

Author Biography

Zachary Claar

Zachary Claar graduated summa cum laude from Cal Poly in December 2022 as a history major with a minor in law and society and will be attending Pepperdine Caruso School of Law in the fall. He wrote his paper for Dr. Tom Trice's "Soviet Russia, 1917-1991" class. Zachary is interested in studying the history of the Jewish people, the modern Middle East, and American political history. After graduating from law school, he hopes to become a District Attorney or work for the Department of Justice.

The Plight of Soviet Jews

Zachary Claar

Anti-Semitism has deep roots in Russia dating back to the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the early Soviet government took steps to fight it. This hatred and discrimination towards the Jewish population has its roots in the Tsarist government that was continued by the Soviet Union, especially in the aftermath of World War II and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Despite the Soviet Union being the second country to recognize Israel, Israel was viewed by Soviet leaders as a capitalist and bourgeois state that was too closely aligned with the West.¹ This, along with events such as the Doctor's Plot of 1953, allowed for feelings of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism to rise in the U.S.S.R. This heavily affected Soviet policy, resulting in disastrous consequences for the Soviet Jewish population. In this period, the Refuseniks also emerged. The Refuseniks were Soviet Jews who had been refused permission to emigrate to Israel. This essay will focus on the story of Soviet Jewry, with special attention given to Refusenik scientists and argues that despite any speeches or documents that Soviet leaders used to appeal to the Jewish community, the Soviet government continued their anti-semitic policies and refused to allow Soviet Jews to leave. The U.S.S.R. started as a safe haven for Jews during a time of rising anti-Semitism throughout the world, but the nation would quickly change and allow for anti-Semitism to survive in Russia, especially at the government level. It also led to worse relations between countries such as Israel and the U.S.S.R. Foreign attention (especially in the United States and Israel) on the plight of the Refuseniks is also a major part of the Refuseniks' story, although this did not always improve the Refuseniks' situation.

Before the establishment of the Soviet Union, Russian Jews were treated horrifically by the Tsar's regime. Pogroms targeting the Jews began in 1881, shortly after

¹ F. F., "The U.S.S.R., the Soviet Jews, and Israel," *The World Today* 14, no. 12 (1958): 519.

Tsar Alexander II's assassination, for which the Jews were blamed.² These pogroms continued throughout Tsar Nicholas II's reign and, while there was no official policy ordering or endorsing the pogroms, Tsar Nicholas and his government put Russian Jews in a position of danger. Discrimination throughout the Russian legal code was common and Jews had severe travel restrictions, which helped foster anti-semitic sentiment among the Russian people. Despite this discrimination, the Tsar argued that the Jews were responsible for all their own struggles, an idea that only helped anti-Semitism rise further. Local officials also heavily participated in the pogroms and other attacks on the Russian Jews, although it is unknown if they did it out of loyalty to the Tsar, their own anti-semitic feelings, or a combination of the two.³ Even without an official policy endorsing pogroms from the Tsar's government, his unwillingness to condemn the pogroms, combined with his own anti-Semitism, helped establish anti-Semitism in Russia, a feeling that continued throughout the establishment of the Soviet Union.

Despite the harsh treatment toward Soviet Jewry after Joseph Stalin's death, Soviet Jews were actually treated relatively well during the early years of the U.S.S.R when compared to their treatment under the Tsar. The early Soviet government pursued several avenues in order to distinguish themselves from the Tsar. One of the ways in which this was pursued was by distancing themselves from his anti-Semitism. Soviet leaders believed that if they portrayed the Jews as being able to advance towards modernity, then other Soviet groups would be willing to follow. This involved attacking stereotypes of the Jews such as how they were disloyal or an elite class who preyed on the peasantry.⁴ Thus, the image of a new Jew was created, one who was pursuing collective avenues such as farming. With a ban on private trading in 1923, Soviet leaders believed that this new focus on agriculture would help ensure the Jews survival. The Soviets also created an autonomous region for the Jews named Birobidzhan; located just north of Manchuria, Soviet Jews began moving to the region in 1930. The community was to be dedicated to agriculture and, marking the beginning of a trend of American focus on the plight of Soviet Jews, was endorsed by an American commission composed of agricultural and engineering experts.⁵ Amid increasing anti-Semitism

2 Pogroms were organized attacks and genocides against the Russian Jewish population throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century.

3 Shlomo Lambroza, "The Tsarist Government and the Pogroms of 1903-06," *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 3 (1987): 293-294.

4 Jonathan Dekel-Chan, "'New' Jews of the Agricultural Kind: A Case of Soviet Interwar Propaganda," *The Russian Review* 66, no. 3 (2007): 430-431.

5 "Soviet Government Plans to Build Jewish Republic," *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, October 11, 1929.

in countries such as Germany, this plan was also heavily praised in the United States for its complete emancipation of Soviet Jews.⁶

Despite the fact that Soviet Jews were treated well in the nation's infancy, this trend quickly changed and, by the end of his life, Joseph Stalin pursued several anti-semitic policies. Stalin did not support Zionism, but in 1945 he did not oppose the idea that a Jewish state could be established in Palestine. After the end of World War I, the British Empire and France divided the Middle East between themselves under the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Due to this agreement, the British Mandate for Palestine was established, which included modern-day Israel. After the end of World War II, the British Empire was on the decline and allowed for the United Nations to take the lead on the issue of Palestine. The U.N. recommended that the land be divided up into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The General Assembly approved this plan by a 33-13 vote with ten abstentions.⁷ During this time, the Soviets wanted to increase their influence in the Middle East, but they felt that they could not rely on the support of the Arab countries. Instead, they believed that the Jews would be a viable alternative and that Jews throughout the world might think more fondly of the Soviet Union if they supported the United Nations partition plan. To strike this balance, the term Zionism was completely ignored by Soviet leaders in their attempt to appease the Jews. Nonetheless, Soviet-Israeli relations were strong between 1947 and June 1948.⁸ However, relations soon soured and Stalin targeted Soviet Jews until the end of his life.

When the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, refused to include a left-wing party named Mapam in his governing coalition, the Soviets denounced Israel as "bourgeois, nationalistic, and leaning toward the West."⁹ Another area of conflict between the Israelis and Soviets was regarding the issue of immigration. Long before the Refuseniks were denied permission to immigrate, the Kremlin believed that Israel was encouraging Soviet citizens to renounce their citizenship, something which Israel denied. To calm tensions, Israel promised to be neutral in foreign affairs, but this was antithetical to Zionism. Meanwhile, the Soviets required

6 "Soviet Union Sets Aside Area for Jews," *The Pittsburgh Press*, June 11, 1934.

7 Victor Kattan and Richard Falk, "The Partition of Palestine," in *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891-1949* (London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 2009), 146-151.

8 Benjamin Pinkus and Jonathan Frankel, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948-1967: A Documented Study*, ed. Jonathan Frankel, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 232-234.

9 Joseph Heller, "The Soviet Union and Israel: From the Gromyko Declaration to the Death of Stalin (1947-53)," in *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-67: Superpower Rivalry*, (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2010), 10.

that all Soviet Jews who wanted to emigrate would have to renounce their Soviet citizenship and the Supreme Soviet would consider each case individually.¹⁰ This marked the start of Soviet refusal to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate.

Outside of worsening relations with Israel, anti-Semitism in Soviet policy was also on the rise. Soviet Jews welcomed the establishment of Israel, with over 50,000 of them celebrating Rosh Hashanah by enthusiastically welcoming Israeli Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Golda Meir at the entrance to a synagogue in Moscow. This infuriated Stalin and other Soviet leaders and heavily contributed to the Doctor's Plot in 1953. In January of that year, state newspaper Pravda published a report in which mainly Jewish doctors were accused of betraying the Soviet Union by working with Zionist organizations and Israel. Both the article and Jewish support for the establishment of Israel led to mass arrests of Jewish leaders. According to Il'a Ehrenberg, a plan for the deportation of the Jewish population to the far eastern regions of the Soviet Union was also created.¹¹ Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. severed diplomatic relations with Israel in February. This cut in ties was most likely in preparation for a more aggressive action against Israel and a nation-wide persecution of Jews. However, Stalin died in March 1953 and the plan disappeared with him.¹²

Soviet anti-semitic policy was directly backed by each leader's own personal anti-semitic feelings and these feelings heavily influenced the mistreatment of the Refuseniks. At the Yalta Conference, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Stalin if he supported Zionism; Stalin responded by declaring the Jews to be, "middle-men, profiteers, and parasites."¹³ These ideas continued with his successors. Like Stalin, Nikitka Khrushchev also believed that the Jews were treasonous and dangerous, which meant that they were a security risk for the Soviet Union.¹⁴ This idea harkens back to an old anti-semitic belief in which anti-semites argue that Jews' connection to Israel is greater than their connection to another country.¹⁵ This trope was applied to Refusenik scientists who attempted to immigrate to Israel even after Khrushchev took control of the Communist Party. The Soviets

¹⁰ Heller, 11.

¹¹ Bozena Szaynok, "The Anti-Jewish Policy of the USSR in the Last Decade of Stalin's Rule and its Impact on the East European Countries with Special Reference to Poland," *Russian History* 29, no. 2 (2002): 305.

¹² Szaynok, 303-305.

¹³ Heller, 6.

¹⁴ Simon Redlich, "Khrushchev and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 34, no. 4 (1972): 345.

¹⁵ World Jewish Congress, "Anti-Semitism Defined: Allegations of Dual Loyalty," World Jewish Congress, February 23, 2022, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/defining-anti-Semitism-dual-loyalty>. The trope has been prevalent for over one thousand years as anti-semites throughout history have tried to cast Jews as a political other.

officially declared that these scientists knew too much sensitive information even though the actual reason was that they were pursuing anti-semitic policies.

A further example of Soviet leaders' anti-Semitism can be found in how they discussed the Holocaust. Despite Stalin's death anti-Semitism did not see a decrease. Any previous discussion of the Holocaust by Soviet leaders was instead replaced with silence. This policy continued during the first years of Khrushchev's tenure until 1957 when some publications on the genocide were released. The Diary of Anne Frank was translated into Russian in 1960 and more articles on both the Holocaust and Jewish resistance were published. Interest in the genocide, in both the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, exploded after Adolf Eichmann was captured by Israel in 1961, an operation that the Soviets sympathized with. Eichmann was a high-ranking officer in the Nazi S.S. and was one of the main architects of the Holocaust, which he never denied.¹⁶ He had managed to escape to Argentina after the war. Had Eichmann been captured by the Allies he would have been tried at Nuremberg with other Nazi war criminals. After Khrushchev's ouster, there was no significant change in the publication of Holocaust literature. However, Soviet leaders still made no attempt to placate the demands of Jewish activists who wanted the government to provide even more information on the Holocaust and failed to honor and uphold the memory of those who had been murdered.¹⁷

Despite the blatant anti-Semitism of Soviet leaders and the wider Soviet population, Soviet Jews did not abandon their religion. This was especially true for a number of the Refuseniks. The Soviets attempted to instill a culture of fear upon the Jewish population by continuously monitoring their activities. Soviet Jews were afraid of Jewish informants to the secret police who would observe and report the behavior of their fellow Jews in synagogues and in other public spaces. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel noticed this culture of fear. On a trip to the Soviet Union, he recounts how Jews in cities such as Kiev and Moscow warned him that some Jews who were "immersed in prayer [were] pointed out as a fake ... worshipping not the God of Israel but his enemies."¹⁸ Soviet Jews distrusted each other in fear that they could be reported to the secret police. Despite this fear, Soviet Jews still found an

¹⁶ Valerie Hartouni, *Visualizing Atrocity: Arendt, Evil, and the Optics of Thoughtlessness*, (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 23. Eichmann claimed that he was only a midlevel bureaucrat who held no anti-semitic feelings. Instead, he was just following orders in the hopes that he would be promoted.

¹⁷ Pinkus, 424-428.

¹⁸ Elie Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence: A Personal Report on Soviet Jewry*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011), 16.

avenue to resist and continue openly practicing their religion. Wiesel tells the story of Jews in Georgia who were informed that their synagogue was to be turned into a new Komsomol club. These Georgian Jews were so desperate to continue using their synagogue that they offered to raise the funds for the new building, but the Soviets refused. Still not deterred, the Jews resisted by blocking the street to the synagogue. Men, women, and children participated and the demolition crews were forced to leave.¹⁹ The synagogue was saved due to their bravery.

Soviet Jews resisted anti-semitic policies and sentiments in the U.S.S.R. by supporting the state of Israel and seeking to learn more about Jewish populations throughout the world. Israel's surprise victory in the Six Day War in 1967 resulted in a major increase in Jewish nationalism. This victory changed the way that Soviet Jews viewed themselves. While previous generations of Soviet Jews had focused on studying the U.S.S.R. when they wanted to learn about their state's history, this generation now began to focus on Israel. Israel represented the struggle for repatriation and more Soviet Jews decided that they needed to flee to Israel as soon as possible. Soviet Jews such as Leon Uris were already writing samizdats (writings that were banned by the U.S.S.R.) that attempted to create more Zionists in the Jewish community. This new Jewish identity was not well received by Soviet leaders since it went directly against the Soviet ideal of unity and loyalty to the Soviet state.²⁰ Soviet Jews were usually unable to support Israel's victory publicly and the war led to even more discrimination in both Soviet policy and mindset.

As the Soviets had supported the Arab countries in the Six Day War, they attempted to portray Israel and its supporters as aggressors. In the Soviet satellite state of Poland, where it was believed that all Polish Jews supported Israel and that the Zionists were aggressors, Jews were removed from the communist party and were also fired from their jobs. As was the case with the Refuseniks, Jewish scientists and those in the arts were heavily targeted, with many being fired and even arrested. In 1968, the Polish communist party condemned anti-Semitism and the arrests. While anti-Semitism did somewhat decrease in Poland, the party never acknowledged their own anti-Semitism. The party's statement had just been a gesture toward the Jewish community. As a result, thousands of Polish Jews fled the country and only around 5,000 remained as of 2002.²¹

¹⁹ Wiesel, 99-100.

²⁰ Yuli Kosharovskiy and Stefani Hoffman, "We Are Jews Again": *Jewish Activism in the Soviet Union*, ed. Ann Komaromi, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017), 7-8.

²¹ Heiko Haumann, "The Jews in the Russian Revolution and in the Soviet Union," *In A History of East European Jews*, NED-New edition, (Vienna: Central European University Press, 2002), 240-241.

There were Soviet Jews who, after being granted exit visas, decided not to immigrate to Israel and instead fled to other countries, such as the United States. This was the case for several different reasons. Many Jews in the Soviet Union married a person from another faith (or an atheist), and they were afraid that this could lead to discrimination in Israel. Additionally, the Israeli economy could not easily handle large numbers of immigrants arriving in such a small country. There were also other places in the world with growing Jewish centers and communities outside of Israel that attracted Soviet Jews, especially those who were less religious.²² Other reasons that Jews wanted to immigrate to countries other than Israel stemmed from Soviet policy and the Cold War. Some Soviet Jews feared that another war between Israel and its neighbors was likely, especially after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Also, after centuries of attacks on Judaism from the Soviet government and forced assimilation, Jewish education was not widely available in the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union also continuously attacked Israel and Zionism. This was because the Soviets supported Israel's Arab neighbors throughout the Cold War while the United States supported Israel. Constant Soviet attacks on the Jewish State led to some Soviet Jews to not have a desire to move to the country.²³

Anti-Semitism among Soviet leaders and the larger Soviet population did not stop with the ousting of Nikita Khrushchev. While an article in Pravda in 1965 condemned anti-Semitism (three years before the Polish condemnation) which remained Soviet policy throughout Leonid Brezhnev's tenure, Soviet Jews were, in practice, still heavily discriminated against. Soviet leaders also made sure to anger Soviet Jews who supported Israel. In 1981, Brezhnev gave a speech in which he said that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will always fight against ideas that are antithetical to socialism, such as anti-Semitism and Zionism. Continuing the trend of making slight overtures to the Jewish community while continuing anti-semitic policies, Mikhail Gorbachev argued that Soviet Jews were disproportionately represented in education professions. However, he did nothing to change this and even ignored that Soviet Jews were forced to refrain from supporting Israel publicly and that there were quotas in place to limit the number of Jews who could receive mathematical or scientific training.²⁴

There was also a large amount of foreign attention, especially from Israel and the United States, on the plight of the Refuseniks and Soviet Jews as a whole. The

²² Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade, 1971-80*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984), 90.

²³ Freedman, 23-24.

²⁴ Robert B. Cullen, "Soviet Jewry," *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 2 (1986): 255-266.

Committee of Concerned Scientists (CCS) wanted to promote international cooperation between scientists and was very concerned about Refusenik scientists. Their Soviet Jewish colleagues, including pro-Israel physician Alexander Voronel who participated in a hunger strike protesting against Soviet policy towards the Refuseniks, were prevented from attending an international conference in Moscow.²⁵ Voronel was also arrested by plainclothes police officers in Moscow. Countries such as the United States believed that these officers were a part of the KGB.²⁶ In protest to the conference, the scientists began informal meetings called Sunday Seminars at Voronel's home; the resulting international pressure aided Refusenik attempts to leave the country. After another shutdown by the Soviet government of a Moscow science conference led by Voronel, he was able to obtain an exit visa so he and his wife could flee to Israel. Once he arrived in Tel Aviv, he declared the seminars a success since the KGB had been fearing the scientists rather than the scientists fearing the KGB.²⁷

A less successful attempt to assist the Refuseniks was with the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in 1975. It was proposed to Congress by Senator Henry Jackson and Representative Charles Vanik. The amendment prevented communist countries from obtaining Most-Favored-Nation status in trade with the U.S. if they discriminated in emigration.²⁸ The amendment only served to anger Soviet leaders and, between 1975-1977, they reduced emigration. The major peak in emigration for Soviet Jews to go to Israel and other countries came from 1978-1980. This is when the SALT II Treaty was being discussed and, in an attempt to curry favor with the West, the Soviet Union allowed over 50,000 Soviet Jews to leave. However, those numbers fell sharply between 1981-1985 with only 896 Jews who were permission to emigrate in 1984, a historic low.²⁹

American media, Soviet Jews who had previously left the country, and Jews throughout the world also paid very close attention to the plight of the Refuseniks. In Santa Ana, California, 150 people (including local religious leaders) attended a rally in support of the Refuseniks. They held up signs reading "Free Soviet Jews"

25 Elisabetta Vezzosi, "The Committee of Concerned Scientists and the Helsinki Final Act: 'Refusenik' Scientists, Détente and Human Rights," In *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972-1990*, ed. Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, 1st ed., (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2019), 123.

26 Deborah Shapley, "Scientists Plan Protest during Nixon Summit in Moscow," *Science* 184, no. 4144 (1974): 1356.

27 Vezzosi, 123-124.

28 David P. Forsythe, "Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect," *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 446.

29 Cullen, 260.

and sang songs in Hebrew to put pressure on the Soviet government.³⁰ While it was not a huge rally, it was still evident of the support for the Refuseniks worldwide. American attorneys and activists also traveled to the Soviet Union to assist the Refuseniks. Bernard Kramer was one of these attorneys and he found that Soviet Jews continued to face discrimination on a daily basis despite Soviet leaders' condemnations of anti-Semitism. All Soviet citizens were required to carry a passport and had to present it when seeking a job. For the Jewish population, it said that the passport carrier was Jewish, meaning that the passport was an easy way for Jews to be discriminated against. Kramer also estimated that, unlike the United States where there is a healthy representation of Jews in academia, in the Soviet Union, Jews made up less than one percent of a university's faculty and student body combined.³¹ This is evident of Soviet attempts to continue purging the Refuseniks who had been members of the intelligentsia solely because they were Soviet Jews who wanted to flee to Israel.

One Refusenik who had to consistently deal with this anti-Semitism and discrimination throughout his life was Soviet Jewish scientist Andrei Sakharov. In 1972, he married Elena Bonner who was from an Armenian-Jewish family. Although the two of them were not very religious, they were ethnically Jewish.³² The couple were also leading figures in the human rights movement in the Soviet Union, which led to discrimination against Sakharov. Sakharov began to worry that Soviet authorities were trying to make him a Soviet man once again (even though he still lived in the U.S.S.R.) and that they viewed his wife as an international agent of Zionism.³³ Despite all of this, Sakharov was extremely important to the Soviet Union since he helped provide the country with thermonuclear bombs, something that was incredibly valuable during the Cold War. However, in 1980 Andrei Sakharov was arrested and exiled to Gorky. The official reason for his arrest was that he was divulging state secrets to the United States and other countries. However, it was believed by Sakharov's colleagues and supporters that Sakharov and his wife's support for human rights were the true reasons for his expulsion.³⁴ Due to

30 Leonel Sanchez, "Orange County Digest: 150 Attend Rally for Refuseniks," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1987. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/orange-county-digest/docview/810069116/se-2>.

31 Vicki Quade, "Pro Bono, Pro Freedom: Lawyers Doing Good," *Human Rights* 17, no. 1 (1990): 36.

32 G. E. Gorelik and Antonina W. Bouis, *The World of Andrei Sakharov: a Russian Physicist's Path to Freedom*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 324-325.

33 Gorelik, 330.

34 Craig R. Whitney, "Moscow complains Sakharov 'Blabbed' About Vital Secrets: Asserts Dissident Leader Ignored Warnings and was Therefore Ordered Out of Capital Telegram from Sakharov's Wife Soviet Asserts Sakharov 'Blabbed' About State Secrets 'Sakharov Repeatedly Blabbed'," *New York Times*, January 24, 1980. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/moscow-complains-sakharov-blabbed-about-vital/docview/121361291/se-2>.

his importance to Soviet physics and nuclear research, his human rights work was allowed to go unchecked for several years, but the Soviets eventually began cracking down on these scientists, especially after the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan began (which was something Sakharov opposed). He was arrested during an American Physical Society meeting, leading to increased foreign attention and protest for his release.³⁵ This follows the theme of foreign support in the United States and Israel for the Refuseniks and dissident scientists.

Another Refusenik scientist who was arrested by the Soviet Union in 1980 was Viktor Brailovsky. Brailovsky was a cyberneticist who had been consistently denied permission to emigrate with his family to Israel for over eight years. As a result of this discrimination, he published a samizdat detailing the terrible conditions that Soviet Jews were experiencing in their daily lives. His long support for Jewish rights attracted Soviet government attention and his samizdat infuriated the Soviets. As a result, Brailovsky was arrested during an international conference in Madrid, the same way Sakharov's expulsion occurred during an international conference in Chicago. Soviet authorities refused to tell his wife where they were taking her husband, further angering foreign supporters of the Refuseniks.³⁶ American scientists continuously lobbied for foreign support and attention to be paid to their Soviet colleagues and wrote articles in support of them. The CCS called for even more attention and support for the Refuseniks as they argued that the situation was worsening. At the conference in Madrid, American scientists harshly criticized Soviet policy towards the Refuseniks and they cited twenty-three scientists' persecutions as evidence. Both Brailovsky and Sakharov were on this list.³⁷ Again, there was heavy foreign support and activism in support of the Refuseniks as they were facing continuous discrimination from the Soviet government.

These two cases present a very obvious trend among the Refuseniks, especially those who were scientists. In addition to anti-Semitism, Cold War rhetoric and fears also played a role in the Soviet government denying the right to emigrate to Israel or the United States to Soviet Jews. In 1979, a high number of exit visas were granted by the Soviets to Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union. However, in the first half of 1980 only 56.8% of the exit visas issued in the first half of 1979 were granted. For the second half of 1980, only 23.9% of the number of

35 "Sakharov: Internal Exile," *Science News* 117, no. 5 (1980): 67.

36 "Russ Arrests Major Jewish Activist," *The Salt Lake Tribune* (Salt Lake City, Utah), November 14, 1980.

37 Tineke Boddé, "Oppression of Scientists Intensifies," *BioScience* 31, no. 9 (1981): 633-634.

exit visas that were granted in the second half of 1979 were granted.³⁸ In 1979, the SALT II treaty was still being negotiated between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets saw an opportunity to continue improving relations with the US by granting these visas. However, SALT II was blocked by Congress. This, coupled with the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, crippled Soviet-American and Soviet-Israeli relations and could be viewed as a reason for the steep decline in the granting of exit visas.³⁹

The story of the Refuseniks and Soviet Jews as a whole is not a positive one. Anti-Semitism has always had a home in Russia and it may never go away. Even though the fall of the U.S.S.R. somewhat improved life for the Jewish population, anti-Semitism still runs rampant throughout the country. Discussing Russia's current war with Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov argued that just because Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish, does not mean that Ukraine has no Nazi elements. He further stated that the worst anti-semites are Jewish people themselves. Israel immediately condemned the remark and in a statement after a phone call between Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Israel said that Putin had apologized. However, the Russian statement made no mention of the apology.⁴⁰ This proves that anti-Semitism is still extremely prevalent in Russian society and can explode whenever the Russian government wants it to.

Despite the change in leadership between the Tsar and the Soviet Union, the situation regarding the Soviet Jews did not truly change, with the exception of the pre-World War II creation of Birobidzhan. However, Soviet leaders' anti-Semitism continued to affect Soviet policy, even if they attempted to make gestures of support to the Jewish population. The Refuseniks and other Soviet Jews were heavily discriminated against for no other reason other than the fact that they were Jewish. The Soviet Union's treatment of its Jewish population has helped harm Russia's relations with both the United States and Israel. Russian Jews continue to live in a culture of fear and worry. It was not and still is not safe to be a Jew in Russia.

38 Freedman, 19.

39 Freedman, 19.

40 Joseph Krauss, "Israel Says Putin Apologized over His FM's Holocaust Remarks," AP NEWS, May 5, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-israel-racial-injustice-race-and-ethnicity-5ec7023af0ed2f0ff97292fa019fb680>.

Bibliography

- Boddé, Tineke. "Oppression of Scientists Intensifies." *BioScience* 31, no. 9 (1981): 633-634.
- Cullen, Robert B. "Soviet Jewry." *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 2 (1986): 252-266.
- Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. "'New' Jews of the Agricultural Kind: A Case of Soviet Interwar Propaganda." *The Russian Review* 66, no. 3 (2007): 424-450.
- F. F. "The U.S.S.R., the Soviet Jews, and Israel." *The World Today* 14, no. 12 (1958): 518-532.
- Forsythe, David P. "Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect." *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 435-454.
- Freedman, Robert Owen. *Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade, 1971-80*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984.
- Gorelik, G. E., and Antonina W. Bouis. *The World of Andrei Sakharov: a Russian Physicist's Path to Freedom*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Haumann, Heiko. "The Jews in the Russian Revolution and in the Soviet Union." In *A History of East European Jews*, NED-New edition, 1., 207-244. Vienna: Central European University Press, 2002.
- Hartouni, Valerie. *Visualizing Atrocity: Arendt, Evil, and the Optics of Thoughtlessness*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
- Heller, Joseph. "The Soviet Union and Israel: From the Gromyko Declaration to the Death of Stalin (1947-53)." In *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-67*, 6-18. Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Kattan, Victor, and Richard Falk. "The Partition of Palestine." In *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891-1949*, 146-168. London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 2009.
- Kosharovskiy, Yuli, and Stefani Hoffman. "*We Are Jews Again*": *Jewish Activism in the Soviet Union*. Edited by Ann Komaromi. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017.
- Krauss, Joseph. "Israel Says Putin Apologized over His FM's Holocaust Remarks." AP NEWS, May 5, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-israel-racial-injustice-race-and-ethnicity-5ec7023afoed2f0ff97292fa019fb680>.
- Lambroza, Shlomo. "The Tsarist Government and the Pogroms of 1903-06." *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 3 (1987): 287-296.
- Redlich, Shimon. "Khrushchev and the Jews." *Jewish Social Studies* 34, no. 4 (1972): 343-353.
- "Russ Arrests Major Jewish Activist." *The Salt Lake Tribune*, November 14, 1980.

- Quade, Vicki. "Pro Bono, Pro Freedom: Lawyers Doing Good." *Human Rights* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 34-53.
- "Sakharov: Internal Exile." *Science News* 117, no. 5 (1980): 67.
- Sanchez, Leonel. "Orange County Digest: 150 Attend Rally for Refuseniks." *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1987. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/orange-county-digest/docview/810069116/se-2>.
- Shapley, Deborah. "Scientists Plan Protest during Nixon Summit in Moscow." *Science* 184, no. 4144 (1974): 1356.
- "Soviet Government Plans to Build Jewish Republic." *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, October 11, 1929.
- "Soviet Union Sets Aside Area for Jews," *The Pittsburgh Press*, June 11, 1934.
- Szaynok, Bozena. "The Anti-Jewish Policy of the USSR in the Last Decade of Stalin's Rule and its Impact on the East European Countries with Special Reference to Poland." *Russian History* 29, no. 2/4 (2002): 301-315.
- Vezzosi, Elisabetta. "The Committee of Concerned Scientists and the Helsinki Final Act: 'Refusenik' Scientists, Détente and Human Rights." In *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972-1990*, edited by Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, 1st ed., 119-150. Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2019.
- Wiesel, Elie. *The Jews of Silence: A Personal Report on Soviet Jewry*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011.
- Whitney, Craig R. "Moscow complains Sakharov 'Blabbed' About Vital Secrets: Asserts Dissident Leader Ignored Warnings and was Therefore Ordered Out of Capital Telegram from Sakharov's Wife Soviet Asserts Sakharov 'Blabbed' About State Secrets 'Sakharov Repeatedly Blabbed'." *New York Times*, January 24, 1980. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/moscow-complains-sakharov-blabbed-about-vital/docview/121361291/se-2>.
- World Jewish Congress. "Anti-Semitism Defined: Allegations of Dual Loyalty." World Jewish Congress, February 23, 2022. <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/defining-anti-Semitism-dual-loyalty>.