



Soviet Jews face oppression

By Chuck Beck

The Soviet government's oppression of Jews and other religious groups should be more to Americans than just another part of the world, an American nun said Friday night at the Tiffereth Israel Synagogue in Lincoln.

Sister Ann Gillen, the executive director of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, said in her travels in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), she learned how Jews lived under the Soviet regime.

She told a group of about 160 persons that people in Leningrad apartments share kitchen and dining areas, making government surveillance easy.

"If one of the families happens to be Jewish, there may be a member of the Leningrad police or KGB (the Soviet state police) to watch every move made by the Jewish family," she said.

Gillen talked with a Jewish boy whose father had been arrested by the KGB at home. After his father's arrest, the boy called a western journalist who wrote an account of the arrest, she said.

Publicity in the Western press saves the oppressed, because it puts pressure on Soviet officials, she said. Ukrainian Catholics and Lutherans as well as Jews throughout the USSR want to leave, Gillen said, but it is difficult for members of religious groups to get emigration visas.

Visa applications cost about \$108 for each application, but a person may earn only \$48 a month, she said. A person may only apply to leave once in a year, and there is no standard process for obtaining a visa.

When a person is refused a visa, he may either lose his job or be forced to take a menial job.

Gillen encourages Americans to write Soviet Immigration officials urging that oppressed groups be allowed to leave the USSR. One cannot insult Soviet officials, however, asking that oppressed groups be allowed to leave "in the name of justice," she said.

American college students belonging to the national organization, Students for the Struggle for Soviet Jewry, are writing to Soviet officials, according to Gillen.

Gillen belongs to the Society of the Holy Child, has a B.A. in English and an M.A. in American history.

Consumer Aid Group Recognition, power anticipated

Following a year of disorganization, the ASUN Consumer Aid Group (CAG) is aiming at realistic goals—public recognition and consumer education for the UNL community, Gail Eisenstatt, director of the group, said Saturday. CAG was started a year ago by five interested UNL students to assist other

CAG was started a year ago by five interested UNL students to assist other students as consumers. An office was set up and manned, Eisenstatt said, but almost no one came.

Eisenstatt, a UNK senior, said the group never really got off the ground last year. Their main activity was an Education Day in March to aid in identification of fraudulent business practices.

But she explained that due to a lack of substantial goals, the group has never reached the public.

Down-to-earth goals

This year the consumer group held an organizational meeting in September and settled for "down-to-earth" goals, Eisenstatt said.

"Being a relatively small, young group," she said, "we didn't want to shoot for the moon. First of all, we want the students to know we are here." Subsequent to this public awareness, she said, the group hopes to familiarize the UNL community with basic consumer problems. Eisenstatt said although individuals should have the power to get action on their own, they usually don't. If a consumer wishes to return an item to a store, for example, and the store doesn't want to take it back, "it's the customer's tough luck."

In this instance, she said the Consumer Aid Group could apply persistent pressure—letters and calls to the store. This type of campaign would be more effective than a lone complaint, Eisenstatt said.

Power in numbers

"Our powen lies in numbers," she continued, "and membership is rising. According to Eisenstatt some 25 students have expressed interest in the group, compared to five students last year.

Despite the increase, Eisenstatt said, the group is abandoning their office and approaching students with a new strategy. She said they are considering a bulletin board in the Student Union to provide two-way communication between the group and the student body. A box would be provided by the board for consumer suggestions and complaints. Eisenstatt said the consumer group became affiliated with ASUN this semester and hopes for "a piece of the budget". They now receive no ASUN funds. Membership is open and anyone interested may contact the ASUN office.

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