

# USSR PICTURES "JEWISH PARADISE" IN RUSSIA

By David Benarone

UNITED NATIONS (WUP) -- In an apparent attempt to offset the impact which the world conference on Soviet Jewry -- to be held in Brussels, Belgium from February 17 to 19 -- will have upon world public opinion, the USSR Mission here this week released a lengthy document entitled "Soviet Jews Today - Facts and Figures."

It's the old story. The document pictures a Jewish "paradise" under Soviet rule, comparing the situation with what existed under the Czars, etc.

Declaring that the 1970 census had listed some 2,151,000 Jews in the USSR, the document notes that "the Jewish population would have been much larger if it were not for the last war. Many Jews were killed or tortured to death on Nazi-occupied territory. The Nazis killed nearly 200,000 people in Babi Yar, including 70,000 Jews..."

The document then hails the great contributions which Soviet Jews have made to the State, "in all spheres of political and economic life, in science, education, literature and the arts."

Although Jews represent "less than one per cent of the country's population," the document states, they "account for 6.1 percent of the total number of people engaged in science, for 5.2 percent in art; for 6.9 percent in literature and the press, and for 3.4 percent in medicine. The number of students among the Jews," it emphasizes, "is considerably higher than that among the people of other nationalities of the Soviet Union. In the 1971-72 academic year, for example, 106,000 Jews studied in the Soviet

higher educational establishments...Altogether 339,000 Soviet Jews have been decorated with orders and medals for heroism and courage displayed in defending the mother-country and for valorous labor achievements in the political, economic, scientific and cultural fields."

Touching upon the religious beliefs of Jews, the document lists certain percentages which it says are based "only on selective sociological investigations...because there are no statistics on believers in the USSR."

The majority of Jewish families in the Soviet Union, the document asserts, "deliberately sent their children to Russian, Ukrainian and other" than Yiddish "schools, because they regarded this possibility as the realization of their equality."

In an endeavor to throw the lie on the charge of discrimination, it notes that "out of the total of more than 67,000 Soviet Jews employed in science, there are 4,200 doctors of science and 23,800 candidates of science. Among the Lenin Prize winners, Jews account for 10.8 per cent in the field of science, and 12.4 percent in the field of engineering, 9.7 per cent in the field of literature and 11.8 per cent in the field of art."

This does not mean "that Jewish culture is ignored or suppressed in the USSR," the document insists. "According to the information of the All-Union Chamber of Books, 124 books by Jewish authors came out in a total edition of 17 million copies in the languages of the USSR nationalities since 1967. In the same period,

37 books appeared in Yiddish in a total edition of 125,000 copies...Jewish theatrical and musical companies regularly tour the whole country. The 'travelling' of these companies has justified itself because the Jews live all over the country."

The unique document concludes with a statistical report on the emigration of Jews to Israel and elsewhere. "According to the official data, over the entire post-war period up to June 1, 1975, that is, over 30 years, 115,000 citizens of Jewish nationality emigrated from the USSR to Israel (and to Palestine before Israel was founded). This is approximately 5 percent of the total number of Jews living in our country as of January 1, 1970."

The very fact that the Kremlin took the pains to issue such a detailed report on its Jewish citizens -- and in such a defensive manner in which it appears -- only goes to show that the Soviet leaders are indeed very much concerned about the global protests and charges of discrimination continually levelled against them.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Chaika Grossman, a Mapam MK, has introduced a measure into the Knesset to liberalize the present abortion laws.

NEW YORK -- Preliminary findings of the Soviet Jewry Research Bureau, indicate that enforced conscription is increasingly being used by the Soviet authorities to deter Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union.

NEW YORK (LNS) -- Twenty-two young Lubavitcher scholars left New York's Kennedy airport for an extended period of Torah study and communal activity in Israel.

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