

HUMAN RIGHTS IN RUSSIA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1999

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
WASHINGTON, DC

The briefing was held at 10:10 a.m., in Room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Ambassador William H. Courtney, Senior Advisor of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Amb. COURTNEY. Good morning. My name is Bill Courtney.

On behalf of the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Representative Chris Smith and Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, I welcome all of you to today's briefing on the human rights situation in Russia's regions.

The major purpose of the Commission, which was created by the Congress in 1976, is to monitor and encourage compliance by participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe with their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Charter of Paris of 1990, and other OSCE documents. The Commission holds hearings and briefings and conducts other activities to carry out its purposes.

Today we will learn more about the human rights situation in 30 of Russia's regions. It is described in an insightful and painstakingly prepared report by the Moscow Helsinki Group and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

This report, part of a project funded by USAID, is unprecedented in its scope and detail of coverage of human rights across Russia; and it is only the beginning. The project will involve many more regions in the future.

Today we are honored to hear from Ludmilla Alexeeva and Micah Naftalin. They are well known by the Commission. Both testified on January 15 at our hearing "Whither Human Rights in Russia?" Information on that hearing is on the document table outside.

At that hearing, Chairman Smith noted that the decline in Russia's economic fortunes was accompanied by disturbing developments in the area of human rights and civil liberties. Chairman Smith called special attention to the 1997 religion law, a trial of the Jehovah's Witness organization in Moscow, the case of environmental activist Alexander Nikitin, and a rash of anti-Semitic statements made by Communist Party members of the Duma.

One witness at the hearing, David Satter, a former Moscow correspondent, noted the helplessness of the average Russian in a criminalized state where "the individual is deprived utterly of the protection of the law in the face of a criminal business Mafia."

Corruption is also a burning issue. The story on the front page of today's *Washington Post* suggests the levels to which it is penetrating. In the latest issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the eminent economist and scholar of Russia Anders Aslund wrote that the country "suffers not from too free a market but from corruption thriving on excessive regulations erected by a large and pervasive state."

Aslund estimated that in 1992, a peak year for ill-gotten gains, four-fifths of the GDP of Russia was siphoned off by several types of corruption. For ordinary Russians on their farms, in their factories, this was an astounding blow.

These issues are not new. Nearly 3 years ago in remarks about Russia at Columbia University, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott warned that “crime and corruption threaten to discredit and even doom reform.” Some would say this has to come pass—at least partly—and that human rights are one of the casualties.

The question on the minds of a lot of people, including many friends of Russia, is how did the diseases of crime, corruption, and human rights violations combine to weaken democracy and the rule of law in Russia, sap the strength of the state, and undermine the well-being of its people? Are these diseases spreading or are they in remission? And what can be done to promote a lasting cure?

In July in St. Petersburg, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly endorsed strong language on human rights and corruption at the initiative of the U.S. delegation, which was led by Chairman Smith and Co-Chairman Campbell, and included 15 other Senators and Representatives.

The briefing today will shed much light on vital questions for Russia’s future. Respect for human rights must not be a Potemkin village. It is a core issue for any state that seeks the respect of its own citizens and the support of the international community. This is especially true for a country whose future is so uncertain but which has such great prospects if it makes far deeper democratic and economic reforms.

Fortunately, concentration camps and psychiatric hospitals in Russia are no longer in use as a means to threaten and punish those who seek to exercise such fundamental rights as the freedoms of expression, religion and association. But, as our testimony this morning will show, there remain many human rights issues in Russia that deserve close attention.

We look forward to the briefing today from our two distinguished guests. First, let’s begin with Ms. Alexeeva.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Thank you. Russia is a truly enormous country that comprises 89 regions, each one of them comparable to most European states in territory and population. As for the differences in political and social environment, some Russian regions actually contrast with one another much more drastically than different European states.

Due to the immensity of the country and the heterogeneity of the regions, no single NGO is capable of monitoring the situation with human rights across the entire territory of the Russian Federation on its own.

Such over-all monitoring can be realized only through active collaboration of the NGOs from different regions with the results of their work brought together and thoroughly analyzed. This very principle is at the heart of the project, “Human Rights Monitoring in Russia,” developed and realized by the Moscow Helsinki Group and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy and generous support of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This project required a tremendous organizational effort. On this occasion I shall not get into the structural details. I will mention only that the human rights monitoring program, the results of which we are presently bringing to your attention, was realized in 30 Russian regions. The overall project’s time frame is 3 years. In the year 1999, it is intended to engage the total of 60 regions and in the year 2000, 89 regions—each and every region in the country.

During these 3 years, all the regional human rights NGOs shall grow competent in the practice of monitoring, and regular reporting on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation shall accordingly become their permanent function.

All the major organizational work was executed by the Moscow Helsinki Group, the oldest of the currently active Russian human rights organizations. It was founded on May 12, 1976, and became internationally acknowledged as the first NGO in the USSR that attempted to monitor the situation with human rights in the country and prepared documents revealing the Soviet Union's violations of the Helsinki Agreements' humanitarian articles.

The information on the violations of the Helsinki Agreements by the USSR was thus sent to the leaders of the other signatory States, which was an absolutely unprecedented insolence from the Soviet point of view. Dr. Yuri Orlov, first Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, paid for that insolence with 7 years of camps and 5 years of exile. Most of the Group's members also paid in kind—either with deprivation of freedom or with forced emigration.

Here, in this room, it is also fitting to recall that the Moscow Helsinki Group's first partner abroad was the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The first offer of cooperation that we received from overseas was made by Congressman Dante Fascell, first Chair of this Commission, and it was at your Commission's hearings that I came forth with the very first testimony on the Moscow Helsinki Group's activities and on the persecutions of the Moscow Helsinki Group's members by the Soviet State. It was in June 1977.

At this briefing, I am happy to report that now—when we live not in the USSR but in the Russian Federation and our human rights movement has grown tremendously—the Moscow Helsinki Group still occupies a very significant place in the frame of that movement. Since May 1996, the main trend of our activities is in supporting the human rights organizations in the Russian regions, thus providing for the development of Russian human rights movement as a whole.

In 1996, we began by supporting 50 regional organizations only. Today, our database includes over 1,200 human rights organizations across the territory of the Russian Federation.

As a result of the growth of the human rights movement and Moscow Helsinki Group's strong ties and great relationships with our regional colleagues, it actually became possible to realize the complex program of human rights monitoring, whose first result—the report on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation—we are presenting today.

The significance of this project is not limited to having annual reports on the situation with human rights in our country. It is, of course, very important by itself; but no less important is the fact that this report is a product of collective work of the human rights organizations from different regions.

Such collaboration promotes consolidation and turns the conglomerate of individual NGOs, separated from one another by some enormous distances, into one united human rights movement. And it is obvious that the more consolidated the movement, the more influential it is.

Furthermore, the reports submitted by the regional NGOs and the All-Russian Report written on their foundation highlight the shortcomings of our work, bringing our attention to those areas that need improvement.

For example, in the regional reports there is not enough—from my point of view—mate-

rial on the situation of religious confessions and on the situation of women. Their omission testifies to the fact that the human rights NGOs have no strong ties with either religious associations in their respective regions or with women's groups—which, by the way, are very active in quite a number of regions.

It is evident that the human rights activities must work in that direction, not only in order to find such materials and include them in the report of 1999 but also in order to strengthen the NGOs' network in their respective regions and provide for further development of the democratic society in Russia.

Nevertheless, despite all the flaws of our first report and despite the fact that in the first year of the monitoring project only 30 out of the total of 89 Russian regions were involved, the report does give an objective idea of the situation with human rights in Russia. Here and now, I shall try to give that situation a summary.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation endows Russia citizens with very broad rights and freedoms that are not less extensive than the ones the citizens of the most democratic countries enjoy in the contemporary world.

Still, if in the Soviet times our problem was in having no such rights by the law, now we are facing another problem that is equally difficult to solve—the laws are not carried into life, and the citizens' constitutional rights are constantly violated by the officials of all power levels, from the pettiest clerk to the President. Chechnya alone is an absolutely colossal act of abuse.

The great majority of Russian functionaries—most of whom were Soviet functionaries not such a long time ago—don't even know the law, don't have any respect for it, and don't see the essentiality of compliance to the law. In our country, there is no tradition of law abidance. This statement is true in regards to all the power branches, including the ones whose very duty is to control the law's execution—in Russia it is the Prosecutor's Office—and the ones that must guarantee the laws' execution, the militia.

But the most destructive influence on the situation with human rights or, I should say, on the very atmosphere of Russian life, belongs with the law-violating Russian courts. The entire system of power is not only ignoring the law but also corrupted from top to bottom.

The law-enforcing organs grew into one with the criminal world on the one hand, and represents one corporation—bound with common interests—with the judicial organs on the other hand. And this is the main reason for the unlawful court verdicts being no rare exceptions but rather a routine phenomenon. Any man detained by the militia for some very trivial reason—and sometimes for no reason at all—faces a very serious danger of never getting out of the militia station alive, or of going from there directly to the place of confinement subject to accusation in a very grave crime—sometimes as grave as murder, which he never actually committed.

At each and every seminar and each and every conference—with participation of regional human rights activists—we constantly come to the opinion that nowadays defiance of the law, demonstrated by the law enforcement organs and courts—the utter corruption and criminalization of these power bodies are primarily dangerous for our state and citizens. Primarily dangerous.

The regional reports are particularly overflowing with the facts of beatings at the militia stations in process of investigation, about false confessions being literally beaten out of people, and about court decrees made on foundation of such confessions.

The Russian functionaries' legal nihilism is flourishing, not only due to the absence of the law abidance tradition but also because of the legal ignorance of the large majority of our citizens. The State opted out of providing for the citizens' legal enlightenment—completely abandoned that task, whose realization is especially needed in the modern Russian society.

Our Constitution is only 5 years old, and it is very different from its Soviet predecessor. Russian citizens are not aware of their rights, don't know how to use them, have no skills in defending them. This empty niche of human rights enlightenment is being gradually filled by the NGOs.

Precisely due to our society's vital demand for this kind of activities, Russian human rights organizations are swiftly growing in number, covering practically the entire country, and comprising the most active and the most educated Russian citizens.

In the last few years, young people have been massively joining the movement, especially young professionals. They are students, lawyers recently admitted to the bar, psychologists, teachers, journalists and sociologists.

The primary form of human rights work in the Russian provinces is general human rights enlightenment through the mass media bodies, elective courses in schools, other educational facilities, and especially through the public help desks that offer free legal counseling and provide free legal assistance to those citizens whose rights were violated by the state power bodies and their functionaries.

In Russia, defending the citizens' rights from the lawless functionaries is akin to Sisyphian labor. The functionaries can easily violate people's rights by one single scrape of the pen; while in order to achieve the rights' restoration, it is often needed to go through each and every judicial instance all the way to the Supreme Court. And even the Supreme Court sometimes fails to serve the ends of justice. For that reason, a great flow of complaints is now streaming from Russia to the European Human Rights Court.

The only way to crush that evil tradition of disdain for our Constitution and laws and stop the mass violation of human rights is to create effective mechanisms of public control and implement them into each and every human rights relevant sphere of life in the Russian Federation.

We must achieve absolute openness, absolute transparency, for our citizens and taxpayers in such fields as the penitentiary facilities, militia stations, orphanages, institutions for handicapped people, the military, and the movement for financial flows from the center to the regions in order to pay salaries to teachers, doctors and other budgetary employees.

The army of Russian functionaries that used to ignore the human rights activists for a long time is now mobilized against them. In the last few years, numerous attempts have been made to hamper the NGOs' work—if not to get rid of them at all. Among such attempts is the bill on subjecting to taxation the grants that the NGOs receive from overseas and even the labor of the NGOs' volunteers. The threat of this bill is not over yet for us.

Another method used to hinder the NGOs is the policy of obstruction to re-registration, which all the Russian public organizations had to pass before July 1, 1999. As for the registration of new NGOs, it was practically blocked altogether. The human rights and ecological organizations have had to face the most serious obstacles. For example, it took the Moscow Helsinki Group six whole months to re-register.

Another prominent human rights organization, Glasnost Foundation, was actually refused re-registration, and the Moscow City Court let the refusal stand. The newly founded

organization Ecology and Human Rights was not allowed to register either.

The explanations given by the Department of Justice and Courts that consider such cases are of special interest. The judges actually allude to those very articles of the Constitution that the State guarantees to the Russian citizens their rights and freedoms; and then, on the basis of these articles, make an absolutely incredible conclusion that the citizens, therefore, should not protect their rights on their own.

At the same time, the functionaries totally ignore the most crucial question—what is to be done if the citizen's rights are being violated by the State power bodies?

It is notorious that the attack on the human rights organizations began after they had come forth with bitter critique of the law on freedom of conscience and religious associations. The attack on the religious associations was, therefore, the first stone—the testing stone so to say—hurled at the NGOs and especially at the human rights NGOs with the ultimate purpose of destroying them.

Finally, I would like to conclude my presentation by reminding that in the Soviet times a wonderful tradition was formed in the democratic countries.

During each visit of the Soviet officials to the democratic countries—as well as during the visits of the officials and public figures from the democratic countries to the Soviet Union—the representatives of the democratic world addressed to the Soviets with the requests to free the political prisoners, to allow the refuseniks to leave the country, to ease the regime of confinement for the prisoners of conscience, and so on and so forth.

Our Western guests took it upon themselves to act as mediators, understanding perfectly well that the Soviet regime makes it impossible for the dissidents to address the authorities directly on any level at all and that in the USSR there can be no real contacts between the society and the State power bodies.

Unfortunately, Russian human rights activists are still in great need of foreign intercession because, despite the fact that the human rights movement became quite a significant phenomenon, the authorities—both federal and local—do not want to take it into consideration. This statement is especially true in regards of the federal and Moscow power bodies.

Hence, I hereby appeal to the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe to restore that tradition and to promote its revival in all of the countries signatory to the Helsinki Agreements. We need you once again to become mediators between the authorities and the independent public of our country in the course of each visit and on each and every suitable occasion.

Thank you for your attention.

Amb. COURTNEY. Thank you for that very eloquent statement.

Let me next call on Micah Naftalin.

Mr. NAFTALIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As always, it's our great pleasure to visit with you on behalf of our president, Yosef Abramowitz, and the entire UCSJ board and the councils that are affiliated with us.

My special pleasure to be in the company of my dear friend and colleague, one of the former Soviet dissidents and presently Russian human rights leaders, Ludmilla Alexeeva, who is Chair of the prestigious Moscow Helsinki Group. As you know, Mrs. Alexeeva is also the President of the International Helsinki Federation.

May I say—joining me and our MHG colleagues is Dr. Leonid Stonov (to my right), who for a dozen years until 1990 was the principal spokesman in Moscow for the refuseniks as

well as being a member of the Helsinki Group.

Dr. Stonov, now an American citizen, directs and coordinates UCSJ's eight human rights bureaus across the former Soviet Union, including the Moscow bureau whose staff has been directly involved with the monitoring project that is the subject of this briefing. Dr. Stonov's here to answer questions later in the morning as they arise.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to enter into the record two additional documents: Dr. Stonov's statement on the rise of anti-Semitic terrorism and UCSJ's most recently updated "Chronology of Anti-Semitism in Russia."

This remarkable path-breaking project, involving the monitoring and report-writing efforts of relatively new and evolving human rights NGOs in 30 of Russia's provinces, began in 1996—one might well say—when Russian President Yeltsin complimented the MHG on its 20th anniversary and established a network of official human rights commissions in the provinces. His edict invited MHG to coordinate the provincial NGOs' work.

From the beginning, it was clear that the activities of the official commissions would not be adequate, however; so in the spring of 1998, MHG and the Union of Councils began developing a joint proposal to support the independent monitoring by regional human rights NGOs, which we submitted to NED and USAID originally in Washington but soon, in the case of AID, in Moscow as well.

During this period I briefed you—Ambassador Courtney, I'm sure you'll remember, when you were at the White House in the NSC—and also Assistant Secretary of State Richard Morningstar. And with you two pushing and us pulling and AID mission in Moscow responding, we had a NED-supported pilot project beginning last July, a year ago, and the full project's first year, beginning last October.

This has truly been, in our judgment, an enlightened partnership of the foreign policy, foreign aid, and grassroots human rights NGO communities, a Russian-American partnership—one I believe is all but unprecedented and, I hope, a model for future styles of activity.

And, Mr. Chairman, you have also before, as well, the principal partnership in Russia between the vital interest of the Russian human rights community and the Jewish community.

By operating the principle of grassroots monitoring effort across the FSU—that specializes in anti-Semitism, fascism and other manifestations of nationalistic extremism—UCSJ provides an all-important bridge between groups focusing on protecting Jews and other minorities and other victims of religious persecution and those concerned with the broader human rights issues that you've just heard about from Mrs. Alexeeva's testimony. When it comes to understanding and prescribing for the development of a democratic civil society, all of these perspectives must be taken by policy makers as both important and interdependent.

Let me say a few words about anti-Semitism. For many years, UCSJ has been documenting and warning of a gradual, inexorable, and dangerous rise in anti-Semitic violence in the FSU, especially the Russian Federation.

Last November, for instance, we concluded that the trend had taken a quantum leap—in our judgment—when the Duma voted to support General Makashov's pogromist threats. By December, the Communist Party chiefs issued a new manifesto, making anti-Semitism a central policy of the dominant party in the Russian Parliament.

We then raised the alarm that these actions constituted a signal, not only that the previously low level of official anti-Semitism seemed to be rising but in turn offered official

sanction and permission to those previously passive Jew-haters that they could emulate the major players on the hate group fringes—such as Russian National Unity—and that it was now safe to act out their hatred without serious fear of any consequences. The genie of anti-Semitic terrorism was out of the bottle, is the way we put it last November, early December.

Regrettably, our analysis, our predictions began proving accurate in the spring. The two papers that I've submitted document this chilling phenomenon which, when combined with the general political and economic meltdown of Russia's hopes for a democratic civil society, raises parallels, we believe, to the Weimar Republic of pre-Hitler Germany that has long engaged our attention and more recently that of Russian and Western analysts alike.

As Mrs. Alexeeva states, human rights and policy attention inevitably proceeds—and must proceed—from sound and systematic monitoring. Human rights monitoring by NGOs is, for human rights advocates, what intelligence gathering by government organs is for foreign policy makers.

Regrettably, the foreign policy establishment—in our judgment, officials and academics alike generally fail to take into account systematically the signals provided by the NGO monitors when considering what they view as vital national interest. In our judgment, this is a grievous error that needs to be repaired.

Prior to this year, human rights monitoring in Russia has been largely confined to the efforts of Moscow-based organizations, with some exceptions. This report, therefore, breaks important new ground, especially when noting Mrs. Alexeeva's trenchant observation that many of the provinces covered in this report are the size of many European countries. For the first time, we are able to begin documenting activities across much of Russia.

This report concludes that the use of torture is getting worse, especially in the pre-trial, investigative isolation wards. Torture and pre-trial incarceration are the refuge of incompetent and corrupt policing and investigating. We can observe now the totally inadequate procedures governing arrest, detention, and access to independent legal counsel.

We see a near-total breakdown in public confidence in—and even fear of—the police, with abuses supported by the prosecutors and largely ignored by the courts. The report documents the serious deterioration in the condition of children and of prisoners in the jails. The specter of the maladministration of psychiatry seems to be returning from its Soviet roots.

Finally, as I will discuss in a few moments, the paranoiac use of secrecy as a pretext by the FSC and the Procurator General to suppress free speech and impose Draconian controls and surveillance on private and commercial electronic communications is an extremely worrisome return to Soviet-style behavior.

Over the past dozen years, I have observed that human rights is often seen, dismissively, as a feel-good dimension of foreign policy—that is, politically correct rhetoric like exhorting abusive nations while the real business of national defense or trade is conducted.

On the contrary, every day for 30 years, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, a grassroots human rights NGO, has been directly involved on the ground in a number of related issues, each of which has a direct bearing on how one might measure the states of the former Soviet Union as being a not law-based criminal enterprise—willing to cover up extreme threats to the environmental safety of its own people and its neighbors; capable and willing to eavesdrop on personal and commercial faxes, telephones, e-mail, internet; incapable or unwilling, for example, to protect its Jewish citizens from dangerously escalating pogromist threats by the Communist Party leaders in the Parliament and anti-Semitic hate crimes by nationalis-

tic extremists.

In other words, we provide—and monitoring provides—information to measure the acceptability of Russia, Ukraine, etc. as reliable security, environmental or economic partners that also are expected to observe their international human rights and other treaty commitments; and we take and promote effective steps that encourage needed reforms.

These are hardly simply feel-good concerns. Indeed, they are concerns that the U.S. and other Western governments have often ignored to their peril. The following points highlight the principal concerns affecting America's and Russias' vital national interests that UCSJ is tracking through its own monitoring network and in cooperation with the Moscow Helsinki Group.

First is the area of anti-Semitism, and I'll skip a little of that—you can read it in my testimony—except to say that our assessment is now supported, among others, by the respected Russian newspaper, *Kommersant Daily*, that recently openly raised the question of Jewish pogroms in Moscow and in a looming anti-Semitic epidemic in advance of the upcoming elections.

This is their concern, the trend that they are watching; so it's not just advocacy groups that are raising these issues.

But I want to say—as the provincial monitoring report documents—I believe anti-Semitic hate crimes and the lack of effective official response is by no means the most important threat to Russian society; and we need to be the ones to make that clear.

Endemic corruption and lawlessness clearly rank at the top. The tracking of anti-Semitism, however, is an exceedingly valuable bellwether for measuring the health of the democratic infrastructures of a country. It is an integral component of the human rights/rule of law/civil society mix. Of course, the report does document anti-Jewish hate crimes and provocations, and the collegiality of fascist organizations and local officials.

UCSJ is a principal monitor of religious persecution generally and was an early advocate in opposition to the discriminatory laws on religion enacted by the Russian Duma in September of 1997.

While we doubted from the beginning the assurances by the government and the Russian Orthodox Church that traditional religions would not be attacked—even though the law permits great discrimination—we argued as well that the greatest danger would lie in its implementation in the vast provinces.

This report confirms that fear with the worst treatment being suffered by those Christian churches deemed most competitive to Russian Orthodoxy, including the Roman Catholics and such Protestant confessions as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists.

Third, the KGB successor, FSB, has joined forces with the Navy and the prosecutors to declare war on environmental safety monitors. In recent years they have jailed and then prosecuted for treason Alexander Nikitin and Grigory Pasko, who respectively alerted the world to the present dangers of radiation poisoning of the North and Japanese seas from submerged nuclear submarines.

After long incarcerations, Pasko was acquitted by a military court that even charged the FSB with falsifying documents, while Nikitin has been subjected to multiple trials in which the courts have found the evidence against him unconvincing. His documents, after all, were all in the public domain and the charges unconstitutionally based, either on secret or ex post facto directives.

Nonetheless, the courts have been unwilling to acquit and so return this clearly political case repeatedly for further tries by the FSB and the prosecutors. These cases are fairly well known in the human rights community and certainly by our State Department and the Clinton administration and the Congress.

Now, however, the FSB has gone farther; it has blocked the work of Vladimir Soyfer, head of an Academy of Sciences Research lab for maybe 40 or 50 years, that actually monitors the dangerous output of radiation leakage from submerged nuclear submarines.

These incidents have been documented as incipient disasters comparable to the Chernobyl reactor meltdown. UCSJ is organizing a campaign, including the scientific and environmental communities who will be our partners, on this general subject and on behalf of Soyfer.

Of course, these cases all raise important human rights violations. But they also raise vital questions of national security concerning public health and environmental safety—matters rendered immune from censorship by the Russian Constitution. The key security question—in my judgment—raised by the NGO monitoring is this: what are the Navy, the FSB, the Procurator General trying to cover up? And why? Are the safety measures so grave, safety issues so grave, as to negate constitutional requirements of disclosure? Or is there involved some massive and corrupt money laundering scheme?

We don't know. But it does seem improper for the U.S. or other Western governments to offer clean up assistance without demanding the release of the messengers. This would seem to be a clear case for imposing economic linkage to human rights reforms when national security is also at stake.

Fourth, the Russian FSB—as well as its counterpart in Ukraine—have developed and are now implementing the unconstitutional capability to monitor—without court approval—telephone centers, cell phone operators, and, most recently, the e-mail and internet providers who, at their own expense, must provide the FSB access to track, intercept, interrupt the internet connection of any client of that provider.

We are now planning to join with the St. Petersburg human rights organization, Citizens Watch, to mount a campaign to protect the security and confidentiality of personal and commercial communications.

But the broader policy question is, whose interests does such Draconian domestic surveillance serve? National security is the official justification, but three decades of advocacy for the so-called secrecy refuseniks justifies our skepticism. Political blackmail has been documented already. What more is involved are matters that go far beyond the feel-good issues of human rights.

And, indeed, all of these issues are not simply feel-good issues. They are all of vital importance, not only to individuals in the FSU but to all nations that seek to engage in bilateral arrangements for military security, environmental protection, economic and banking activity—all, indeed, who have an interest in promoting a law-based society in countries that have overpowering economic poverty but remain nuclear super powers and who are led, in the case of Russia, by a former KGB officer and FSB head, a man President Yeltsin has endorsed as his heir apparent.

In the past, Prime Minister Putin has defended the prosecution of Nikitin. On the other hand, he was considered an ally of the reform-minded former mayor of St. Petersburg, Sobchak. His KGB/FSB background thus gives the Prime Minister a great advantage, for good or for ill; and we believe the jury is out and the burden of proof is his.

Finally, it seems to us, in general, when there is massive poverty in an economy stripped of billions—perhaps a trillion dollars—by criminals and corrupt officials from top to bottom and a corrupt and totalitarian justice system, there can be no hope of a civil society, democratic leadership, or a reliable international partner.

Nor should Russia's leadership reasonably expect continued economic assistance by governments, international banks, or private enterprise unless and until it takes some credible steps toward serious reform. The economic principle that certain institutions are too important to fail has, we think, too long been applied to the personalities of Russia's nominally pro-Western leadership in the past.

It is long past time when principles rather than political personalities should take more effect—should govern U.S. foreign policy toward Russia and other successor states in the FSU—and that linkage between reform and requested support should be matters for negotiation.

We therefore believe it is time to focus more foreign aid—not less but more foreign aid—on supporting grassroots monitoring of this sort and targeting important support directly at the infrastructure for a democratic civil society. And here, I would say, the Congress bears a special responsibility.

To this end as well, we especially encourage—and I'm echoing something that Ludmilla said—we especially encourage more systematic bilateral interchanges on the issues that promote human rights reforms and urge the Russian government to meet regularly and directly with human rights leadership. Only in these ways can there develop a credible atmosphere of transparency and accountability to the public.

Mr. Chairman, we applaud our government for its support of this ground-breaking grassroots human right monitoring effort, and we thank you and your colleagues and your magnificent professional staff, for providing the ever-responsive venue of the Helsinki Commission.

Thank you very much.

Amb. COURTNEY. Micah, thank you for that very forthright statement.

Dr. Stonov, we are extremely pleased that you're here today. Like Ludmilla Alexeeva, Leonid Stonov is a legendary figure throughout the former Soviet Union. I saw myself firsthand in Central Asia and the Caucasus how much Leonid Stonov did to inspire and motivate human rights NGOs and others in that region—so thank you for being here.

Let me recognize the presence of Dorothy Taft, Chief of Staff of the CSCE, the Helsinki Commission; Ronald McNamara, who is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the CSCE; and John Finerty, who is the Staff Adviser of the CSCE for Russia and the Baltics.

Let's open up for discussion. Please identify yourself and your organization before asking your question or making your comment. This is not like church; you can speak up. Yes?

QUESTIONER. My question is to Ms. Ludmilla Alexeeva and Mr. Leonid Stonov. Have you personally ever been harassed, and what is it like living in a society where you know those things are happening? I'm a Congressional Fellow with Congressman Kucinich's office.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Excuse me. I was involved in the human rights movements at the beginning in USSR—it means since the middle of '60s—and I was among founders of Moscow Helsinki Group.

But, fortunately, I wasn't arrested because I was forced to emigrate. I lived in the United States 16 years and I have American citizenship. Then, after 16 years I returned to Russia

because I would like to work to see my country democratic.

QUESTIONER. When did you go?

Ms. ALEXEEVA. In 1993.

Dr. STONOV. When I was a refusenik, KGB decided to accuse me of being a parasite because I didn't find a job. It was impossible.

Then, finally, I found job outside Moscow, so I avoided being exiled (authorities wanted to exile me). When for psychological—maybe—pressure on me I was deprived of my academic degrees, it was in 1982; and I know only about 25 people who are deprived. It was a very short period because being here in the West there were very big demonstrations against depriving refuseniks and other potential emigrants of academic degrees.

QUESTIONER. What does it mean, the depriving—

Dr. STONOV. It was the decision of Institute where I worked before and the State Higher Attestation Commission (so-called VAK) to deprive me of Ph.D. for 'anti-patriotic' behavior. But I am very proud, by the way, because it proves that scientific degrees are given not only for science but for devotion to the Soviet system. And now some people ask me to go to VAK and to receive back my degrees, but I said I do not do it. I would not do it. If they want to return, I will accept; but I will not write a special note—a special appeal—in order to return academic degree.

QUESTIONER. What field was it?

Dr. STONOV. It is biology.

Mr. NAFTALIN. He didn't mention the fact that his telephone was tapped and there was the KGB outside his apartment to track who was coming in and out.

Dr. STONOV. And for demonstrations, several times I received five days in jail; but it's nothing compared to some others.

Amb. COURTNEY. Ludmilla, let me ask one question about Dagestan, which is very much in the news now.

For years, democratically inclined leaders in the Caucasus have cautioned the West that Dagestan could be a more complex and perhaps even more destructive situation than in Chechnya if democratic and economic reforms did not develop there in a faster way and ethnic and social tolerance were not promoted more. From your work in Russia's regions, what perspectives might you have on whether the human rights situation in Dagestan—prior to the outbreak of fighting—has been worse than in other areas of Russia or other areas of the North Caucasus?

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Yes, I think so. Frankly, unfortunately, in Dagestan we have no strong human rights organizations. Dagestan wasn't included in the 30 regions which worked on this report, and it won't be included in the 60 regions which shall work with us in this year.

And it's real sad that the situation with human rights in Dagestan is worse than in many other regions. It is typical, though, that in the regions where human rights organizations are absent or weak, the situation with human rights is consequently worse. And, unfortunately, for that reason we don't have enough information coming to us from Dagestan.

Now, of course, we will pay special attention to this region as to a problem zone, but we are only beginning this work. The same goes for Chechnya. In Chechnya there are very few human rights organizations, and all of them quite weak—are very weak. Sometimes, when we need to make more efforts, we have very limited possibilities to make those efforts. It's in—

Mr. Meshcheryakov would like to add something to my reply about Dagestan.

Mr. MESHCHERYAKOV. (through translator). I think that the situation in Dagestan is really very much different from the situation in Chechnya.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Yes, it is better.

Mr. MESHCHERYAKOV. I think the situation in Dagestan is better compared to Chechnya as a result of the good work of the human rights organizations.

We have rather wide contacts with individuals and human rights organizations in Dagestan. If you rely on organizations, if you look at the information that's coming from them, for instance, if you listen to what they're saying, you shall see that they're saying one can't really talk about mass violations in the conflict area by the Russian Army in relation to those who are not taking part in the military action.

And this is the first time that we're not using military from active duty. For instance, there is a minimal limitations on movement of noncombatant citizens. For instance, you don't have these mass arrests in Makhachala—the people who are actually on the side of the partisans.

I think that this would not have been possible if it weren't for the fact that people did raise the issue and protest these situations in Chechnya.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. That's right. I would like to add that our journalists give us less information about Dagestan than in regards to Chechnya, maybe because of the example of journalist Maslyuk, who was captured as a result of her work in Chechnya. It was a sad lesson for our journalists, and now we have to obtain information more through our acquaintances in Dagestan than through the mass media.

Amb. COURTNEY. Thank you.

Dr. STONOV. I want to stress a point that what's happening now in Dagestan—it's only beginning. Unfortunately. Maybe it's very pessimistic, but it's only the beginning.

Amb. COURTNEY. Well let me add that Daniel Meshcheryakov is the overall director for the human rights project in Russia.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. He knows the situation very well because he maintains direct connections with all the human rights activists in the regions. This is his duty, his responsibility.

QUESTIONER. Micah, you made a passing reference to instances of psychiatric abuse. Can you or maybe Ludmilla elaborate on that?

Mr. NAFTALIN. There are hints. There are hints of that in the report. And then there was a piece a couple of weeks ago by our old friend—what's his name, our psychiatric abuse expert in Moscow?

Dr. STONOV. Yuri Savenko, President of Independent Psychiatric Russian Association.

Mr. NAFTALIN. That they are starting to see evidences of abuse in the psychiatric hospitals. It has not reached the stage, as far as we know, of significant political repression through psychiatry; but there are—I think it's an area we need to watch and air importantly to make sure it doesn't get worse, because we're starting to see little sparks that we hadn't seen before.

Dr. STONOV. Repressions are directed against representatives of some religion groups, some so-called sects.

Mr. NAFTALIN. There is also evidence that this is not political, where family members who are coveting people's property are sending them into the psychiatric hospitals; and then

it takes them a while to prove that they're sane to get back out and protect themselves. How much of this has to do with collusion with authorities is not clear yet.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. I would like to add that we don't have many signals about political usage of psychiatry. But unfortunately, many people whose mental health allows them to live in the society still end up in the mental institutions through economic or family factors. For that reason this problem is not closed. Many regional NGOs receive signals about such unlawful use of psychiatry.

QUESTIONER. My name is Ivars Kuskevics. I'm from the State Department. I'm wondering if our Russian guests could comment on the likelihood that these internet restrictions proposed in Russia—how will they affect the work of human rights NGOs? And also to what extent all Russian citizens and, of course, internet users protest these restrictions?

We've seen some isolated instances of server—individual internet service providers protesting, but what about the broader population?

Mr. MESHCHERYAKOV. We have a case, for instance, in Volgograd where one organization—with whom we are in close contact and which will be part of the monitoring operation next year—has gone to court in a charge against the procuracy and the FSB. Without any legal order or any sanction, the FSB demanded that their provider transferred all their information (e-mail messages, etc.) to the server of the regional FSB Department.

And it is especially interesting that since there had been no sanction from the procuracy, the procurator—feeling that he had made a mistake and wanting to justify the FSB's actions in the face of the court—just went and gave a post factum blanket sanction on downloading to the FSB's server the information from the accounts of each and every user in the city “for security reasons.” It seems that he was not even aware that according to the law the prosecutor's office has a right to sanction perusal only in relation to a specific individual involved in a specific criminal case, while such blanket sanctions are forbidden.

The judge said to the prosecutor, “Well look, there's an awful lot of users here. How do you expect to be able to go through all these tons of information. The prosecutor replied, “Look, I don't understand anything about computers, so don't ask me this question.”

We think this is a very important incident; and as for the information we are currently receiving from the Volgograd organization we're in contact with, we understand that all the leading providers have an order from the FSB to transfer everything over to the FSB.

Of course, we realize that the FSB doesn't really have the technical ability to go through all that stuff they pull into their system; but this has a very significant negative psychological impact which limits the free flow of information, free exchange of information. And we consider in any instance to come to the defense of the free flow of information.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. I would add that the intervention of FSB in the free flow of information is not limited to the internet. We have, for example, an appeal from Ivanovo. There, the administration was trying to introduce the per-minute telephone payment system, which, of course, implied that each and every caller and recipient of the call would be identified and recorded. The Ivanovo human rights organization went to court to prevent the administration from introducing that system, due to the fact that such system allows the FSB to control the citizen's private life. The FSB is becoming more and more active now.

Mr. NAFTALIN. I would just like to add that it sounds really kind of Orwellian. It's true that they don't have the financial resources to make the system work properly; so they're requiring the providers to spend their own money—thousands of dollars—to put the sys-

tem—to put the equipment in, so they’re getting the victims to pay for the assault. This is a case that’s been developing over many months, and it looks to me like it’s slowly gathering some momentum.

Originally, the only people paying any real attention to it of a public nature was Citizens Watch, I think, and one provider who refused to go along. Of course, the minute he refused to go along they have the power to withdraw the provider’s registration and put them out of business. So it’s a tough situation.

But now in the spring the *St. Petersburg Times* started to write about it and then, a few weeks ago, the *Moscow Times* and maybe some of the Russian language papers as well. I’m not sure. Is that true? They’re starting to pick up on it; but, of course, nobody can stand up to the FSB unless the top of the government is prepared to do it—which so far they’re not in any of the issues we’re talking about.

QUESTIONER. I wonder—of the regions that you monitored, are there any that particularly stand out as leaders or are really at the forefront of implementing human rights or fully respecting those? What are some—at the other end—of the worst cases that you reviewed?

And I wonder where Moscow under Mayor Luzkhov’s administration falls; and an issue that’s near and dear to my heart, having worked on freedom of movement issues, is the question of *propiska*; and I wonder if you could discuss that as it applies particularly to the Moscow case.

MS. ALEXEEVA. The choice of regions that participated in this report and that are to take part in the next report was performed on the foundation of our previous work experience with them. We choose those regions where we have stronger and more responsible human rights organizations. This year it was 30 best organizations. In the second year it will be 60 best organizations. Fortunately this system is working just fine.

But unfortunately, among those 60 regions the Moscow region is not represented. In Moscow, of course, there are more than 100 very active human rights organizations. But all those organizations focus their activities on the regions other than Moscow. Even us—despite being named the Moscow Helsinki Group, our main field activity is not Moscow but the provinces.

And it’s not good; and I recognize that we should concentrate our attention on Moscow just as well, because the report about the situation with *propiska* in Moscow—shame on us—came not from Russian human rights organizations but from the Helsinki Watch American organization. A very good report, by the way.

And I think we will correct the situation in the next few years.

AMB. COURTNEY. Yes. Of the 30 regions you looked at, which are doing better on human rights?

MS. ALEXEEVA. You know, we have no “excellent” regions, of course, but it’s normal. I think that such regions with excellent human rights situation simply do not exist, and not only in Russia but in many other countries, including the United States. But, of course, the levels of human rights violations differ quite significantly.

For example, the best region, I would say, where we have more democratic governance, is Samara. I would say it’s very significant. Perm is the first region where six human rights activists received the names of honorable citizens of their city in the month of May of this year. It’s the first time in Russia.

And the Governor of Samara, Titov, chose to approach the local human rights problems.

The administration of Samara respects human rights activity, respects the human rights more than in many other regions. Governor Titov is the most democratic and most civilized governor in the whole Russia, from my point of view.

For example, first Titov liquidated the foster family and other kinds of family care for children without parents in his region. And we are trying to advocate his excellent example in other regions—but to this time unsuccessfully—including Moscow, where the Moscow administration fights strongly to keep orphanages in Moscow as opposed to foster family care.

And the situation with human rights in Moscow—and especially in some areas as with parentless children and some other domains—is much worse than in many Russian regions. I would say that from the point of view of respect for human rights, Moscow can be placed on the same shelf with Krasnodar, Stavropol, and the worst Russian regions. We have no official anti-Semitism in Russia, for example; but anti-Caucasus feelings make official policy of the Russian administration. It's Moscow official policy. And for that reason, the corruption of Moscow militia is the worst—much worse than in the majority of Russian regions.

It's interesting that our capital is on such a low level of human rights. I think it is the fault of our authorities.

Amb. COURTNEY. Wendy?

QUESTIONER. Wendy Silverman, State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This is just a follow-up question. Were you saying that there's an official policy, an official anti-Caucasus policy, at the Moscow level or at the federal level or both?

Ms. ALEXEEVA. No, no. Just on Moscow level; not on federal level. And the same is the official policy in Krasnodar, for example, or in Rostov maybe; but no, we have no official anti-Semitism now. I would say that this is the policy of some political parties but not Russian official policy in general.

Amb. COURTNEY. John?

QUESTIONER. If I could follow up that question. Ludmilla, at our hearing in January you mentioned the Communist Party: you said that you did not believe that anti-Semitism among the Russian people was that strong, but the Communist Party was using it as a platform.

There seems now to be a schism—*raskol*—in the Communist Party and maybe Iliukhin and Makashov—moving off in one direction and the others—maybe some of the others—do you think that reflects this particular issue, or is this over some other kind of issues or something like that?

Ms. ALEXEEVA. I will answer this question; but I would advise you to address this question to Daniel Meshcheryakov, because he understands any political questions much better than I. Basically don't think that this is just the issue of anti-Semitism. This is broader problem.

The problem of anti-Semitism exists too, of course. But I would add to my January reply that this is just political anti-Semitism, not mass—not among the Russian masses. All sociological surveys show that there is no growth of anti-Semitism among normal people, but it's a political issue. It has been a hot political matter during the last several months, and it is being spread by our mass media to the extent that I am afraid now that it shall influence the mass psychology too.

Mr. MESHCHERYAKOV. For instance, surveys do show that among those people who vote Communist, the anti-Semitic feelings are actually strong.

In this instance then, it is very unlikely that the CPRF leaders will sort of loudly disassociate themselves from the radical Communists, given the fact that now—with the election campaign going on—the CPRF leaders are simply unwilling to lose some of the radically-oriented and, therefore, anti-Semitic-oriented electorate. Still, I think that among the leadership of the Communist Party the anti-Semitism is rather moderate. And they themselves would not want to get themselves involved into the campaign of that radical section of the Communist Party that makes these loud anti-Semitic statements.

Therefore—if you stop and think—theoretically, at least, it is obvious that if the Communists come to power, this would create massive problems in the area of human rights. Still and all, given the current state of play, I don't think that anti-Semitism would become sort of official policy.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. But I hope they won't come to power.

Mr. NAFTALIN. Could I add a little to this, and I think maybe Leonid might want to too. I'd like to say, first of all, we have to be clear what we mean when we say it's 'political'; because if somebody as astute politically as a Chernomyrdin can start for the first time—really start making anti-Semitic slurs in public, it suggests that he thinks there is a constituency for anti-Semitism in the political process. And so when we say 'political,' that means to some extent his judgment on attitudes of the electorate.

I do want to say to Ludmilla that it's very tricky to talk about public attitudes based on the polls, because, in part, we've been watching these polls a lot and some of the organizations—not us but other organizations, including the American Jewish Committee—have been doing attitude polls for many years.

And there is a fundamental debate among the scholars as to how to interpret the data. There's been much made several years ago of the American Jewish Committee's conclusion—based on its data—that anti-Semitic attitudes were relatively low. And yet other scholars, looking at the same data, made different conclusions, depending on which questions they looked at.

I'll give you a very simple example. In our country—and I'm going to make these numbers up a little bit, but I think I'm in the right ballpark—in our country somewhere less than 5 percent of the public has some kind of serious hard-core anti-Semitic feelings expressed through the polls.

In Russia, the hard-core active anti-Semites who would be judged to be willing to act out is somewhere in the order of 3 times that number—15 to 18 percent—in the polls that we've been looking at over the last 3 or 4 years.

But, more important, if you look at some of the kinds of trick questions that try to disguise—if you ask somebody are you an anti-Semite, they know the politically correct answer; they're not stupid. They say no or they say whatever; unless they're hard-core people they'll say no.

But an example of a tell-tale question—they have questions that ask, for instance, do you believe that there's a conspiracy on the part of the Jews to control Russia? That would be an example. That's not "would you care if they lived next door to you" or things of that sort.

And this data has been rather consistent, so that if you put together the people who answer that question yes, they do believe it, plus the people who say maybe they would likely believe it, that number goes well over 50 percent in Moscow, which is the most liberal city in Russia.

Now I'm just suggesting that I still believe that you're probably right; the average Russian citizen probably does not harbor deep anti-Semitic feelings that would result in joining the Russian National Unity or throwing a bomb into a synagogue.

I have no doubt that that's true. But these attitudes are pretty hard-core compared to a more democratic country, and they're likely to be exacerbated by the terrible economy of the country. It's carried by the Russian Orthodox Church, which is the dominant moral authority in the country. And so I think it's very important not to dismiss too lightly what could happen with a great charismatic anti-Semitic leader and a flash point event.

This was the lesson of Germany in the early '30s; and there are a lot of analogies that suggest that we cannot be too complacent about it, even though we certainly don't want to be in a position of indicting the Russian people for being—No people are anti-Semitic as a group, but it doesn't take many people to create a major problem. That critical mass is close. Not there, maybe; but it's close.

Particularly when you have a situation where it's absolutely clear that the government, while it may not have a policy—undoubtedly, does not have a policy, an anti-Semitic policy; certainly Yeltsin doesn't have it. We don't know about some of the KGB types, what their—we don't know what Primakov's policy might have been. We do know that Yeltsin does not harbor an anti-Semitic or foster an anti-Semitic policy.

But, on the other hand, you have to look at what people do and don't do; and what we do know is that the Russian government even has been on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of how a democracy would respond to acts of anti-Semitic or other kinds of hate crimes—it scores very low.

There is not a leadership in the country, either through the media or through the government, to establish a zero tolerance atmosphere in the country for nationalistic hate crimes, including anti-Semitism.

Amb. COURTNEY. Yes?

QUESTIONER. Hi, my name is Susan Taylor, and I'm with the Church of Scientology International; and I just have one quick question. We've experienced over the last year a great increase in abuses against our churches and our members, from surveillance to raids on our churches and also abuses of individuals.

And I was just wondering—have you experienced or do you know of the same, and are there any human rights organizations in Moscow that are gathering information on minority religions, and have there been any reports that have come out of Moscow that can be disseminated here in the United States?

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Moscow Helsinki Group was one of the founders—or maybe the main founder—of the special organizational committee for religious freedom and secular state. And this committee prepares annual reports about the situation with religious freedom and about violations of the rights of religious organizations and believers. They presented their report for 1998 two weeks ago, and they mentioned many violations of the rights of religious groups in many regions.

Amb. COURTNEY. Well, thank you very much Ludmilla for being here. Micah. Leonid. Mr. Meshcheryakov.

We appreciate your attendance. Thank you for coming.

[Whereupon the briefing was concluded at 11:38 a.m.]

**PREPARED SUBMISSION OF
LUDMILLA ALEXEEVA, PRESIDENT OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP
AND PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FOUNDATION**

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 1998

Russia is a truly enormous country that comprises 89 regions, each one of them comparable to most of European states in territory and population. As for the differences in political and social environment, some Russian regions actually contrast with one another much more drastically than different European states. Due to the immensity of the country and heterogeneity of the regions, no single NGO is capable of monitoring the situation with human rights across the entire territory of the Russian Federation on its own. Such over-all monitoring can be realized only through active collaboration of the NGOs from different regions with the results of their work brought together and thoroughly analyzed. This very principle is at the heart of the Project "Human Rights Monitoring in Russia" developed and realized by the Moscow Helsinki Group and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews with the participation of the National Endowment for Democracy and generous support of the US Agency for International Development.

This project required a tremendous organizational effort. On this festive occasion I shall not get into structural details. I will only mention that the human rights monitoring program, the results of which we are presently bringing to your attention, was realized in 30 Russian regions. The over-all Project's time-frame is three years. In the year 1999 it is intended to engage the total of 60 regions, and in the year 2000—89 regions, i.e. each and every region in the country. During these three years, all the regional human rights NGOs shall grow competent in the practice of monitoring, and regular reporting on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation shall accordingly become their permanent function.

All the major organizational work was executed by the Moscow Helsinki Group, the oldest of the currently active Russian human rights organizations. It was founded on May 12, 1976 and became internationally acknowledged as the first NGO in the USSR that attempted to monitor the situation with human rights in the country and prepared documents revealing the Soviet Union's violations of the Helsinki Agreements' humanitarian articles. The information on the violations of the Helsinki Agreements by the USSR was thus sent to the leaders of the other signatory states, which was an absolutely unprecedented insolence from the Soviet point of view. Dr. Yuri Orlov, first Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, paid for that insolence with 7 years of camps and 5 year of exile. Most of the Group's members also paid in kind—either with deprivation of freedom or with forced emigration. Here, in this room, it is also fitting to recall that the MHG's first partner abroad was the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The first offer of cooperation that we received from the overseas was made by Congressman Dante Fascell, first Chair of the Commission, and it was at your Commission's hearings that I came forth with the very first testimony on the MHG's activities and on the persecutions of the MHG's members by the Soviet State.

At this briefing, I am happy to report that now, when we live not in the USSR but in the Russian Federation, and our human rights movement has grown tremendously, the Moscow Helsinki Group still occupies a very significant place in the frame of that movement. Since May 1996, the main trend of our activities is in supporting the human rights organizations in the Russian regions thus providing for the development of Russian human rights movement

as a whole. In 1996 we began by supporting 50 regional organizations only. Today, our database includes over 1200 human rights organizations across the territory of the Russian Federation. As a result of the growth of the human rights movement and the MHG's strong ties and great relationships with our regional colleagues, it actually became possible to realize the complex program of human rights monitoring, whose first result—the report on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation—we are presenting today. The significance of this project is not limited to having annual reports on the situation with human rights in our country. It is, of course, very important by itself, but no less important is the fact that this report is a product of collective work of the human rights organizations from different regions. Such collaboration promotes consolidation and turns the conglomerate of individual NGOs, separated from one another by some enormous distances, into one united human rights movement. And it is obvious that the more consolidated the movement, the more influential it is. Furthermore, the reports submitted by the regional NGOs and the All-Russian Report written on their foundation highlight the shortcomings of our work, bringing our attention to those areas that need improvement. For example, in the regional reports there is very little material on the situation of religious confessions and on the situation of women. That omission testifies to the fact that the human rights NGOs have no strong ties with either religious associations in their respective regions or with women's groups, which, by the way, are very active in quite a number of regions. It is evident that the human rights activities must work in that direction not only in order to find such materials and include them into the reports for 1999 but also in order to strengthen the NGOs' network in their respective regions and provide for further development of the democratic society in Russia.

Nevertheless, despite all the flaws of our first report and despite the fact that in the first year of the monitoring project only 30 out of the total of 89 Russian regions were involved, the report does give an objective idea of the situation with human rights in Russia. Here and now, I shall try to give that situation a summary.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation endows Russian citizens with very broad rights and freedoms that are not less extensive than the one the citizens of the most democratic countries enjoy in the contemporary world. Still, if in the Soviet times our problem was in having no such rights by the virtue of Law, now we are facing another problem that is equally difficult to solve—the laws are not carried into life, and the citizens' constitutional rights are constantly violated by the officials of all power levels, from the President (Chechnya alone is an absolutely colossal act of abuse!) and to the pettiest clerk. The great majority of Russian functionaries, most of whom were Soviet functionaries not such a long time ago, don't even know the Law, don't have any respect for it and don't see the essentiality of compliance to the Law. In our country, there is no tradition of law-abidance. This statement is true in regards of all the power branches, including the ones whose very duty is to control the laws' execution (in Russia, it is the Prosecutor's Office) and the ones that must guarantee the laws' execution (the militia). But the most destructive influence on the situation with human rights or, I should say, on the very atmosphere of Russian life, belongs with the law-violating Russian courts. The entire system of power is not only ignorant but also corrupted from top to bottom. The law-enforcing organs grew into one with the criminal world, on the hand, and represent one corporation, bound with common interests, with the judicial organs, on the other hand. And this is the main reason for the unlawful court verdicts being no rare exception but rather a routine phenomenon. Any man, detained by the militia for some very trifling reason, and sometimes for no reason at all, faces a very serious danger of never getting out of

the militia-station alive or of going from there directly to a place of confinement, subject to accusation in a very grave crime, sometimes as grave as murder, which he never actually committed. At each and every seminar, at each and every conference with the participation of regional human rights activists, we inevitably come to the opinion that nowadays the defiance of the Law, demonstrated by the law-enforcement organs and courts, the utter corruption and criminalization of these power bodies are primarily dangerous for our state and citizens. The regional reports are practically overflowing with the facts of beatings at the militia-stations and in process of investigation, about false confessions being literally beaten out of people and about court decrees made on the foundation of such confessions.

The Russian functionaries' legal nihilism is flourishing not only due to the absence of the law-abidance tradition, but also because the legal ignorance of the large majority of our citizens. The State opted out of providing for the citizens' legal enlightenment, completely abandoned that task, whose realization is especially needed in the modern Russian society. Our Constitution is only 5 years old and really very different from its Soviet predecessor. Russian citizens are not aware of their rights, don't know how to use them, have no skills in defending them. This empty niche of human rights enlightenment is being gradually filled by the NGOs. Precisely due to our society's vital demand for this kind of activities, Russian human rights organizations are swiftly growing in number, covering practically the entire country, and comprising the most active and the most educated Russian citizens. In the last few years, young people have been massively joining the movement, especially young professionals. They are students, lawyers recently admitted to the Bar, psychologists, teachers, journalists and sociologists. The primary form of human rights work in the Russian provinces is general human rights enlightenment through the mass-media bodies, elective courses in schools and other educational facilities, and especially through the public help desks that offer free legal counseling and provide free legal assistance to those citizens whose rights were violated by the state power bodies and their functionaries. In Russia, defending the citizens' rights from the lawless functionaries is akin to Sisyphean labor. The functionaries can easily violate people's rights by one single scrape of the pen, while in order to achieve the rights' restoration it is often needed to go through each and every judicial instance, all the way to the Supreme Court. And even the Supreme Court sometimes fails to serve the ends of justice. So, a great flow of complaints is now streaming from Russia to the European Human Rights Court.

The only way to crush that evil tradition of disdain for our Constitution and laws and stop the mass violation of human rights is to create efficient mechanisms of public control and implement them into each and every human-rights relevant sphere of life in the Russian Federation. We must achieve absolute openness, absolute transparency for our citizens and taxpayers in such fields as the penitentiary facilities, militia-stations, orphanages, institutions for handicapped people, the military, and the movement of financial assets from the center to the regions in order to pay the salaries to teachers, doctors and other budgetary employees. The army of Russian functionaries, that used to ignore the human rights activists for a long time, is now mobilizing against them. In the last few years, numerous attempts have been made to hamper the NGOs' work if not to get rid of them at all. Among such attempts is the bill on subjecting to taxation the grants that the NGOs receive from the overseas and even the labor of the NGOs' volunteers. The threat of this bill is not over yet for us. Another method used to hinder the NGOs is the policy of obstruction to re-registration, which all the Russian public organizations had to pass before July 1, 1999. As for the regis-

tration of new NGOs, it was practically blocked all together. The human rights and ecological organizations have had to face the most serious obstacles. For example, it took the Moscow Helsinki Group six whole months to reregister. Another prominent human rights organization, “Glasnost” Foundation, was actually refused re-registration, and the Moscow City Court let the refusal stand. The newly founded organization “Ecology and Human Rights” was not allowed to register either. The explanations, given by the Departments of Justice and Courts that consider such cases, are of special interest. The judges actually allude to those very articles of the Constitution that guarantee to the Russian citizens their rights and freedoms and then, on the basis of these articles, make an absolutely incredible conclusion that the citizens, therefore should not protect their rights on their own. At the same time, the functionaries totally ignore the most crucial question—what is to be done, if the citizens’ rights are being violated by the state power bodies?

It is notorious that the attack on the human rights organizations began after they had come forth with bitter critique of the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.” The attack on the religious associations was, therefore, the first stone, the “testing stone,” so to say, hurled at the NGOs, and especially at the human rights NGOs, with the ultimate purpose of destroying them.

Finally, I would like to conclude my presentation by reminding that in the Soviet times a wonderful tradition was formed in the democratic countries. During each visit of the Soviet officials to the democratic countries as well as during the visits of the officials and public figures from the democratic countries to the Soviet Union, the representatives of the democratic world addressed the Soviets with the requests to free the political prisoners, to allow the refuseniks to leave the country, to ease the regime of confinement for the prisoners of conscience, and so on and so forth. Our Western guests took it upon themselves to act as mediators, understanding perfectly well that the Soviet regime makes it impossible for the dissenters to address the authorities directly on any level at all and that in the USSR there can be no real contacts between the society and the state powers bodies. Unfortunately, Russian human rights activists are still in great need of foreign intercession, because, despite the fact that the human rights movement became quite a significant phenomenon, the authorities, both federal and local, do not want to take it into consideration. This statement is especially true in regards of the federal and Moscow power bodies. Hence, I hereby appeal to the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe to reawaken that tradition and to promote its revival in all of the countries signatory to the Helsinki Agreements. We need you once again to become mediators between the authorities and the independent public of our country, in the course of each visit and on each and every suitable occasion.

**PREPARED SUBMISSION OF MICAH H. NAFTALIN,
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS (UCSJ)**

**MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS IN RUSSIA—FAR MORE THAN SIMPLY A
“FEEL GOOD” ENDEAVOR**

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Helsinki Commission:

As always, it is my great pleasure to visit with you on behalf of our president, Yosef I. Abramowitz, and the entire UCSJ Board of Directors and affiliated Councils. It is my special pleasure to be in the company of my dear friend and colleague, one of the foremost former Soviet dissidents and present Russian human rights leaders, Ludmylla Alexeeva, who is chair of the prestigious Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG). As you know, Mrs Alexeeva is also the president of the International Helsinki Federation.

Joining me and our MHG colleagues is Dr. Leonid Stonov who, for a dozen years until 1990, was the principal spokesman in Moscow for the Refuseniks, as well as being a member of the Helsinki group. Dr Stonov, now an American citizen, directs and coordinates UCSJ's eight human rights bureaus in the FSU, including the Moscow Bureau, whose staff has been directly involved with the monitoring project that is the subject of this briefing. Dr. Stonov is here to answer questions later in the morning.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record two documents: Dr. Stonov's statement, "The Danger of Antisemitic Terrorism in Russia—1999;" and UCSJ's most recently updated "Chronology of Antisemitism in Russia."

This remarkable, path-breaking project, involving the monitoring and report-writing efforts of relatively new and evolving human rights NGOs in 30 of Russia's provinces, began in 1996, one might well say, when Russian president Boris Yeltsin complimented the MHG on its twentieth Anniversary and established a network of official human rights commissions in the provinces. His edict invited the MHG to coordinate the provincial NGOs' work. From the beginning, it was clear that the activities of the official commissions would not be adequate. So, in the spring of 1998, MHG and UCSJ began developing a joint proposal to support the independent monitoring by regional human rights NGOs, which we submitted to NED and USAID, originally in Washington but soon, in the case of USAID, in Moscow as well. During this period, I briefed you, Ambassador Courtney when you were with the White House NSC, and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Morningstar. With you two pushing, us pulling, and the AID mission in Moscow responding, we had an NED-supported pilot project beginning in July 1998 and the full project's first year beginning last October. This has truly been an enlightened partnership of the foreign policy, foreign aid and grassroots human rights NGO communities—a Russian-American partnership; one I believe is all but unprecedented and, I hope, a model for future activity.

Mr. Chairman, you have before you as well the principal partnership between the vital interests of the Russian human rights community and the Jewish community. By operating the principal grassroots monitoring effort across the former Soviet Union that specializes in antisemitism, fascism and other manifestations of nationalistic extremism, UCSJ provides an all important bridge between groups focusing on protecting Jews and other victims of religious persecution and those concerned with the broader human rights issues that you have just heard about in Mrs. Alexeeva's testimony. When it comes to understanding and

prescribing for the development of a democratic civil society, all these perspectives must be seen by policymakers as both important and interdependent.

For many years, UCSJ has been documenting and warning of a gradual, inexorable and dangerous rise in antisemitic violence in the FSU, especially the Russian Federation. Last November, we concluded that the trend had taken a quantum leap when the Duma voted to support General Makashov's pogromist threats. By December, Communist Party chief Zyuganov issued a new manifesto, making antisemitism a central policy of the dominant party in the Russian parliament. We then raised the alarm that these actions constituted a signal that the previously low level of "official" antisemitism was rising which, in turn, offered official sanction and permission to those previously passive Jew-haters that they could emulate the major players on the hate-group fringes, like Russian National Unity, and that it was now safe to act out their hatred without serious fear of any consequences. The genie of antisemitic terrorism was out of the bottle.

Regrettably, our analysis, our predictions began proving accurate in the spring. The two papers I have submitted for the record document this chilling phenomenon which, when combined with the general political and economic meltdown of Russia's hopes for a democratic civil society, raises parallels to the Weimar Republic of pre-Hitler Germany that has long engaged UCSJ's attention and, more recently, that of Russian and Western analysts alike.

As Mrs. Alexeeva states, human rights and policy attention inevitably proceeds from sound and systematic monitoring. Human rights monitoring by NGOs is for human rights advocates what intelligence gathering by governmental organs is for foreign policymakers. Regrettably, the foreign policy establishment—officials and academics—generally fail to take into account systematically the signals provided by the NGO monitors when considering what they view as vital national interests. This is a grievous error.

Prior to this year, human rights monitoring in Russia has been largely confined to the efforts of Moscow-based organizations. This report therefore breaks important new ground, especially when noting Mrs. Alexeeva's trenchant observation that many of the provinces covered in this report are of the size of many European countries. For the first time, we are able to document activities across much of Russia.

This concludes that the use of torture is getting worse, especially in the pre-trial, investigative isolation wards. Torture and pre-trial incarceration are the refuge of incompetent and corrupt policing and investigating. We can observe the totally inadequate procedures governing arrest, detention and access to independent legal counsel. We see a near-total breakdown in public confidence in, and fear of, the police, with abuses supported by the prosecutors and largely ignored by the courts. The report documents the serious deterioration in the condition of children, and of prisoners in the jails. The specter of the maladministration of psychiatry is returning from its Soviet roots. Finally, as I will discuss in a few moments, the paranoid use of secrecy as a pretext by the FSB and the Procurator General to suppress free speech and impose draconian controls and surveillance on private and commercial electronic communications is an extremely worrisome return to Soviet-style behavior.

Over the past dozen years, I have observed that human rights is often seen, dismissively, as a "feel good" dimension of foreign policy, e.g., politically correct rhetoric like exhorting abusive nations while the real business of national defense or trade is conducted. On the

contrary, every day for 30 years, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ), a “grassroots” human rights NGO, has been directly involved, on the ground, in a number of related issues, each of which has a direct bearing on how one might measure the states of the former Soviet Union as being a not law-based criminal enterprise; willing to cover up extreme threats to the environmental safety of its own people and its neighbors; capable and willing to eavesdrop on personal and commercial telephone, fax, email and internet communications; incapable or unwilling, for example, to protect its Jewish citizens from dangerously escalating pogromist threats by Communist Party leaders in the parliament and antisemitic hate crimes by nationalistic extremists. In other words, we provide information to measure the acceptability of Russia, Ukraine, et al as reliable security, environmental or economic partners that also are expected to observe their international human rights and other treaty commitments, and we take and promote effective steps that encourage needed reforms.

These are hardly mere “feel good” concerns. Indeed, they are concerns that the U.S. and other Western governments have often ignored to their peril. The following highlight the principal concerns affecting America’s, and Russians’ vital national interests that UCSJ is tracking through its own monitoring network and in cooperation with the Moscow Helsinki Group.

1. UCSJ’s extensive reports provide an important and useful database concerning antisemitism and extremism. Last November—long before the international media tuned in, and even before most Russian Jewish leaders became alarmed—our monitoring and analysis permitted us to forecast the escalation of anti-Jewish violence that has erupted this past spring and summer, with synagogue and Jewish theater bombings and aborted bombings, attempted or actual cemetery desecrations, arsons and murders. UCSJ’s assessment is now supported, inter alia, by the respected Russian newspaper, *Kommersant Daily* that has openly raised the question of “Jewish pogroms in Moscow” and a looming “antisemitic epidemic” in advance of the upcoming elections.

As the provincial monitoring report documents, antisemitic hate crimes, and the lack of effective official response, is by no means the most important threat to Russian society. Endemic corruption and lawlessness clearly rank at the top. The tracking of antisemitism is, however, an exceedingly valuable bellwether for measuring the health of the democratic infrastructure of a country. It is an integral component of the human rights/rule of law/civil society mix. Of course, the report does document anti-Jewish hate crimes and provocations, and the collegiality of fascist organizations and local officials.

2. UCSJ is a principal monitor of religious persecution generally and was an early advocate in opposition to the discriminatory law on religion enacted by the Russian Duma on September 26, 1997. While we doubted from the beginning the assurances by the government and the Russian Orthodox Church that traditional religions would not be attacked even though the law permits great discrimination, we argued as well that the greatest danger would lie in its implementation in the vast provinces. This report confirms that fear, with the worst treatment being suffered by those Christian churches deemed most competitive to Russian Orthodoxy, including the Roman Catholics and such Protestant confessions as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists.

3. The KGB-successor FSB has joined forces with the Navy and the prosecutors to declare war on environmental safety monitors. In recent years they have jailed and then prosecuted for treason Alexander Nikitin and Grigory Pasko, who respectively alerted the world to the present dangers of radiation poisoning of the North and Japanese seas from submerged nuclear submarines. After long incarcerations, Pasko was acquitted by a military court that charged the FSB with falsifying documents, while Nikitin has been subjected to multiple trials in which the courts have found the evidence against him unconvincing — his documents were all in the public domain — and the charges unconstitutionally based either on secret or ex post facto directives. Nonetheless, the courts have been unwilling to acquit, and so return this clearly political case repeatedly for further tries by the FSB and the prosecutors.

Now, the FSB has gone farther—it has blocked the work of Vladimir Soyfer, head of an Academy of Sciences research lab that actually monitors the dangerous output of radiation leakage from submerged nuclear submarines. These incidents have been documented as incipient disasters comparable to the Chernobyl reactor meltdown. UCSJ is organizing a campaign, including the scientific and environmental communities, on the general subject and on behalf of Soyfer.

Of course, these cases all raise important human rights violations. But they also raise vital questions of national security concerning public health and environmental safety—matters rendered immune from censorship by the Russian Constitution. The key security question raised by the NGO monitoring is this: What are the Navy, FSB and Procurator General trying to cover up, and why? Are the safety issues so grave as to negate Constitutional requirements of disclosure? Or, is there involved some massive and corrupt money laundering scheme? We don't know. But it does seem extremely improper for the U.S. or other Western governments to offer clean-up assistance without demanding the release of the messengers. This would seem to be a clear case for imposing economic linkage to human rights reforms when national security is also at stake.

4. The Russian FSB, and its counterpart in Ukraine, have developed and are implementing the unconstitutional capability to monitor without court approval telephone centers, cell phone operators and, most recently, the email and internet providers who, at their own expense, must provide the FSB access to track, intercept and interrupt the internet connection of any client of that provider. We are now planning to join with the St. Petersburg human rights organization, Citizens Watch, to mount a campaign to protect the security and confidentiality of personal and commercial communications. But the broader policy question is, whose interests do such draconian domestic surveillance serve? National security is the official justification, but three decades of advocacy for the so-called “secrecy” Refuseniks justifies our skepticism. Political blackmail has been documented. What more?

These are not simply “feel good” issues. They are of vital importance not only to individuals in the FSU, but to all nations that seek to engage in bilateral arrangements for military security, environmental protection, economic and banking activity—all, indeed, who have an interest in promoting a law-based society in countries that have overpowering economic poverty but remain nuclear super-powers and who are led, in the case of Russia, by a former KGB officer and FSB head—a man President Yeltsin

has endorsed as his heir apparent. In the past, Prime Minister Putin has defended the prosecution of Nikitin; but he was considered an ally of the reform-minded former mayor of St. Petersburg. His KGB/FSB background gives the Prime Minister a great advantage—for good or ill. The jury is out; the burden of proof is his.

When there is massive poverty in an economy stripped of billions—perhaps a trillion dollars by criminals and corrupt officials from top to bottom, and a corrupt and totalitarian justice system, there can be no hope of a civil society, democratic leadership, or a reliable international partner. Nor should Russia's leadership reasonably expect continued economic assistance, by governments, international banks, or private enterprise unless and until it takes credible steps toward serious reform. The economic principle that certain institutions are "too important to fail" has too long been applied to the personalities of Russia's nominally pro-Western leadership. It is long past the time when principles rather than political personalities should govern U.S. foreign policy toward Russia and other successor states in the FSU, and that linkage between reform and requested support should be negotiated.

We therefore believe it is time to focus more foreign aid on supporting grassroots monitoring and targeting important support directly at the infrastructure for a democratic civil society. Here, the Congress bears special responsibility. To this end, as well, we especially encourage more systematic bi-lateral interchanges on the issues that promote human rights reforms and urge the Russian government to meet regularly and directly with the human rights leadership. Only in these ways can there develop a credible atmosphere of transparency and accountability to the public.

We applaud our government for its support of this groundbreaking grassroots human rights monitoring effort, and we thank you and your colleagues, and your magnificent professional staff, Mr. Chairman, for providing the ever-responsive venue of the Helsinki Commission.

Thank You.

**PREPARED SUBMISSION OF LEONID STONOV,
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR, UCSJ HUMAN RIGHTS BUREAUS IN THE FSU**

THE DANGERS OF ANTISEMITIC TERRORISM IN RUSSIA, 1999

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about monitoring of the fundamental human rights, including the right for national-cultural-religious autonomy under protection of the law. I will speak mostly about anti-Semitism, although there are many other forms of xenophobia. These Congressional hearings about anti-Semitism are the third for the year besides the appeal of the 99 Senators to President Yeltsin in June 1999. It is difficult to overestimate the influence of these discussions of political realities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. We can speak about systematic Congressional monitoring of this important problem, and it deserves the highest appreciation. The Congress continues the remarkable traditions of Senator Jackson and Congressman Vanik, who during a difficult for the Soviet Jews time proposed the historic amendment which opened the exit gates for more than million Soviet Jews. Also we appreciate Senator Lautenberg's important initiative. His amendment has for 10 years helped Jews and other persecuted religious minorities from the FSU to enter the USA as refugees. I hope that this amendment will be extended for the next fiscal year. I also want to thank the Helsinki Commission delegation led by Congressman Christopher Smith, who raised the question of anti-Semitism and other important human rights problems in Russia during the last OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Petersburg two months ago.

I will not touch on here concrete and numerous facts of anti-Semitism in the different regions of Russia because in the next few weeks the Union of Councils will issue a new report—the second supplemental edition—about anti-Semitic events in 50 regions of Russia in 1998–1999, about anti-Semitism in nationalistic parties and movements' ideologies, about using this shameful phenomena in the pre-elections campaigns, about absence of response of all authority branches to anti-Semitism and other kinds of xenophobia. In this report we use results of the MHG-UCSJ monitoring, sponsored by the US AID (special thanks to this Agency), and also information from our Bureaus and correspondents from many Russian cities and towns. My goal today is to characterize the peculiarities of modern anti-Semitism, which is flourishing in Russia.

Antisemitism is not only heritage of the Tsarist and Soviet regimes. It is a reflection of political, economic and moral crisis that affected Russia and the other post-Soviet countries. The modern escalation of anti-Semitism is in part in due to the weakening of presidential power. The FSB role and activity have increased during last months. This organization as in the past controls the whole life of the country, including the Internet and information about environmental contamination (Nikitin, Pasko, and Soifer cases). The FSB also tries to influence the results of future elections. And, finally, big pre-election blocs with obvious ideology like "Fatherland"- "The whole Russia" of Primakov-Luzhkov is being created, which will try to influence the election process. Degradation of the economy is continuing, capital is flowing out and not into Russia. Poverty, drug addiction, child prostitution and criminality are rising. Longevity is decreasing. At the same time manifestations of xenophobia and other kinds of ethnic and religious intolerance are on the increase. Religious freedoms are suppressed. The Russian Orthodox Church's role as carrier of the almost state religion has increased. Extremist and chauvinistic attitudes are growing and anti-Western, especially anti-Ameri-

can, propaganda in mass media is on the rise. The search for enemies and scapegoats is broadening.

We are focusing today on an analysis of anti-Semitism because German National Socialism started from these phenomena, and many people did not believe that Hitler's theories in "Main Kampf" could be implemented. As old people remember now, National Socialism was an ideology, which most normal persons in the world did not take seriously. Only when military actions started in Europe in 1939 did they react. They waited too long to fight. Many people also underestimate Russian national extremism in the same way.

I am sure that open anti-Semitic appeals of Makashov, Iliukhin, Kondratenko, Barkashov and other extremists-chauvinists in the autumn of 1998 – winter 1999, which did not provoke any response from those in authority, resulted in a chain of terrorist acts in the summer, 1999. It seems that this was the beginning not only of physical, but also of psychological attacks against Jews, which were designed to intimidate. I mean numerous explosions that occurred and that might have occurred outside and inside all Moscow synagogues, in the Moscow Jewish Theater "Shalom"; attempt upon the life of Jewish Children Center director Leopold Kaimovsky in the Moscow Choral Synagogue on July 13, 1999; several dummy reports about bombs in order to stimulate panic among Jews; synagogue pogroms in Novosibirsk (March, 1999) and Birobijan (May, 1999); the open appeal by TV in St. Petersburg (August, 1999) to expel Jews and Caucasian people; anti-Semitic slogans with threats on school walls in Orel and other cities; Mr. V. Chernomyrdin and numerous politicians and journalists anti-Semitic remarks about Jewish oligarchs; slaughters of rabbis and Jewish activists (Yaroslavl, Nizhny Novgorod); anti-Semitic campaigns in the mass media (N. Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, Samara, Penza, Orel, Petersburg, Pskov, etc.). The well-known writer Valentin Rasputin again joined the anti-Semitic campaign, as well as many others from the Russian Writers' Union in Moscow, which long ago became a nucleus of Russian nationalists. Stalin's grandson Eugene Dzhugashvili dragged out of naphthalene an old myth about Zionist conspiracy and threat to the entire world.

Simultaneously there were Nazi activities directed against Jews and Blacks in Chicago and Los Angeles, that Russian nationalists applauded. However the American government or the people does not tolerate these activities. In contrast the Russian government made only halfhearted attempts to catch the perpetrators of these crimes. Russian authorities did not catch anybody who organized bomb explosions and attacks (besides N. Krivchun, Moscow synagogue security guard detained him after his attack against L. Kaimovsky and then passed him to police), although character of all explosions and equipment were similar in Moscow. It seems that well organized group is behind these explosions and attempts on Jewish lives and property.

The number of extremist and chauvinistic organizations with open or hidden anti-Semitic ideology has increased in Russia. The main are: Russian National Unity (RNU), Movement in Support of Army, Military Industry and Science (which Iliukhin wanted to rename to Movement Against Kikes), LDPR (Zhirinovskiy Party), KPRF (Zuganov Party), World Russian People Council (Sobor), Congress of the Russian Communities, National-Bolshevik Party, "Otechestvo" ("Fatherland") of N. Kondratenko, "Pamyat" of D. Vasiliev, Russian All-People Union, Russian National Socialistic Party, Skinheads, Vened's Union, Cossacks Union, People's National Party, National Republican Party and many others. The UCSJ and MHG monitoring allows us today to alert the world that there are whole regions in Russia, where human

rights violations and anti-Semitism have become the policy of local authorities. I would like to name them hoping that Russian human rights activists will help to strengthen local democrats. Businessmen, especially from the West, should know what to expect in these regions of Russia. And it is useful for politicians to know who is who, because officials from these regions often visit the Western countries.

The first group of regions is Krasnodarsky and Stavropolsky krays, Volgograd and Pskov oblasts. The level of the national extremism reached here the highest point, and ultra-nationalism became a part of an official ideology, RNU takes here the strongest positions.

The next group – Vladimir, Tula, Voronezh and Kursk oblasts. Here Communists are dominant, and their policy encourages the strong nationalism. Ulyanovsk, Bryansk and Kemerovo oblasts. Leftists' radicals and communists are in power. They violate human rights, restrict economic and other freedoms, but directly do not support national extremist organizations. The restoration of Orthodox Bolshevism takes place here. The old nomenclatura in Orel oblast is in power, although it does not share any ideology. Human rights are broadly violated, the RNU continues to be very strong and influential. Primorsky kray, Bashkortostan and Kalmykia—the administration implant authoritarianism, clans support system without any visible ideology.

I would like to discredit the myth that the struggle against political extremism and anti-Semitism is the result of the lack of legislation. There are the laws in books, but they are not enforced. Of course, it's the positive step that Ministry of Justice developed and sent to the Duma in July 1999, the draft of the Anti-Extremism Law, but the Duma is not in a hurry to fix the date of hearings. The Russian Constitution may not be very prominent, but has quite clear laws "About mass media" and "About public associations", and finally the new Russian Criminal Code (articles 282—rising racial, ethnic and religious hatred; 205—terrorism; 105—murder and attempt upon life on the ground of ethnic and religious hatred) continue to be legislative basis of non-admission of extremism and national-chauvinism. As Mrs. Luidmila Alexeeva, chairperson of MHG, said, those who are supposed to protect the people, are, in fact, the perpetrators of crime against the people.

President Yeltsin, in his discussion with President Clinton in Cologne in June 1999, promised to fight anti-Semitism in Russia if President Clinton could have proved that it existed. The Union of Councils provided President Clinton with evidence of anti-Semitism and rights violations in Russia. Later the UCSJ provided Vice-President Gore with the same materials before his meeting with Prime-Minister Stepashin in July 1999. Russian leaders in their discussions with the foreign leaders, including Israeli Prime-Minister Barak, readily acknowledged anti-Semitic events, but refrained from public statements at home. The strong impression is that anti-Semitism has so deeply and widely penetrated all aspects of the society that Russian leaders are afraid to rebuff chauvinists-nationalists in order not to lose votes. The state anti-Semitism has merged with public (street) anti-Semitism.

From the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, anti-Semitism has become the biggest threat to Jewish physical existence. The mutual and the first time during many years' clear position of the Russian Jewish leaders indirectly supports this thesis. Many people are so accustomed to anti-Semitism, that they try not to notice it, as they often do not respond to contamination of air and water in their regions. The others do not want to irritate the authorities, because they are afraid that "it could be worse". But now many leaders led by V.Gusinsky, the RJC President, sharply said that the Russian Government showed

“impermissible indifference and open irresponsibility by turning the blind eye on the anti-Semitic escapades of individual politicians and whole parties” (Interfax, July 13, 1999). A. Shaevich, the chief Rabbi of Russia, strongly condemned attack on L.Kaimovsky, but before the investigation was over, he said that N. Krivchun acted alone. We are sure that the absence of the strong reaction of all the branches of authorities, including the court system, to the inspiration of inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred is a manifestation of state anti-Semitism. The new phenomenon is that anti-Semitism is openly declared as ideology of some parties and movements. The elucidation of parts of the Jewish blood became the certain component of the election campaigns in the country.

We hope that operating together and efficiently we do not allow an escalation of the violence, inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred in Russia, and by this we will promote the growth of democracy and market economy, and establish stable peace and agreement in the society.

Thank you.

**CHRONICLE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA
PREPARED BY UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS**

MAY 1998-AUGUST 1999

“This attack is the result of the general situation when such people as Makashov [a Communist Party parliamentarian who called for the death of the Jews in Russia] and Barkashov [leader of the neo-Nazi organization Russian National Unity] are not punished. They should sit next to this young man on the bench in court.”—*Rabbi Adolph Shaevich, Chief Rabbi of Russia, speaking about the synagogue stabbing on July 13, 1999.*

- 13 August 1999: Denis Usov, a Kupchino neighborhood deputy, journalist and antisemite is charged with inciting ethnic hatred. Kupchino distributed newspapers with extremist language by calling for the Russian people to rise up against non-Russian minorities.—*St. Petersburg Times.*
- 12 August 1999: A fake bomb is found near a synagogue on Spaso-Glinish-chevsky pereulok. The area was blocked off after an object resembling an explosive device was found in a garbage pail.—*Interfax.*
- 11 August 1999: Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the head Rabbi of Moscow, criticizes the Russian government for “not responding adequately” to the increase in antisemitism in Moscow and through out Russia. Goldschmidt claimed that Jews are concerned about the increase in antisemitism and the lack of government action.—*JTA.*
- 10 August 1999: The Jewish community in Russia expresses its concern over the recent reshuffling of government and the appointment of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister. The community is worried about the instability in the government, which could spread to the country itself.—*JTA.*
- 8 August 1999: Citizen’s Watch, a human rights group in St. Petersburg, accuses a city owned television station of airing programs that incite ethnic hatred and ultra-nationalistic views. The group claims that the station has hosted a series of antisemitic television shows and claims that the views expressed on the show are not those of a majority of the population.—*JTA.*
- 3 August 1999: During the popular St. Petersburg television talk show Sobitiya, a majority of viewers assert that they would physically take part in ethnic cleansing in their city. The program, which had Russian Nationalist Party leader and antisemite Nikolai Bondarik on the program, has come under fire for airing antisemitic shows on a city owned TV station.—*St. Petersburg Times.*
- 2 August 1999: Six Jewish graves in the central Russian town of Tomsk are defiled over the weekend. This is the latest in a series of attacks against Jewish synagogues that have occurred over the past few months. *Reuters.*
- 2 August 1999: During talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Russian President Boris Yeltsin condemns the recent increase of antisemitism in Russia.—*Reuters.*

- 1 August 1999: Viktor Chernomyrdin receives praise in the antisemitic *Zavtra* newspaper from Communist lawmaker Albert Makashov, Pamyat leader Dmitri Vasilyev and publisher of the Black Hundreds newspaper Alexander Shtilmark for making antisemitic statements the previous week.—*JTA*.
- 23 July–1 August 1999: In Yekaterinburg, a regional court overrules the decision of a lower court and cancelled a 400 ruble fine imposed on the local RNU for holding a demonstration in an unsanctioned area. Jewish leaders in the area urge authorities to protect them from antisemitic attacks. They claim that they had filed several complaints with the prosecutor's office but have received no response.—*Yekaterinburg Television Selection List*.
- 29 July 1999: Zinovy Kogan, the Chairman of the Confederation of Jewish Religious Communities in Russia, during an interview states that he felt the stabbing attack at the synagogue a few weeks ago was actually an attempt to set fire to the cultural center in the Choral synagogue. Kogan also states that members of the Jewish community in Moscow and throughout Russia were afraid because of the recent increase in antisemitic attacks.
- 29 July 1999: Mayor Yuri Luzhkov of Moscow, the first high-ranking official to condemn the previous week's attempted bombing of the Bolshaya Bronnaya synagogue, attends a service there to give thanks that a disaster was averted.—*JTA*.
- 29 July 1999: Laura Likhtman, an 18-year-old Israeli citizen, is kidnapped in the city of Nalchik. The kidnapers are demanding \$500,000 in ransom money. The Israeli government has promised to work to free the woman as soon as possible.—*Kabardina-Balkariya*.
- 28 July 1999: During an interview in Armenia, the former Prime Minister of Chechnya, Moldavi Udugov, makes antisemitic statements.—*Golos Armenii*.
- 28 July 1999: Mr. G. Khazanov, the President of the Jewish Community in Moscow, condemns the Russian government for not speaking out against the recent increase in antisemitism in Russia.—*Mezhdunarodnaya Evreyskaya Gazeta*.
- 28 July 1999: Sergey Stepashin, during a meeting with Jewish leaders in Washington, promised to 'eradicate' antisemitism. Jewish leaders are cautiously optimistic about his comments.—*JTA*.
- 28 July 1999: The Russian Jewish Congress issues three explanations for the recent increase in antisemitism in Russia. First, many Russian political figures have started using antisemitic slogans to gain support. Second, the indifference of Russian citizens and third, the unwillingness of the authorities to bring those guilty to trial.—*RFE/RL*.
- 26 July 1999: Rabbi Adolf Shayevich, the head rabbi of Russia, criticizes the Russian government for not taking action against growing antisemitism in the country and warned that unless perpetrators were arrested and punished, the attacks would continue.—*RIA*.
- 25 July 1999: A bomb is discovered inside the Bolshaya Bronnaya synagogue less than two weeks after a Jewish leader was stabbed. The bomb contained the equivalent of more than one pound of TNT, which could have killed many people who were in the building.—*JTA*.

- 22 July 1999: In an interview, Mikhail Kuzmin, the mayor of Stavropol, admitted to supporting the neo-Nazi RNU. When asked if he supports the party, he replied “I personally support it.”—*Vremya MN*.
- 19 July 1999: Viktor Chernomyrdin, former prime minister and Russian envoy to Kosovo, makes antisemitic remarks while discussing the possibility of his party, “Our Home Is Russia” joining a coalition with other moderate groups. He characterizes the recent fight between two Jewish media moguls as a fight between “two Jews” and states “it happens that two Jews are squabbling and the whole country has to watch this circus.”—*Washington Post*.
- 16 July 1999: Nikita Krivchun, the young man who stabbed the director of the Moscow Jewish Center, is charged with attempting to assassinate an individual motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred.—*ITAR-TASS*.
- 15 July 1999: The refusal of top Russian officials to speak out against the stabbing of a Jewish leader in Moscow’s Choral Synagogue is perceived by Jewish leaders as a “bad sign.” The Jewish community believes that politicians remain silence out of fear of antagonizing antisemitic voters in the upcoming elections.—*JTA*.
- 14 July 1999: After 20 months, the regional government of Bryansk finally registers a Reform synagogue. The Bryansk government had claimed that according to the 1997 Law on Religion, an organization has to prove it has been in Russia for at least 15 years in order to be registered and that the congregation could not do this.—*JTA*.
- 14 July 1999: Rabbi Adolf Shayeveich, the Chief Rabbi of Russia, states that the attack on Leopold Kaimovsky, the director of the Jewish Arts Centers, occurred because “the state is too weak to resist extremism.”—*Interfax*.
- 14 July 1999: The number of Jews leaving Russia has increased dramatically over the past year. Immigration to Israel is up 129% in the first six months of this year. The dramatic rise is attributed to the weak economy, the political situation and antisemitism.—*Associated Press*.
- 13 July 1999: A young man with a swastika painted on his chest enters the Choral Synagogue and stabs Leopold Kaymovsky, the director of the Jewish Cultural Center.—*Russian Public Television First Channel Network*.
- July 1, 1999: The head of the antisemitic Pamyat organization decides to run for mayor of Moscow. Dmitry Vasilev claims that Moscow is a capital for “ethnic Russians” and said people who live in the city must “respect its ways.”—*Interfax*.
- 30 June 1999: The Russian television show “Russian House” airs antisemitic statements for the third time. The talk show, which is supposed to focus on political and social issues, had an “expert” on who claimed that the Holocaust never place. In past shows, Jews were accused of being part of a conspiracy to take over the world and there was a call for Kosher food to be sold at separate stores.—*JTA*.
- 26 June 1999: A poll taken by the Public Opinion Foundation finds that a significant number of Russian are very nationalistic. The poll states that 20% of the population believes in the right of the “titular ethnic group” while 38% of Russians believe Russia should only accept “Russian” refugees and 35% said a candidate’s nationality should be examined in appointments.—*Izvestiya*.

- 23 June 1999: Izvestiya reports that although the Russian President's Commission on Countering Political Extremism is supposed to examine how judicial and law enforcement bodies prevent political extremism, there has been only one conviction out of twenty-five cases brought under article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code.—*Izvestiya*.
- 22 June 1999: In Sverdlovsk Oblast, the local RNU tries to portray the race for governor as a contest between “a true Russian patriot” Governor Eduard Rossel and “an abettor of global Zionism” Yekaterinburg mayor Arkady Chernetsky, who is Jewish. Authorities do little as the local RNU puts up propaganda posters for the governor and the local newspaper printed an article called “Heil Rossel!”—*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*.
- 21 June 1999: Lt. Sergei Fishman, a Jewish officer in the Russian army, is freed from Chechnya after being kidnapped near his garrison last December. Fishman claims that his Chechan captors singled him out for torture because he is Jewish.—*JTA*.
- 20 June 1999: A group of about 100 radical nationalists from the National Front movement, the People's National Party and the Movement “For Belief and the Fatherland,” rallies in Moscow to demand the annulment of Article 282 of the Russian criminal code. Article 282 makes it against the law to “incite racial or ethnic discord.”
- 10 June 1999: The RNU holds a regional conference in the city of Tver. The group has become much more popular there ever since the economic crisis began last August.—*EastWest Institute*.
- 8 June 1999: 99 U.S. Senators send a letter to Russian President Boris Yeltsin threatening to cut off economic and political support for Russia unless it confronts the problem of antisemitism in the country.—*JTA*.
- 7 June 1999: The city of Moscow steps up its fight against antisemitism by banning the use of Nazi symbols. The local police is given the power to decide what constitutes a Nazi symbol and the city legislature passes a law prohibiting the display of Nazi symbols.—*Express-Chronicle*.
- 2 June 1999: In Karelia, the regional Justice Ministry registers a youth organization connected with the RNU. The group “Russian Knights” claims they bring together Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian teenagers for “paramilitary” sports camp.—*RFE/RL*.
- 1 June 1999: The Jewish Agency reports that immigration by Russian Jews to Israel has increased by 116% in the first quarter of 1999. The organization cited antisemitism as one of the major reasons for this increase. *The Moscow Times*.
- June 1999: Russian officials approve a new antisemitic textbook to teach 20th century history at the university level. The textbook claims that Jews started as “artisans” and rose to positions of dominance in the financial world and press and almost totally ignores policies and acts that were taken against Jews in the 20th century.—*Mezhdunarodnaya Evreyskaya Gazeta*.
- June 1999: The Jewish community in Ulyanovsk has its attempts to gain ownership to one of three preserved buildings of the city's synagogue rejected by the city government. The local government tried to compensate the Jewish community by offering them the home of the former Town Governor of Simbirsk, but the community cannot afford the rent or cost of renovating this building.—*Mezhdunarodnaya Evreyskaya Gazeta*.

- 21 May 1999: The Vice Speaker of the Federation Council and head of the Moscow city Duma Vladimir Platonov tries to pass legislation that would move responsibility in certain ethnic violation cases to the police and that they would only use monetary fines as punishment.—*Kommersant Daily*.
- 20 May 1999: Police in Moscow arrest 19 members of the antisemitic organization “Pamyat.” They had held an unsanctioned demonstration to commemorate the birthday of Russia’s last Tsar, Nicholas II.— *The Moscow Times*.
- 19 May 1999: Librarian of Congress James Billington, a leading expert on Russia, states that the Russian reaction to the bombing of Yugoslavia has increased the chances that Russia would turn into a fascist dictatorship based on, “old Communists joining new fascists to produce something like a Russian Milosevic.”—*RFE/RL*.
- 18 May 1999: A bomb is discovered and defused in the Shalom Jewish Theater in Moscow. Police state that the bomb was extremely powerful and could have resulted in many deaths if it had exploded. The building also houses the Russian VAAD.— *Kommersant* and *JTA*.
- 17 May 1999: RNU picketers in Yekaterinburg hold another in a long series of demonstrations, but for the first time they are arrested. The 30 RNU activists who were arrested were set free soon afterwards.—*Radio Rossi*.
- 9 May 1999: Communist MP General Albert Makashov urges supporters at a march in Moscow to attack Pavel Lobkov, a television reporter covering the event. Mr. Lobkov barely manages to escape a serious beating. Makashov told TV reporters soon afterwards, “He is not Lobkov, but Lobkovich,” implying that he is Jewish.—*Ren TV*.
- 6 May 1999: A synagogue is vandalized twice over the course of a few days in the remote Siberian region of Birobizhan (The Jewish Autonomous Region). In the first attack a menorah is broken and in the second attack a window is shattered and a metal Star of David torn off the wall. The vandals use stones in the courtyard to form swastikas and the words “Get out” on the ground.—*The Moscow Times*.
- 6 May 1999: Leaflets are distributed in Kirov containing a photograph of Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov and the head of the Russian Jewish Congress Vladimir Gusinsky, both wearing yarmulkes. Under the photograph, the anonymous writer wrote that Luzhkov’s real name was Katz and wrote with indignation, “And this man wants to be Russian president!”—*Izvestiya*.
- 1 May 1999: Bombs explode near two Moscow synagogues. Russia’s Chief Rabbi Adolf Shayeveich states that the bombings were one more warning to Russian Jews and that they were probably connected to the recent banning of RNU activity in Moscow. He sharply criticizes Russian law enforcement agencies for their “indifference to manifestations of antisemitism.” —*Interfax*.
- 1 May, 1999: The influential pro-Communist newspaper *Zavtra* writes that if Ehud Barak wins the forthcoming Israeli elections, “Israeli agents will be activated in Russia within the framework both of the parliamentary and of the presidential election campaigns.” —*Zavtra*.
- 24 April 1999: A bomb goes off near the US consulate in Yekaterinburg, shattering its windows. Local officials believe that members of the Communist Party or the RNU, who have been picketing the consulate in protest of NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia, may be responsible.—*NTV*.

- 16 April 1999: After a two month long investigation, a report by the Ministry of Justice absolves the Communist Party of responsibility for the antisemitic remarks of two of its members, General Albert Makashov and Viktor Ilyukhin.—*Agence France Presse*.
- 9 April 1999: Yevgeny Lukin, a former FSB (a successor to the KGB) official and a well known antisemite, is appointed head of Saint Petersburg's main television station. Mr. Lukin is best known for a historical novel he wrote in 1996 entitled "No Blood on the Butcher's Hands" which blamed Jews for the Bolshevik Revolution and the atrocities that followed.—*St. Petersburg Times*.
- 6 April 1999: Members of the neo-Nazi RNU organization demonstrate for two hours in Yekaterinburg in protest of Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov's decision to ban RNU activity in Moscow. In contrast to Moscow, Yekaterinburg authorities give official permission to the RNU to demonstrate and shout slogans like "Send Luzhkov to Israel."—*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*.
- 31 March 1999: A leftist organization called "Skif" claims responsibility for the shots fired at the US embassy in Moscow on March 28th. The group was founded in honor of the leading antisemite in the Russian Orthodox Church, the late Metropolitan Ioann of Saint Petersburg and Ladoga.—*RFE/RL Newslines*.
- 28 March 1999: Russian extremists, including members of the RNU, rally around the US embassy to protest the bombing of Yugoslavia chanting, "Russia is for Russians, Moscow is for Muscovites!" and "We need an American Negro. We will kill him. We'll make cigarette butts out of him!"—*Moscow Center Television*.
- 25 March 1999: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reports that the RNU is becoming more active in Voronezh. The Voronezh Regional Congress of the Intelligentsia complained that swastikas and RNU leaflets have been spread all over the city, RNU activists openly march in the streets with their swastika arm bands in plain sight, and local law enforcement agents have done almost nothing to stop them.—*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*.
- 23 March 1999: The State Duma again votes not to censure General Albert Makashov for his most recent antisemitic statements in Novochoerkassk.—*RFE/RL Newslines*.
- 22 March 1999: A new extremist organization, the Empire Party of Russia (EPR), holds its founding congress in Moscow. The head of the Tyumen branch of the party states that the EPR would follow the example of the pre-Revolutionary "Black Hundreds" and would save Russia from spiritual enslavement and "unclean Yid hirelings."—*Express Khronika*.
- 21 March 1999: Vandals spray antisemitic graffiti on the walls of a public school in Orel which rents space to the local Jewish community for Hebrew classes. After seeing slogans like "Kill a Jew" on the walls of the school, Jewish leaders say that they are afraid to continue holding classes there.—*JTA*.
- 17 March 1999: Speaking to a crowd of 50, 000 supporters, Aslan Maskhadov, the president of the breakaway Russian republic of Chechnya, blames "international Zionist centers" for trying to topple him from power. —*JTA*.

- 17 March 1999: Rostov Oblast Prosecutor General Sergei Ustinov refuses to bring charges against General Albert Makashov for his antisemitic comments on February 20th in Novocherkassk. During his speech at a meeting of the “Movement to Support the Army,” General Makashov suggested that the name of the organization should be changed to “Movement Against Yids.”—*RFE/RL Newslines*.
- 16 March 1999: High ranking Communist Party deputy Viktor Ilyukhin gives a radio interview in which he says that the swastika is an ancient Russian symbol and that because Yeltsin’s top aides were mostly Jewish, they have pursued policies that have led to “genocide” against the Russian people.—*Radio Rossii Network*.
- 8 March 1999: A synagogue is vandalized in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk. Vandals spray the walls with swastikas and the symbol of the fascist group RNU, which resembles a swastika combined with a cross. Vandals also destroy the furniture and tore the holy books to pieces. Local police play down the significance of the crime, calling it a childish prank. The RNU is reportedly active in the Novosibirsk region, which is home to 10,000 Jews.—*JTA*.
- 28 February 1999: The Voronezh city administration follow the advice of the local chief of the Interior Ministry, General Dementiev, and cancel a permit allowing the RNU to hold a demonstration in the city’s central Petrovsky Square. A large police force gather on the day of the planned event to prevent the RNU from assembling. Despite this, RNU members in Voronezh, wearing full uniform decorated with swastikas, are not prevented from distributing leaflets and their newspaper “Russian Order” only a ten minute walk from the square. —*EWI Russian Regional Report*.
- 25 February 1999: The Voronezh city administration proposes that regional authorities outlaw the production, distribution, and display of Nazi and other extremist symbols. The bill is designed to prevent RNU symbols, which despite their similarity to Nazi symbols, are claimed to be an ancient Slavic symbol of “God’s presence on Earth” by RNU leaders.—*EWI Russian Regional Report*, Vol.4, No.8, March 4, 1999.—*Note*: The EWI Russian Regional Report reported that the recent actions of Voronezh city authorities are a break from their record of being a stronghold for the RNU. In 1997, members of the RNU joined local police units in patrolling the streets of Voronezh. Also in 1997, the RNU was allowed to hold a conference in the Oblast Duma building. RNU propaganda is visible all over the city. It remains to be seen if this most recent action against the RNU is a serious break from past practices.
- 25 February 1998: Moscow prosecutor Sergei Gerasimov submits a proposed law that would simplify the prosecution of individuals who use fascist or fascist-like symbols. The proposed law would bypass reluctant judges and allow police chiefs to punish offenders directly with heavy fines. The existing law, which prohibits the use of banners, pins, uniforms, greetings, gestures, symbols and swastikas used in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, has not been effective, according to a senior prosecutor at the Moscow’s prosecutor’s office.—*Moscow Times*.
- 24 February 1999: The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hears testimony from American Jewish leaders about the state of antisemitism in Russia. The testimony points to groups such as the RNU, which has been allowed to register branches in more than a dozen regional cities. “All this pathetic scapegoating certainly casts a pall over our relations with Russia,” says Senator Joseph Biden, a Democrat from Delaware.—*Associated Press*.

- 24 February 1999: General Albert Makashov again makes antisemitic statements in a speech delivered to an audience of more than 2,000 in Novochoerkassk. “Jews are brave. They are so brave because we are sleeping, because none of us has yet knocked on their door and pissed in their windows,” says Makashov. Makashov also suggested renaming his group, “Movement in Support of the Army,” to “Movement against the Yids.” —*Jewish Telegraph Agency*.
- February 1999: Borovichi, Russia has become a center of a new wave of increasing antisemitism in rural Russia. Local Jewish leaders appealed to international monitoring groups to help defend them against an antisemitic campaign orchestrated by the RNU. Jewish graves have been desecrated, the city has been covered with antisemitic posters, and Jews have received mailed death threats. The campaign against the city’s 500 Jewish residents began one year ago when a local fascist group, “Myortvaya Voda,” sponsored antisemitic television ads, calling for the good Christians of Borovichi to kill a Jew a day. Local RNU members, whose meetings with local Cossack leaders and military recruiters have been featured on local television, are now organizing the recent wave of activities. Uniformed RNU leaders are allowed to distribute their propaganda and enlist young members at local schools.—*Union of Councils Press Release and Action Alert*, February 17, 1999.
- In response, The Borovichi Duma passed a resolution banning the RNU from putting up posters, wearing swastikas, holding meetings or demonstrations, or distributing propaganda.—*Union of Councils Press Release*, February 23, 1999.
- On February 14th, Borovichi police arrested seven RNU members who were distributing leaflets at a meeting. Local television reported that they were released without being charged. If the investigation into the nature of their propaganda concludes that it contains antisemitic content, the punishment will be a fine equivalent to \$5.—*Union of Councils Press Release*, February 23, 1999.
- 21 February 1999: During a last minute press conference, NBP leader Edward Limonov claims that Moscow police’s Criminal Investigation Branch raided the group’s basement headquarters. According to Limonov, several television crews followed the police, and nine members were briefly detained. A notice from the fire department said the headquarters were dangerously littered “with print materials, inflammable trash and had too many wooden partitions.” —*Moscow Times*, February 23, 1999 .
- 15 February 1999: Russia’s Justice Ministry announces an investigation of the Communist Party as part of it’s crackdown on extremism. According to a ministry spokeswoman, the investigation will try to establish whether or not the party’s activities comply with the aims of its founding charter and with Russian legislation.—*Reuters*.
- 11 February 1999: A Moscow city court decision supports Mayor Yuri Luzhkov’s move to ban the RNU from holding a congress in the city in December 1998. The court rules that RNU members were likely to provoke violence in the city. The RNU had planned to hold the meeting in the Izmailovo Sports Complex on Dec. 19 and expected 5,000 members to attend.—*Moscow Times*, February 12, 1999.
- 4 February 1999: The Moscow Prosecutor’s office reports that police arrested and charged a neo-Nazi who appeared on a videotape of a burning synagogue. However, the tape was faked, and does not connect the individual to recent attacks on Moscow synagogues.—*Moscow Times*, February 5, 1999.

- 4 February 1999: Moscow's police chief fires two senior officers for failing to stop a weekend march of RNU members. The officers had previously stated that they had no legal grounds for preventing the march, and were shown on television apologizing to some RNU members on the day of the march for having briefly detaining them.—*Reuters*.
- 31 January 1999: Approximately 150 RNU members march in a column in northern Moscow. The march receives repeated television coverage for several days after. During the march members distributed their newspaper, "Russian Order." Mayor Yuri Luzhkov harshly criticizes city police for their failure to prevent the march.—*Moscow Tribune*, February 3, 1999.
- 30 January 1999: A group of NBP members, led by Edward Limonov, disrupt a meeting of the Congress of Democratic Reformers, shouting slogans glorifying Stalin, Beria, and Dzerzhinsky.—*Moscow Tribune*, February 3, 1999.
- 30 December 1998: The FSB drops its criminal investigation into some of Russia's most outspoken extremist politicians. The investigation was aimed at remarks made by Communist Duma deputy Albert Makashov, NBP leader Edward Limonov, and radical communist activist Victor Anpilov, among others. The decision to drop the investigation comes after linguists, historians and specialists in etymology and psychology from the Russian Academy of Sciences concluded that the video footage they viewed of the statements did not contain evidence of criminal activity.—*Agence France Presse*.
- 21 December 1998: President Yeltsin's chief of staff, Nikolai Bordyuzha, gathers Russia's top security and defense ministers to discuss what the Kremlin has called a surge of antisemitism and extremism. Bordyuzha expresses outrage over the amount of "hardcore antisemitic literature" being sold "perfectly legally" on the streets of Moscow.—*Reuters*.
- 22 November 1998: The local Nizhny Novgorod television station Seti-NN broadcasts a collection of documentaries on the RNU prepared by journalists in Kstovo, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast. The broadcast includes statements by Kstovo Mayor Vyachelsav Bolyak, who says he would allow RNU members to form a volunteer brigade to assist police in law enforcement activities, and the local FSB chief, Sergei Lvov, who describes the fascist organization as "normal young men who want to see more public order in the city" and says he would be willing to cooperate with the RNU. However, the day after the broadcast, Mayor Bolyak condemns Seti-NN for inaccurately citing his words and denies collaboration with the RNU. The Justice Ministry has begun an investigation of Bolyak's relationship with the RNU, particularly why the mayor allegedly allowed the RNU access to state owned property.—*EWI Russian Regional Report*, Internet Edition, Vol. 3, No. 50, December 17, 1998.
- 16 December 1998: The Moscow prosecutor's office rejects an appeal by RNU leader Alexander Barkashov, demanding that the ban on the RNU's congress in Moscow be overturned, and that criminal charges be brought against Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. The prosecutor's office cites numerous requests by Moscow citizens to the city government to not allow the congress to take place in Moscow. While analysts point to the viable legal claim of the RNU, the decision of the Moscow prosecutor is based on the refusal of the Ministry of Justice to legally register the group.—*Vremya*, December 17, 1998.

- 16 December 1998: Alexander Barkashov, leader of the RNU, says that if the ban on his group's conference was not overturned that he would hold a meeting in the spring of 'hundreds of thousands of young men' who are 'ready to defend their civil rights and freedoms at any price.'—*Jewish Telegraph Agency*.
- 15 December 1998: The Moscow city administration denies the RNU permission to hold its congress in the capital.—*Reuters*, December 16, 1998.
- 24 November 1998: The nationalist group Black Hundreds is threatened with possible criminal charges for staging a small antisemitic rally outside the State Duma on the same day Galina Starovoitova was buried. The Moscow prosecutor's office states that it has begun an investigation into the group for "inciting national, racial or religious enmity." Approximately 40 people participate in the rally.—*Moscow Times*, November 28, 1998.
- 16 October 1998: According to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, an increasing number of servicemen in Rostov have been applying for RNU membership, spurred by the government's failure to provide adequate housing and cuts in the Interior Ministry's forces. The article quotes an Interior Ministry colonel as saying that everybody, from special forces personnel to policemen, is joining the RNU.—*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*.
- 9 July 1998: In a meeting with the Minister of Justice, Pavel Krasheninikov, President Yeltsin expresses concern about local authorities registering groups like the RNU, which is registered in 25 regions. Krasheninikov says that Russian legislators need to establish a legal definition of fascism, as only this can help "stop the threat of fascism in Russia." *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, July 13, 1998.
- June 1998: A Stavropol Krai court rules that journalist Galina Tuz libeled the RNU in an article in the newspaper *Stavropolskaya Pravda* for claiming that the RNU "appears in essence to be a fascist organization" and "pursues a fascist ideology." The court orders the paper's editorial office to pay a fee and publish an apology. Tuz appeals the court's decision, based on the fact that the arguments in her defense were ignored in court and that both Stavropol public opinion and the court's "personal convictions" were partial to the RNU.—*RFE/RL Newslines*.
- 22 June 1998: President Boris Yeltsin declares that neo-Nazism is a growing threat in Russia and its spread must be halted. The statement is made on the 57th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Russia. "I am worried that far from everyone feels how real the threat of extremism is in Russia, but it is there and is very dangerous." said Yeltsin on a nationwide radio address. "Our common duty to the memory of the victims of Nazism is not to let the 'plague of the 20th century be revived.'"—*Reuters*.
- 29 May 1998: Skinheads in St. Petersburg attack two groups of Indian students in two separate incidents. The students are able to identify their attackers, but police claim the attack and threatening behavior by the skinheads was not substantial enough to warrant a charge. The seven skinheads were carrying Russian, German and Nazi flags when they taunted and harassed the students. One student sustained minor injuries during the attack.—*St. Petersburg Times*, June 5, 1998.
- 11 May 1998: A rabbi is badly beaten by two skinheads in a Moscow subway station. The skinheads reportedly shout antisemitic threats before attacking Rabbi Yitzhak Lifshitz, 26. The assailants, ages 21 and 17, are immediately arrested by police.—*Jewish Telegraph Agency*.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the
**Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
(CSCE).**

★ ★ ★

This publication is intended to inform interested individuals and organizations about developments within and among the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

★ ★ ★

The CSCE publishes transcripts of official hearings held before the Commission, analyses of developments in the OSCE, and other periodic documents deemed relevant to the region. All CSCE publications may be freely reproduced, with appropriate credit, in any form. The CSCE encourages the widest possible dissemination of its publications.

★ ★ ★

**For a listing of all available CSCE documents,
to be placed on or deleted from the CSCE mailing list,
or to request additional copies, please contact:**

**CSCE
234 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6460
Voice: (202)225-1901 FAX: (202) 226-4199
E-mail: CSCE @ MAIL.HOUSE.GOV**

★ ★ ★

Visit our site on the World Wide Web at

<http://www.house.gov/csce/>

for immediate access to our electronic documents, press releases, and other information about the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.