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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

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June 14, 1971

The Jewish Center  
ATTN: Rabbi Norman Lamm  
131 West 86th Street  
New York, New York 10024

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

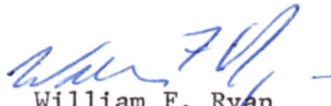
I thought you might be interested in knowing that more than seventy Congressmen have joined me in calling upon the Voice of America to broadcast into the Soviet Union in the Yiddish language. We have also introduced legislation (House Resolution 454) to this end.

I have been very much concerned about the plight of Soviet Jewry. In discussing ways in which to help Soviet Jews, I found that many groups and individuals, including Leonid Rigerman, believe that the United States government could demonstrate support of Soviet Jewry through the Voice of America. Broadcasting in Yiddish, which is spoken by some two million Soviet Jews, would constitute an act of strong psychological encouragement.

I am enclosing copies of the speech which I made on May 26 when I introduced the resolution, as I thought you would be interested and might want to make copies available to members of your congregation. Should you need more copies, please let me know.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely,

  
William F. Ryan  
Member of Congress

WFR/hdb





# Congressional Record

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## SEVENTY-THREE MEMBERS CALL FOR VOICE OF AMERICA TO BROADCAST IN YIDDISH LAN- GUAGE INTO SOVIET UNION

**HON. WILLIAM F. RYAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing today on behalf of 71 Members of the House of Representatives a resolution calling upon the Voice of America to broadcast in the Yiddish language into the Soviet Union. In addition, 73 Members have joined in sending a letter to the Director of the U.S. Information Agency urging him to direct the Voice of America to undertake such broadcasts.

The religious and cultural repression of Soviet Jewry continues. Some 3 million men, women, and children are being subjected to a systematic policy of spiritual extermination. The ultimate aim is the destruction of Soviet Jewry as a people, their identity obliterated under the onslaught of an official policy which denies them the freedom to live as Jews and the freedom to leave.

Today, in the Soviet Union, no Jewish schools, either in Yiddish or in Russian, are provided for the Jewish minority.

Today, in the Soviet Union, no Jewish theater exists, either for Moscow's 500,000 Jews, or for Leningrad's 250,000 Jews.

Today, in the Soviet Union, there are no Jewish libraries, no social centers.

Today, in the Soviet Union, no Jewish daily newspaper, either in Yiddish or Russian, exists.

In 1926, there were 1,103 synagogues in the Soviet Union. Today there are less than 60, and almost half of these are located in the non-European parts of the Soviet Union, where less than 10 percent of the total Jewish populace resides.

Alleged highjackings of planes have been charged, and almost every individual accused has been a Jew.

Emigration is severely restricted, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, both of which state that—

Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own . . .

The plight of Soviet Jewry is abundantly clear. In the midst of this tragedy, though, there is some hope. Within the Soviet Union, a truly heartening development is occurring. A civil rights movement, with Jews in the vanguard, is demanding of the Soviet Government freedom to emigrate. Worldwide sympathy has been aroused, and expressions of opposition to the Soviet Union's policies have been heard from many corners. In the House last year, we passed a resolution on December 31—House Resolution 1336—urging "fair and equitable justice

for—the Soviet Union's—Jewish citizens."

Yet, once having expressed our opposition to Soviet policy, we cannot then contentedly sit back. We must continue our support for the Jews of the Soviet Union. A vehicle to that end—a vehicle which can be of the greatest psychological importance—is to utilize the Voice of America to broadcast into the Soviet Union in Yiddish, the mother tongue of Soviet Jewry. In the 1959, Soviet census—the latest data available—it was reported that 2,267,000 Soviet Jews speak Yiddish. Most of them can understand Russian as well. But the significance of broadcasting to them in their own mother language cannot be underestimated.

Perhaps the most eloquent words about the importance of the Yiddish language to Soviet Jewry are those which Der Nister, one of the major Soviet Yiddish writers and one of Stalin's victims, wrote some years ago:

I write in Yiddish not because I cannot write in any other language or in a language which is more widely used, but because there is no one with whom you can be as sincere, honest, and truthful as you are with the mother who gave you birth. What sense can all of my work have if I should think that the language of my people is dying out? I have always been an optimist. I believe in the existence of my people and my language.

The Voice of America can broadcast to Soviet Jewry in Yiddish. The precedents exist. Currently, the Voice broadcasts to several population groups within the Soviet Union whose numbers are less than the total of Soviet Jewry. For example, the Voice broadcasts in their native languages to 1.3 million Estonians, to 1.8 million Slovenians, 1.9 million Latvians, to 2.73 million Lithuanians, to 2.74 million Albanians, to 2.83 million Georgians, and to 2.94 million Armenians.

The Voice of America should broadcast to Soviet Jewry in Yiddish. Leonid Rigerman, the 30-year-old physicist who I and some of my colleagues aided in emigrating from the Soviet Union earlier this year, said this past March 30:

The Voice of America . . . and the BBC are the only sources of information for Soviet citizens that are believed.

The Voice of America must broadcast to Soviet Jewry in Yiddish. These oppressed people need hope. They need to know that the world and the United States care about what is happening to them. By broadcasting in Yiddish, we can provide unparalleled psychological support for the 3 million Jews of the Soviet Union.



# H. RES. 454

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## RESOLUTION

Calling upon the Voice of America to broadcast in the Yiddish language to Soviet Jewry.

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### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 26, 1971

Mr. RYAN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Whereas the House of Representatives deeply believes in religious and cultural freedom for all persons and is opposed to infringement of these freedoms anywhere in the world; and

Whereas abundant evidence has made clear that the Government of the Soviet Union is persecuting Jewish citizens and imposing restrictions that prevent the reuniting of Jews with their families in other lands; and

Whereas many of the three million Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union speak the Yiddish language; and

Whereas the Voice of America does not broadcast in the Yiddish language to the peoples in the Soviet Union, although it does broadcast to several population groups in the Soviet Union whose numbers are less than the total Jewish population; and

Whereas the broadcasting by the Voice of America in the Yiddish language would bring to the Soviet Union's Jewish citizens knowledge of the worldwide sympathy for their plight and of the worldwide support for their being allowed religious and cultural freedom, as well as freedom to emigrate; and

Whereas the broadcasting by the Voice of America in the Yiddish language would constitute for the Soviet Union's Jewish citizens an act of great psychological support: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives urges the Voice of America to undertake broadcasts in the Yiddish language to the citizens of the Soviet Union.