

URALS FEDERAL DISTRICT**CHELYABINSK OBLAST**

Estimated Jewish Population: 10,000 in the city of Chelyabinsk.¹

Highlights from the Previous Report

Reportedly, antisemitic slogans and swastikas are common in Chelyabinsk, antisemitic literature is easily available, including "Mein Kampf" and RNU literature, and the RNU trains young people in a local gymnasium. Allegedly, the local authorities actively persecuted Mormons, breaking up a worship service, interrogating and threatening missionaries, and denying missionaries visas.

Extremist Activity

In April 2000, a newspaper reported that the Molniya Watch Factory in Chelyabinsk was manufacturing pocket watches with swastika decorations.² However, in a sign of the factory management's true entrepreneurial spirit, in October 2000 a newspaper reported that the Molniya factory, "will become the first in the world to begin producing clocks for Orthodox Jews, with the hands moving from right to left."³

Antisemitic Publishing

The antisemitic newspaper *Russky Dom* ("Russian House," not to be confused with the Moscow antisemitic publication of the same name) is published in Magnitogorsk. A January 21, 2000 article included the following attack on Jews:

It is so strange, even painful, to hear Jewish people say that they are being oppressed in Russia, that they are hated and being pressed to get out of the country. This is garbage! There is no antisemitism in Russia... The Jews were the first to rush to devour the poor Russian nation after those peasants got free. They replaced those who oppressed the peasants. They were even worse than the landowners, who were bad at maintaining the people but did not try to ruin the peasants and exhaust them. A similar story happened in the USA where Jewish money caused all the black people to submit just when they got free from slavery.⁴

Possible Antisemitism

Antisemitic Publisher
Viktor Korchagin

A local human rights NGO reports that in February 1999, charges of inciting ethnic hatred were brought against the editor of the newspaper *Russkie Istiny*, G. Kotlyarov.⁵ It is not known which ethnic group or groups were attacked in the article.

On July 26, 2000 Gennady Rubin, the leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch community in Magnitogorsk, was arrested on possibly bogus charges of embezzlement. Mr. Rubin claimed that his arrest was motivated by a rival businessman with close ties to the local FSB, which allegedly used the threat of arrest to pressure Mr. Rubin and his business partners to give up control over company shares. The prosecutor in charge of the

case allegedly remarked, "Good, we need a Caucasian for this case" when one of Mr. Rubin's partners, a Moslem from the Caucasus, was arrested too.⁶

Religious Persecution

On April 16, 2000 police reportedly broke up a religious meeting of 100 deaf Jehovah's Witnesses in Chelyabinsk, allegedly on the orders of the local Commissioner for Human Rights, Yekaterina Gorina. On July 19, 2000 a local television news program reportedly showed the governor of Chelyabinsk Oblast ordering Ms. Gorina to "liquidate this infection" (Jehovah's Witnesses). A reporter was then shown standing in front of a sign reading "No Foreigners Permitted" and allegedly told the audience, "Foreigners are categorically prohibited from entering the closed city of Ozyorsk. But their ideas, alien to Russians, Russian culture and traditions, are already there without any special permission."⁷

KHANTY-MANSY AUTONOMOUS OKRUG

Xenophobia

A local newspaper reported in February 2000 that according to a poll of residents of the city of Surgut, 42% of respondents hold nationalistic views.⁸

KURGAN OBLAST

Extremist Activity

According to For Fair Elections, a local human rights NGO:

Nationalism is practically unopposed. An example of this is the activity of the Russian National Cultural Autonomy of Kurgan Oblast, headed by the ataman of the Kurgan Association of the Siberian Cossack Host, V. G. Popov. In a report presented at a meeting of the Consultative Council on Problems of Ethnic Relations under the regional administration entitled "On Goals, Tasks and Activities," that organization included declarations aimed at inciting ethnic hatred—one of the stated main tasks of the organization is the struggle against world Zionism. RNU actions are not met with any condemnation or other actions from the authorities. Swastikas and the RNU's nationalistic slogans can be seen on fences near the government building.⁹

During a meeting in Moscow of the antisemitic party the Russian All-Peoples Union in February 2000, A. Sevastyanov from Kurgan told his fellow delegates that 200 people in the region are members of the party. Other delegates made statements of support for Jorg Haider and condemnations of "Russophobic cosmopolitanism" ("cosmopolitan" is a Stalin era official code word for Jew).¹⁰

Xenophobia

According to For Fair Elections:

The spirit of nationalism is literally fed by the regional media. Kurgan television transmits insulting references against people from the Caucasus, spoken on a day to day level. In order to create the impression that all crime is connected to people from the Caucasus and Moslems, the lexical stamps of 'criminals of Caucasian national-

ity' and 'Islamic terrorists' are widely used, notwithstanding the special recommendation of the Federal Russian Information Center not to use those terms.¹¹

When residents of a predominantly Bashkir village requested permission to start teaching the Bashkir language in local schools, a representative of the regional administration allegedly asked, "What, do you want to create a second Chechnya here?"¹²

Religious Persecution

According to For Fair Elections, at a meeting of the Public-Consultative Council of the city administration of Shadrinsk, the deacon of the Russian Orthodox Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral allegedly called for the authorities to act against:

The wave of foreign missionaries, Protestants, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses and others, who often act against Orthodoxy, damage Russian culture, propagandize alien views and implant a harmful ideology. He called upon the authorities to cooperate only with Christian and Moslem organizations.

Reportedly, every Moslem organization which tried to register in the region in 1999 was denied, sometimes for totally groundless reasons.¹³

SVERDLOVSK OBLAST

Estimated Jewish Population: 15,000 in Yekaterinburg.¹⁴

Highlights from the Previous Report

There was some open cooperation between police and the RNU as late as 1997, but that has reportedly ceased. One police officer and four of his fellow RNU members were put on trial for raiding the homes of suspected drug dealers and robbing them. A judge gave them lenient sentences and praised their "socially useful work." The Yekaterinburg city authorities conducted a steadily escalating crackdown against the RNU, fining and arresting RNU members for holding unsanctioned demonstrations. The youth wing of the RNU, Kolovrat, was denied registration and "liquidated" (disbanded). However, a higher court annulled a fine against the RNU's leader.

Other antisemitic groups operating in Yekaterinburg reportedly include: the Congress of Russian Communities, the Russian Union, the Russian National Union, the Fatherland Society of Russian Culture, and the Russian All-Peoples Union, which publishes an antisemitic newspaper. The editor of this paper reportedly requested that the city administration provide him with a list of addresses of Jewish organizations in the city.

A local newspaper published an article warning the mayor of Yekaterinburg, who is Jewish, not to run for governor, because that would incite antisemitism. Copies of "Mein Kampf" were openly sold in the city's main square. The local Russian Orthodox bishop, Nikon, allied himself with the RNU, which he used as a security service, and made national headlines by publicly burning a pile of books written by liberal Russian Orthodox theologians. He was removed from office because of abuse of office and a sex scandal. The Pentecostal New Life Church was persecuted by RNU activists, investigated at the request of a local parliamentarian, and defamed as a "sect" by the official local Russian

Orthodox newspaper, along with Baptists, Mormons, Seventh Day Activists and Jehovah's Witnesses. A bomb exploded near the US Consulate soon after protests by the RNU and local communists against the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. A representative of the Russian Communist Workers Party allegedly arrived at the scene soon after the bombing and praised the act of terrorism.

Extremist Activity

In January 2000, the local RNU was charged with inciting ethnic hatred by the City Prosecutor of Yekaterinburg.¹⁵

After being struck off the ballot in a controversial decision in his home city of Samara, KPRF MP General Albert Makashov ran for a State Duma seat in the Verkh-Issetsk electoral district of Yekaterinburg. In January 2000, the general was quoted as saying about "the Jewish question," "If Kirienko, Chubays and Gaydar are Semites, then I am an antisemite. But simple, honest Jews from Sverdlovsk have nothing to fear from General Makashov."¹⁶ In March 2000, RTR Television, a national television station generally hostile towards the KPRF, reported that KPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov sat next to General Makashov during an election rally in Yekaterinburg. The journalist commented that Mr. Zyuganov was drawing closer to people like General Makashov in order to capture the radical nationalist vote.¹⁷ Later in March, General Makashov lost the race, gaining slightly more than 10% of the vote.¹⁸

A small number of extremist monarchists, neo-Nazis and Cossacks gather at the site of the murder of Tsar Nicholas II, who was declared a saint in 2000 by the Russian Orthodox Church. The extremists reportedly hand out literature blaming Jews for the "ritual murder" of Tsar Nicholas and one extremist told a reporter that local Jews plan to capture Christian children, drink their blood, and eat them "like shish kebab." When asked what he thinks of the possibility that Tsar Nicholas was ritually murdered by Jews, the local Russian Orthodox priest in charge of the site was quoted as saying:

I can say that many people, Russian Orthodox people, figure it that way— that it was a ritual murder. I can't say whether it was a ritual murder or not. I know very little about ritual murders and the rituals of other faiths generally.¹⁹

Antisemitism

In December 1999, a local workers collective protested the use of antisemitic propaganda against mayoral candidate Semyon Spektor.²⁰ In March 2000, a local representative of the Russian Orthodox church criticized the Yekaterinburg authorities for allocating land for a new synagogue, calling it discrimination against the Russian Orthodox Church. However, as a local news agency pointed out, several Russian Orthodox churches have been rebuilt and returned in the last decade in the city, and while Russian Orthodox cemeteries "have not been touched," apartment buildings and a park were built on top of a Jewish cemetery on Blyukher Street.²¹

In June 2000, a local newspaper reported that local businessman Nikolai Yesipov had been beaten on one of the city's main streets on June 14, 2000 because he is Jewish.²²

In October 2000, a newspaper reported that in Pervo-Uralsk, impoverished elderly Jews refused to visit a Jewish soup kitchen, fearing that this would identify them as Jews.²³

Antisemitic Media

On January 28, 2000 the local newspaper *Vechernie Vedomosti iz Yekaterinburga* reportedly published an antisemitic article emphasizing the Jewish origins of three Russian politicians. The head of a local NGO accused General Albert Makashov of being behind the publication.²⁴ The head of the Jewish National Autonomy, Mikhail Oshtrakh was quoted expressing his concern that one of the founders of the paper, which has published other antisemitic articles in the past, is also the head of the regional Department of the Press and Media.²⁵

Xenophobia

In September 2000, around 30 young people armed with bats attacked a camp of migrant Roma (Gypsy) workers. Two Roma were hospitalized. A criminal case was started, but no arrests were made.²⁶

Religious Persecution

In March 2000, the local newspaper *Uralskaya Zhizn* was charged with inciting religious hatred by the federal Ministry of the Press for publishing articles attacking minority faiths. A spokesman for the local Russian Orthodox diocese criticized the decision, pointing out that 60 "sects" were operating in the region.²⁷ Often in Russia, world recognized religious groups like Baptists and Mormons are lumped together with dangerous cults, such as Aum Shirikyō, under the broad term "sect." For example, in May the local Russian Orthodox newspaper *Pravoslavnaya Gazeta* warned that "sects" such as the Mormons and "other wolves in sheep's clothing" were threatening the region.²⁸ In June, the same newspaper reported that representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church had met with local police officials to discuss their "approach to un-canonical gangs."²⁹

TYUMEN OBLAST

Estimated Jewish Population: 1,500.³⁰

Official Antisemitism

According to local Jewish activists, although Tyumen has traditionally been a tolerant place, antisemitism is rising in the region. Allegedly, Leonid Roketsky, the regional governor publicly declared that there is a Jewish conspiracy in the city and that Jews have taken all important positions in their desire for control. Antisemitic graffiti is now common, whereas before it was non-existent.³¹

Antisemitic Publishing

The newspaper *Pravda Segodnya*, which has a circulation of 5,000, published articles which accused Jews of inventing fascism and trying to control the world, and called the Jewish holiday of Purim a bloody festival.³²



Tyumen Governor
Leonid Roketsky

In March 2000, a local newspaper reported that the local antisemitic newspaper *Pravda Tyumeni* had reprinted the antisemitic forgery "Catechism of a Jew in the USSR" (a Soviet version of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion") and printed an article defending the wife of Governor Roketsky against what it called a "Jewish conspiracy."³³ In September 2000, a newspaper reported that charges against *Pravda Tyumeni* for inciting ethnic hatred had been dropped, but that another newspaper, *Yamskaya Sloboda*, was facing the same charges for an antisemitic article entitled "Tyumen Fascism."³⁴ On May 17, 2000 that newspaper printed an article which read, "Fascism is a truly people's regime."³⁵

Religious Persecution

According to Keston News Service, the region adopted in 1995 a restrictive law "On the Missionary Activity of Foreign Religious Missions" which allows foreign missionaries a maximum period of one year to conduct missionary activities once they are registered and mandates a fine of 100 times the minimum monthly wage for unregistered missionary activity. In addition, the regional government must give its permission for any missionary activity to be conducted in religious or public buildings. Although one official was quoted by Keston as saying that this law was no longer in force, having been superseded by the federal law on religion in 1997, another official asserted that it still could be used against "a mission of an alien religion."³⁶

ENDNOTES FOR URALS FEDERAL DISTRICT

- ¹ JTA, October 5, 2000.
- ² *Tverskaya*, April 26, 2000.
- ³ *Kommersant*, October 27, 2000.
- ⁴ *Russky Dom*, January 21, 2000.
- ⁵ The Chelyabinsk Regional Public Committee for Russian Reforms, "Human Rights in the Regions of the Russian Federation: 1999," Moscow Helsinki Group, Volume 3, 394.
- ⁶ JTA, July 30, 2000; UCSJ sources.
- ⁷ "Intervention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia: OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues Warsaw, Poland October 17-27, 2000," Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia.
- ⁸ *Vesti STS*, February 26, 2000.
- ⁹ For Fair Elections, "Human Rights in the Regions of the Russian Federation: 1999," Moscow Helsinki Group, Volume 2, 136.
- ¹⁰ Partinform, February 9, 2000. Posted on the Panorama list-serv, February 14, 2000.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid, 149.
- ¹³ Ibid, 129.
- ¹⁴ JTA, October 5, 2000.
- ¹⁵ APN, January 11, 2000.
- ¹⁶ Region-Inform, January 28, 2000.
- ¹⁷ RTR TV, March 19, 2000.
- ¹⁸ ITAR-TASS, March 27, 2000.
- ¹⁹ *The Jerusalem Report*, August 28, 2000.
- ²⁰ Region-Inform, December 9, 1999.
- ²¹ Region-Inform, March 15, 2000.
- ²² *Vechernie Vedomosti iz Yekaterinburga*, June 23, 2000.
- ²³ *The Forward*, October 6, 2000.
- ²⁴ Region-Inform, January 31, 2000.
- ²⁵ Region-Inform, January 31, 2000.
- ²⁶ *Segodnya*, September 21, 2000.
- ²⁷ Region-Inform, March 30, 2000.
- ²⁸ *Pravoslavnaya Gazeta*, May 30, 2000.
- ²⁹ *Pravoslavnaya Gazeta*, June 6, 2000.
- ³⁰ Chicago Action for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, January 6, 2000.
- ³¹ Chicago Action for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, January 6, 2000.
- ³² Chicago Action for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, January 6, 2000.
- ³³ *Tyumensky Kurier*, March 14, 2000.
- ³⁴ *Izvestiya*, September 25, 2000.
- ³⁵ "Antisemitism in the Regions of Russia," UCSJ Special Correspondent Valery Senderov, June 24, 2000.
- ³⁶ Keston News Service, September 19, 2000.