

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Persecution of Jews
Hit By Four Senators

WASHINGTON (BP)— Religious persecution in the Soviet Union came under strong attack from four United States Senators at a congressional hearing here.

The Senators presented testimony at a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on a resolution condemning persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union. The resolution was introduced in the first session of Congress by Sen. Abraham Ribicoff (D., Conn.), and is co-sponsored by 63 other Senators.

Appearing before the committee were Sen. Ribicoff; Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R., N.Y.), and Sen. Kenneth B. Keating (R., N.Y.). Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D., Conn.) had his statement included in the committee record.

Ribicoff said the aim of Soviet policy is "to shatter, pulverize and gradually eliminate Jewish historical consciousness and Jewish identity." He said this is being done by: depriving Jews of cultural and religious rights, anti-Jewish propaganda campaign, scape-goating of Jews, discrimination in education and employment, and refusal of the right to emigrate.

Sen. Javits testified that in spite of Soviet "claims of religious freedom and denials of the existence of anti-Semitism because it is a violation of Soviet law," there is evidence that the Jews are being singled out for "discriminatory restrictions and extreme punishment." He said the three million Jews in the Soviet Union constitute the "second largest Jewish community in the world."

He cited United States protests against the persecution of Jews from 1840 to the present time. In urging approval of the resolution Javits said, "No policy is more firmly fixed in the conduct of U. S. foreign affairs than this moral imperative to come to the aid of oppressed peoples."

Sen. Keating said that "while mouthing phrases of freedom for all, the communists have waged a relentless campaign against all religion, but particularly the three million Jews within Soviet borders have become a special target." His testimony included a memorandum on Soviet persecution of the Jews prepared by the U. S. Department of State.

The memorandum stated that the anti-religious campaign of the Soviet Union "has grown in intensity over the past several years and all religions, including the Jewish religion, are being subjected to increasing restrictions, forms of interference, and negative social pressures."

"There is no evidence that the authorities intend to incite the public to acts of anti-Jewish violence. Rather, they seem to be using popular anti-Semitic sentiments for their own purposes," the memorandum stated.

Ribicoff said the Senate had spoken on this issue before: (1) in 1949 the Senate agreed to a resolution condemning persecutions of clergymen in communist countries; (2) in 1953 it condemned Soviet persecution of all minority groups, religious and racial; and (3) in 1954 it asked the churches and synagogues of America to have special prayers for those who are denied freedom to worship in their own way.

A representative from the Continuing Committee on Muslim-Christian Cooperation urged that the resolution be broadened to include Christians and other religious groups as well as Jews. Earlier Sen. Keating had said he would have no objection to the resolution's citing evidence of Soviet persecution of Christians and other religious groups.

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The Foreign Relations Committee held only one day of hearings on the resolution. A spokesman in the committee office said other hearings are "possible" but none are scheduled. Similar resolutions have been introduced in the House of Representatives but no hearings have been held on them.

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Anti-Poverty Bill
Passed By Congress

(8-14-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Congress passed President Johnson's anti-poverty bill without solving the church-state problems in it.

The over-all anti-poverty legislation is basically an education measure. Most of it to some degree could involve church programs. A spokesman in the House Education and Labor Committee reportedly said that in almost every title of the bill there would be "widespread opportunity for church groups to further promote their programs on a secular basis and to provide new ones."

In an earlier "staff report" on the anti-poverty legislation, C. Emanuel Carlson pointed out a number of church-state problems and outlined some suggested improvements. Carlson is executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here.

As passed by the Congress, the measure still contains some "problem areas" in church-state relations. It would set up three youth programs: (1) Job Corps for school drop-outs, ages 16-21, to assist in education, vocational training and work experience; (2) work-training program to provide work experience to assist young people ages 16-21 to resume or to continue their education; and (3) work-study program to provide part-time employment for needy college students. The Job Corps could be vetoed in a state by the governor.

Under the work-training and work-study programs, federal funds would be prohibited for construction, operation or maintenance of facilities used solely for sectarian instruction or religious worship. However, work arrangements could be made with other church-operated facilities and funds could be channeled to them. These could include such facilities as playgrounds and recreation areas and other church-sponsored activities.

Another phase of the "war on poverty" would be community action programs. These programs would be planned and implemented by local community groups, either public or private, to help eliminate poverty within the community. Part or all of the costs for such programs could be paid with federal funds. The governor of a state would veto assistance to either public or private organizations for the community action programs.

Component programs, or parts of an over-all community program, could be of special interest to church groups. These could include programs for employment, job training, counseling, health, vocational rehabilitation, housing, home management, welfare, and special remedial or other noncurricular educational assistance.

The measure states that no funds shall go for general aid to elementary and secondary education in any school. However, there is no prohibition on a school, public or parochial, setting up "special remedial or other noncurricular" educational programs. An attempt to bar federal funds from parochial schools for such programs was defeated in the Senate.

Also of possible interest to church groups would be the program of assistance to migrant families. A number of religious groups already provide some type of service for migrants. Loans would be available to set up programs for housing, sanitation, education, and day care for children.

Still another part of the "war on poverty" would be the setting up of a domestic version of the Peace Corps. This would be known as Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). Volunteers in the program could be assigned "upon request" to public agencies or private nonprofit groups.

Assignments in any state would have to be approved by the governor. In his staff report Carlson observed that a governor "would hardly be expected to hold a line against assignments to church agencies."

A loyalty oath provision was written into the bill requiring those who would receive funds to swear they do not belong to or support a subversive organization. It states that "no part of any funds appropriated or otherwise made available for expenditure under this act shall be used to make payments to any individual" who fails to file such a loyalty affidavit.

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Baptist Group Hits
Religion By Law

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Religious practices required by law were hit by a group of Baptist leaders here in a study paper on "Public Ceremonialism and the Free Exercise of Religion." In taking their position they contrasted New Testament religion as a voluntary personal experience and religion as a national heritage or culture.

The paper is one of eight prepared by seminar groups across the country for the Religious Liberty Conference here Oct. 7-9. The conference is sponsored annually by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director. The current conference theme is "The Meaning of the Free Exercise of Religion."

Some of the "ceremonialism" discussed by the Washington group are oaths for public office, chaplains in the Congress, national day of prayer and Thanksgiving Day proclamations, "In God We Trust" motto, and "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

People of "vital religious faith" have contributed much to this country, the study paper pointed out. It went further to say, however, that "in American history one can see many attempts to equate religion with our national heritage or make it just a part of our culture."

"The American success story--victorious in every war, highest level of living in the world, most powerful people on the earth measured by military power, etc., has made it very easy for some to substitute the birth of the nation for the new birth of Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for an American Christian," the seminar group said.

The paper traced the history of oaths for public office. It noted that always there has been the alternative to "swear or affirm," thus "admitting the precedence of individual conscience and permitting the free exercise thereof."

Still certain coercive factors have slipped into some state laws, the paper stated. It cited the Torcaso vs. Watkins case in Maryland as an example. Torcaso was denied appointment as a Notary Public in the state of Maryland because he refused to declare his belief in God. The Supreme Court ruled that this requirement established a religious test for public office and was therefore unconstitutional.

In the free exercise of religion, if a person wishes to include "so help me God" in the oath he should be free to do so but he should not be required to do so, the seminar group said.

The paper criticized any attempts to set up religious requirements for election to a political office. "The fairminded citizen must accept the free exercise of the public figure's religion, whether demonstrated in the private sanctuary or in public assembly," it said.

Concerning chaplains in the Congress, the paper said that "in the light of the free exercise of religion there seems to be no question but that Congressmen ought to have what spiritual help they want."

It pointed out that Congressmen are not required to attend the opening session which includes the prayer, and that individual Congressmen may invite ministers of their own choice to lead the prayers.

The question of government involvement in paying the chaplain from tax funds is similar to the chaplain in the armed forces, the seminar group stated. They asked, "Does the government have an obligation to provide for the needs of man when he is required to perform a duty for the government away from his home? Would some of his needs be spiritual?"

The paper questioned the spiritual value of legally declaring a day of thanksgiving or day of prayer. It said the practice of prayer by governing bodies would be a better guide for the people than would be any law.

"Prayer freely entered into, and not limited to a given brief period, is much more in keeping with the 'free exercise' clause of the First Amendment than the institution of a day of prayer prescribed by public law," it said.

The group said there is a "longing after God" in man that leads to some type of "identifying with God." This produces the idea of favoritism with God or being "on God's side," they said.

"This positioning of the nation 'on God's side' is more likely to be evident through the philosophy and attitudes of individuals and groups" than by specific laws, the paper said. However, it said these attitudes result in efforts for religious laws.

An awareness that God is not prejudiced or limited is necessary to avoid restricting religious freedom by law or tradition, the group concluded.

The seminar group included men from the metropolitan Washington area: Robert Harris, pastor, Temple Baptist Church; William Scurlock, pastor, Takoma Park Baptist Church; James Langley, pastor, Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church; James Windham, pastor, First Baptist Church of Silver Spring; Richard Dutton, pastor, Clinton Baptist Church; Fred Rhodes, president of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention; and James O. Duncan, editor, Captial Baptist, official publication of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

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Two Church Schools Get
Federal Health Grants

(8-14-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- A Baptist and a Catholic university are among 39 public and private institutions receiving \$1,150,632 in research grants from the United States Public Health Service.

Baylor University, Houston, Texas, received a total of \$136,898 in three separate grants. Baylor, with campuses at Waco and Houston, is owned by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., a Catholic school, received \$24,331 for a program to train ophthalmic (pertaining to the eye) assistants.

All of the 39 grants support community service and professional training activities. They were made under the Neurological and Sensory Disease Service Program of the Public Health Service.

One of the Baylor grants (\$31,880) is "to continue testing pre-school children... with language problems." The grant will also help "to develop a curriculum to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties of all types."

Another Baylor grant (\$88,211) is "to evaluate the various methods of treating amblyopia-ex-anopsia (failing eye-sight). A part of the program is "to compare the relative merits of in-patient and out-patient treatment."

The third Baylor grant (\$16,807) is "for postgraduate training in ophthalmic (pertaining to the eye) nursing."

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NDEA Provides Broader
Aid To Church Schools

(8-14-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- A Senate-passed bill provides for broader federal aid to private colleges and parochial schools under the National Defense Education Act. A similar bill is pending before the Rules Committee in the House of Representatives.

The bill authorizes \$2,053,251,000 for extending and expanding the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) for three years. It would also extend aid to federally impacted areas for two years.

Aid to private schools under existing NDEA provisions would be broadened under the new bill.

The "forgiveness" feature for student loans would be extended to college students who later became teachers in private schools or colleges. Presently up to 50 per cent of the loans could be canceled only for students who later taught in public schools.

The new bill would also increase the amount of funds authorized for such loans, and would remove the \$800,000 ceiling on funds available to any one college or university. The funds are provided on a matching basis to public and private colleges for low-interest student loans.

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Currently, matching grants are made to states for public schools and 10-year loans to private schools for purchasing equipment for teaching science, mathematics and foreign languages. This would be expanded to include equipment for history, civics, geography, English and remedial reading. The funds available for this program would be increased.

The expanded version would write into law the existing policy that graduate fellowships may not be granted for study at a school or department of divinity. It would increase the number of fellowships available.

Programs of testing, guidance and counseling would be extended to elementary schools, public junior colleges and technical institutes. The programs are now limited to secondary schools, beginning at the seventh grade level. The testing program would further be extended to private junior colleges and technical institutes.

The bill would also provide grants as well as contracts to colleges and universities for guidance institutes. The program now is for guidance counselors in secondary schools. It would be broadened to include teachers in elementary schools and colleges. Both private and public school teachers would be eligible for stipends under the program.

Under the new bill the teacher training institutes program would be broadened to include history, civics, geography, English and remedial reading. It now is limited to modern languages. School librarians, education media specialists and teachers of handicapped children would also be included.

The pending House bill would extend NDEA for only two years and would not include impacted areas. It would also extend the loan forgiveness feature to students who became social workers and members of the anti-poverty program.

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