The year 1972 will bring unique and unprecedented challenges to the citizens of Israel and the Christians of America and every nation of the earth. The thousands of Soviet Jews who will emigrate to Israel will signalize an important turning point in the history of Soviet anti-Zionism. This same migration will challenge everyone who believes in the Judeo-Christian ethic to support Israel with the problems that have already resulted from this new wave of refugees.

THE ORIGINS OF SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM

The relative absence of anti-Semitism under the regime of Lenin in Russia was ominously reversed shortly after the Hitler-Stalin pact. Soviet propaganda echoed the Nazi point of view.

After the war Stalin opened a frontal assault on every aspect of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. Stalin supervised the systematic campaign to extinguish Jewish culture by the closing of schools, the suppression of publishing houses, the abolition of theater companies and the banning of newspapers.

What Stalin commenced Krushchev finished. In short, the Soviet government during the years 1939 to 1967 carried out the destruction of Jewish cultural life.

As a consequence of the Six-Day War in 1967 and pursuant to Soviet commitments to Arab countries anti-Semitism in Russia became anti-Zionism. Under Brezhnev anti-Zionism and an official
anti-Israel policy were unleashed. The bitter defeat of the Soviet-supported Arab armies in the Six-Day War prompted the Soviet Union to carry out a relentless campaign of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist propaganda.

The last few weeks and months have seen a remarkable and dramatic change in Russia's policy towards its almost 3 million Jewish citizens. The pressure of worldwide opinion which caused the Kremlin to retreat from its resolution to execute the persons involved in the Leningrad highjacking trial in December 1970 seems to have been so intense and continuous that now the U.S.S.R., for reasons which are not entirely clear, is granting exit visas to Jewish applicants on a relatively liberal basis.

During 1971 Jewish emigration from Russia reached a record level of about 15,000. About two-thirds of the 1971 emigrants came from Soviet Georgia and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

The jump from about 1,000 immigrants from Russia in 1970 to the figure of 15,000 in 1971 has led to speculation that, if the easing of visa restrictions continues, as many as 200,000 or even 300,000 Soviet Jews may migrate to Israel.

It seems clear that the future of Soviet Jews and the prospect for any large scale emigration depends upon the continuing pressure of world opinion on Moscow as well as the quality of the absorption and adjustment of Russian immigrants in Israel.

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. CONGRESS
IN THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS TO ISRAEL

The Soviet Jews Relief Act of 1971, co-sponsored by 124 Congressmen and 34 Senators, was designed to create up to 30,000 non-quota visas for Soviet Jews to come to the United States. This bill,
introduced on March 4, 1971, clearly brought a good deal of pressure upon Attorney General John Mitchell and the Department of State. Finally in early October the Attorney General indicated that the Nixon administration would be willing to extend to the Soviet Jews the privileges extended to more than 30,000 Hungarian refugees after the 1956 revolution and to over 10,000 Czechoslovakian refugees in 1968 as well as to the more than 565,000 Cubans who have migrated to the United States.

Clearly the pressure brought by the introduction of the Soviet Jews Relief Act of 1971 both on American officials and on the Soviet Union combined to bring about the easing of visa regulations in Russia so that in 1972 some 40,000 Jews from Russia will in all probability arrive in Israel.

It must be said that the Nixon administration during 1970 and 1971 appeared to default on the pre-election promises of Mr. Nixon. Prior to his election Nixon told the Conference of Presidents of major American Jewish organizations that it was "important to create world opinion, as well as document all the facts, in order that through diplomatic and other channels the concern of the American people for the cultural and religious freedom of Soviet Jews may be firmly communicated on many levels to the leaders of the Soviet government".

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS TO HELP ISRAEL ABSORB NEW IMMIGRANTS

During the last few weeks the Congress has turned its attention to the furnishing of assistance to Israel to absorb the anticipated 40,000 new immigrants who in all probability will arrive from Russia during 1972. Legislation proposed to give $85 million to Israel for this purpose takes into consideration the staggering fact that 166,176 immigrants have arrived in Israel since the conclusion of the Six-Day War. This figure brings the total number of persons who have immigrated to Israel since 1948 to 1,436,771. Israel's Jewish
population has quadrupled since the state's establishment, -- from 650,000 to 2,560,000. Half of today's population came in one of the many waves of immigration which have broken upon the shores of Israel in the last 23 years.

The Soviet Jewish Refugee Assistance Act of 1972, co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of 62 Members of the House and some 40 Members of the Senate, would help Israel to cope with its new exodus. The figure of $85 million amounts to about $2,000 per refugee based upon the anticipated influx of slightly over 40,000 refugees this year.

Most Soviet refugees arrive in Israel with no funds. A visa out of the Soviet Union currently costs them about $1,000. The Israeli government this year allocated a record $650 million to provide for immigrants.

The enactment of the Soviet Jewish Refugee Assistance Act of 1972 (H.R. 13002) is absolutely essential if the United States is to help Israel with its most recent problems. The Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 can no longer be utilized since the superseding Foreign Assistance Act of 1972 contains a provision requiring specific Congressional authorization for any appropriation for the Secretary of State for any fiscal year commencing on and after July 1, 1972.

The Congress, furthermore, must act since it is becoming clear that the Department of State will not act in any way commensurate with the tremendous need in Israel. In a letter from the Department of State dated February 7, 1972 to a Member of Congress it is stated that "No U. S. aid, direct or indirect, is granted to any of these refugees in Israel...nor has it been decided whether any programs will be initiated in Israel".

It seems likely that the new Soviet immigrants will constitute a unique and difficult problem for Israel. Each wave of immigration in the past presented a different set of problems for Israel. The North African Jews, for example, who composed the largest group of immigrants in the late 1950's and early 1960's were generally
unaccustomed to living in a modern industrialized society. Jews from Yemen pose similar but even more complex problems.

The thousands of immigrants from the Soviet Republic of Georgia will pose new problems in that most of the Georgian Jews speak neither Hebrew nor Russian but only the language of Georgian which very few people in Israel understand.

It is to be hoped that the Congress will continue to realize that the State of Israel is absolutely unique in the entire world both because of the very large number of immigrants which it must absorb and also because of the very wide diversity among the different groups of immigrants who come to Israel.

THE NEW CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL'S EMERGING PROBLEMS

The relatively small amount of assistance extended to Israel over the past generation by the Christians of Europe and America is hardly an encouraging demonstration of the solidarity which should exist between all of those who worship the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. The new emigration from Russia, once a Christian nation, poses again the spectacle of an entire country and culture making life so impossible for people of the Jewish faith that they prefer or even feel compelled to depart.

What should be the response of Christians in America as President Nixon prepares for an unprecedented visit to Russia in mid-May of 1972? It seems to me that Christians and others in America should strongly recommend to the President that:

1. He insist in every way during his visit to Russia that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, subscribed to by the Soviet Union in December 1948, contains a very clear assertion of the right of every person in the world to emigrate to the country of his choice,

2. The oppression of Jewish cultural institutions by the Soviet government is clearly contrary to Articles 124 and 125 of the Constitution of the Soviet Union,

3. The people and the government of the United States will continue to arouse world opinion unless the Soviet Union guarantees
categorically and openly the religious and cultural freedom of the Jewish people who reside in the U.S.S.R.

The new crises in Israel which will result because of immigration from Russia have induced me to accept the invitation of the National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry to go to Israel in the near future to evaluate these problems and to report on them to interested individuals throughout America. Tentative dates for my trip to Israel will coincide with a short recess of the Congress from May 25 to May 31. These dates will be shortly after President Nixon has returned from his conversations in Moscow.

After my return from Israel I hope to be able to alert all of the leaders who have participated in this historic conference on Soviet Jewry at the University of Chicago. I hope that the information which I will bring to them will be radiated by them to every concerned person in America. I have the hope that American Christians will be aroused at the injustices being inflicted on persons of the Jewish faith in Russia. I hope also that Christians in America will as never before recognize and act upon the acute and profound problems which confront Israel because by its very nature it is an ongoing ingathering of exiles and refugees.

I have the hope that I along with all of those of the Christian faith with whom I will communicate will recognize as never before that Christians must more fully understand the meaning of the profound statement made by Reinhold Niebuhr, the famous Protestant theologian, who told us that no one can be a good Christian until first he is a good Jew.