November 19, 1971

David Geller

Judah Graubart

Task Force

As per our conversation, I am sending you the minutes of the last Task Force meeting, along with a summary of ideas and thoughts concerning the March consultation.

As you can see from the minutes, Sargent Shriver and Coretta King have agreed to serve as Honorary Co-chairmen of the NITSJ, along with Sister Traxler and Andre LaCocque, who are the working Co-chairmen.

Our next step will be to have stationery printed, with these four names only, which will be used for letters of invitations to the country's top Christian Leadership, asking them to serve on a Board of Directors type structure, and to have their names listed on the next set of stationery as such. (Mrs. King and Sargent Shriver will, of course, sign the letters.) With regard to this facet of the NITSJ, Gene has suggested that in lieu of listing a Board of Directors, we list the prominent Christians (and Jews) as members of the Task Force, thus avoiding the pitfalls and difficulties inherent in Board structures, such as by-laws, elections, etc. As I recall from our conversation, you favor a Board type structure. This, then, is one of the areas in which we shall have to negotiate an agreement.

Concerning the actual names to be listed on the stationery, whether Board or not, we all seem to agree that they should represent the highest levels of the Christian establishment community, including the cream of those names listed in the minutes.

As for Jewish representation, though we want to keep it at a minimum, nonetheless, the Task Force does require prestigious Jewish presence. To that end, we seem to agree that Marc and Elmer Winter would be logical AJC choices, and non-AJC Jewish representatives might be Abraham J. Herschel and Elie Wiesel. (Gene has raised the question of local representation on the stationery, i.e., Dick Levin our chapter Chairman, and Tom van Straaten, the Chairman of our IAC.)
Concerning participants in the program (that is, speakers, not attendees), the minutes reflect the choices of Robert Drinan and Theodore Bikel. (There is some question as to whether Mrs. King and Sargent Shriver will be able to attend, though they are definitely committed to supporting the program.) If Mrs. King is unable to be present (and since Shriver has indicated he does not wish to speak even if he can attend), I would like to suggest that we utilize Ted Kennedy, whom I imagine either Margaret or Bookie could get for us.

In addition to the above mentioned possibilities, Shriver has offered to enlist the services of the U.S. ambassador to the SALT talks Gerald Smith, a Catholic. As we discussed, there may be some question about his attitude on Soviet Jewry, but nonetheless, I would like to utilize him because of his great prestige and relationship to the Administration.

Finally, there is the matter of the post-consultation public meeting, with Marc, Billy Graham and Cardinal Cody. I understand from our conversation that nothing has been done yet, and so we are awaiting further word from either you or Jerry.

Regarding schedules, Gene and I hope to have a meeting with the Chicago Task Force people in early December to map out the nitty gritty details. Since this meeting will deal more with mechanics than general program, we don't think there will be any need for you or Jerry to attend. As for the mailing of the Shriver-King letter to potential Board or Task Force members, we hope to have this out by early December. Because we're working under a time handicap (scheduling the general mailing for January 2nd), it may pay to send the 25 or so letters registered, return receipt requested, and thus hopefully impress upon the recipients the urgency of a speedy reply.

As for invitees to the consultation, I would suggest that each of the Task Force members be asked to prepare a list of who he or she thinks should be invited, with the criterion centering around their prestige and influence within the Christian and secular communities.

That, for the moment, is it. Please respond as soon as possible either by telephone or letter to the questions and issues I've raised in this epistle.

Best regards.

JG:ps
Enclosure

cc: Samuel Katz, Marc Tanenbaum, Will Katz, Isaiah Terman, Gerald Strober, A. James Rudin, Eugène Du Bow
On Friday, November 12th, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry met at the offices of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, Co-chairmen, Sister Margaret Traxler, and Dr. Andre LaCocque, presiding.

The only item on the agenda was the National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, which the Task Force had agreed to sponsor at its first meeting on October 13.

Regarding dates and locations, it was agreed that March 19-20 would afford the greatest convenience while suggestions for sites centered around the Chicago Theological Seminary, the Catholic Theological Union, the Center for Continuing Education and/or the Oriental Institute, both of which are at the University of Chicago. Concerning lodging, it was agreed that the Windermere Hotel or the 50th on the Lake Motel would serve adequately. Dr. LaCocque suggested that the facilities of the CTS would fulfill whatever requirements were necessary as far as board was concerned.
With regard to Honorary Co-chairmen of the Consultation, Sister Traxler volunteered to contact Sargent Shriver and Mrs. Coretta King to ask them to serve in those positions, which the Task Force authorized her to do. In addition to enlisting Mr. Shriver and Mrs. King as co-chairmen, the members present agreed to enlist a Board of Directors of 10-15 nationally prominent Christian clergy and laymen. Among such individuals suggested were Mrs. Abigail McCarthy, Andrew Young, Ceasar Chavez, Bayard Rustin, Ralph Abernathy, Jesse Jackson, Julian Bond, Arthur Fleming, J. Irwin Miller, Earl Warren, Ramsey Clark, Edward Levy, Bishop John Hunes, Paul Moore, Mathew Almon, Mrs. Fred Harris, Bishop William Bauer, et. al.

This group of co-sponsors will be listed on the Task Force's stationery, and will in turn invite approximately 100 Christian and Jewish clergy and laymen to attend the March Consultation.

Regarding the actual format of the Consultation, it will commence with an evening banquet on the night of March 19th, to which not only the Consultation attendees will be invited, but prominent public opinion leaders as well. The dinner will be more inspirational than informational tentatively involving a greeting from the co-chairmen, as well as a presentation of Soviet Jewish freedom songs and readings by a personality such as Theodore Bikel.

Monday morning will be devoted to information and education, with academicians, former diplomats, and other experts addressing themselves to the Soviet Jewish situation.

The morning session will be succeeded by a luncheon with the principal speaker addressing himself to the Soviet Jewish question. Regarding the speaker, it was agreed that Congressman Robert Drinan, of Massachusetts, who is also a Jesuit Priest and the former Dean of Boston College Law School would be a good choice. Mr. Strober volunteered to contact Father Drinan.

Following the luncheon, workshops will be held concerning various facets of the Soviet Jewish issue, both from an educational as well as a programmatic standpoint. Each workshop will meet with a qualified resource person pertaining to that particular field. After the workshops, the Consultation will reconvene for a final session at which the desirability of a resolution or statement will be discussed, as well as the possibility of creating a permanent secretariat, along with other pertinent matters.

A rough estimate of the Consultation's cost came to about $4,000-$5,000 which will hopefully be raised through individual contributions and grants.

* N.B. Mrs. King and Mr. Shriver have accepted the honorary Co-chairmanships of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

** N.B. Father Drinan has accepted the Task Force's invitation to address the Consultation.
NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

Letters of invitations to participants will be mailed the second of January.

In discussing related programs, the Task Force also agreed to the idea of sponsoring a large public meeting on Soviet Jewry, featuring prominent interfaith representatives, directly succeeding the Consultation. In considering participants, the suggestions were made and adopted that Reverend Billy Graham, John Cardinal Cody and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum would be invited to serve as the tri-faith representatives. Father Pawlikowski volunteered to invite Cardinal Cody, while Mr. Strober agreed to get in touch with Reverend Graham and Rabbi Tanenbaum.

Respectfully submitted

Judah L. Graubart

PS
11/18/71