USSR is the permission from the government, is the struggle against the lawless, rightless.
5. We don't have any obligation to support someone.
6. The question about our pensions is complex today. We're rather young, we have plans about leaving, we aren't sure about our future job in the USSR.
7. M. Sverdlov has aunt in Israel. E. Zunshain has many relatives in the USA. You may communicate with them in order to help our case:

Zachar Zunshain
111 West Hudson Street, Apt. 26
Columbus, OH 43202
tel. 614-2638186;

Jane Leshchinsky
1031 A Mohr Ln
Concord, CA 94518
tel. 415-8273440;

Mike Zunshain
426, 27 Avenue C
San Francisco, CA 94121

Fanja Uretsky
3130 Brighton, 6-th Street, Apt. 6 I
Brooklyn, NY 11235
tel. 718-7439411

9. In the USSR and the USA there aren't lawyers or other individuals working especially to help us. But we know a lawyer in Canada was working to help A. Uritsky who has formerly been "poor relative":

Mr. Harley I. Schachter
Manitoba Lawyers & Jurist for Soviet Jewry
200-370 Hargrave Street
Vinipeg, Manitoba R3B2K1
Canada

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- A. Then are the titles and addresses of the officials. It will be very important for us if you could send the letters about us to them:

Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR
4 Staraya Sq.
Moscow, USSR
tel. 2062511

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya Street
Moscow, USSR
Press Department tel. 2444112

APN (Novosti Press Agency)
4 Zubovsky Bld.
Moscow, USSR
Telex 411101 APNSU
tel. 2012424

OVIR (Central Soviet Visa Office)
5 Sadovo-Sucharevskaya Street
Moscow, USSR
tel. 2224460

- B. During the meeting on different level the members of American delegations usually submit to the members of delegations of the USSR lists with the names of soviet refusniks. It's very important for us.

Hoping to get an answer from you soon.

Sincerely,

M. Sverdlov
E. Zunshain