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**THROUGH THE SEAMS OF THE IRON CURTAIN:
CLANDESTINE NGO SUPPORT TO CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN
COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED EASTERN EUROPE,
CENTRAL EUROPE, AND RUSSIA, 1960–1989**

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**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THROUGH THE SEAMS OF THE IRON CURTAIN:
CLANDESTINE NGO SUPPORT TO CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS
MINORITIES IN COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED EASTERN
EUROPE, CENTRAL EUROPE, AND RUSSIA, 1960–1989**

by

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September 2018

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SUPPORT TO CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN
COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL EUROPE,
AND RUSSIA, 1960–1989**

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ABSTRACT

In the same Cold War context in which the CIA's Book Program covertly sent Western literature behind the Iron Curtain into the Communist world, Christian missionaries also used covert (and some overt) methods to smuggle Bibles to the Underground Churches of the Eastern Bloc. This thesis describes the main smuggling routes and locations and consolidates several privately published, first-hand accounts of retired Bible smugglers, with academic works providing additional insight. It follows the timeline of events leading to the greatest expansion of smuggling operations in the 1960s through the 1980s, and it examines the methods, effects, extent of success, and motives for smuggling this contraband—Bibles—which many Soviets considered dangerous to the stability of Communism. After outlining the activity in individual Eastern Bloc nations, this thesis draws parallels between Ashutosh Varshney's use of the theories of instrumental and value rationality and the internal motivations that drove most Bible smugglers to their work—even in the face of great personal loss. Finally, this work draws a connection between the covert actions of the Underground Church and Bible smugglers and the Soviet and satellite governments' loss of legitimacy in line with Sabrina Ramet's assertions in *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLV	<i>Christliche Literaturverein</i> ; “Christian Literature Association”
GDR	German Democratic Republic; East Germany’s English self-title
JIC	Nuremberg Joint Interrogation Center
KGB	<i>Komitet Gozudarstvennoye Bezupasnosti</i> ; the Soviet Union’s foreign intelligence service
LiO	<i>Licht im Osten</i> ; “Light in the East,” a missionary NGO
LPG	Liquid Propane Gas
MICE	money, ideology, coercion, and ego (influence factors)
MOE	measures of effectiveness
NASB	New American Standard Bible; a Bible translation
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIV	New International Version; a Bible translation
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
OM	Operation Mobilization
OPSEC	operations security
OSS	Office of Special Services; the CIA’s predecessor
PNG	persona-non-grata
RASCLS	reciprocity, authority, scarcity, commitment and consistency, liking, and social proof (influence factors)
Stasi	<i>Staatssicherheit</i> ; the East German secret police
SOUD	Russian System of Joint Acquisition of Enemy Data
UE	Underground Evangelism, a western NGO
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialists Republic
VOM	Voice of the Martyrs
WWII	World War II

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¹ Proverbs 27:17.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1970, a team of three Westerners posed as tourists traveling through the Communist Bloc, though a different purpose prompted their trip through Eastern Europe. At the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border, their van was stopped and inspected for longer than usual. The border authorities suspected smugglers—and they were right. A guard’s axe broke the false walls behind the built-in cupboards, exposing stacks of contraband. After ten days of interrogation and confiscated passports, possessions, and money, the team’s resistance training paid off: They were released on foot with a one-way train ticket to Vienna. They were also listed as persona-non-grata in Bulgaria—the second, but not the last country to place this stamp on their papers, signifying they were unwanted and not to be allowed in the country again. They left the country, glad to have the clothes on their backs. As far as they knew, the entire load of contraband—more than a thousand Bibles—had been destroyed.¹

A. A SPECIAL MISSION

Bibles are usually not the first thing that comes to most people’s minds when they think about clandestine operations during the Cold War years. Spies abounded between the United States and the Soviet Union, and most of the spying occurred in the realm of political power and state agendas.² Now, more than a quarter of a century after the end of that war, the stories of clandestine operations—both political and religious—are coming to light as classifications are lifted and operators drop their cover. Among them are many stories of Bible smuggling. Christian smugglers brought more than just Bibles; some

¹ David Babcock and Brenda Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance: Mapping God’s Faithfulness Through 46 Years* (Mosbach, Germany: OM Books, 2015), 79–81.

² See especially Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

brought other types of literature,³ money (as a way to fund printing operations),⁴ or printing supplies (for printing operations already established inside the Iron Curtain)⁵ across Soviet borders in order to support fellow believers in the printing of God’s Word and other religious literature.

This thesis seeks to synthesize accounts of Christians smuggling Bibles, funds, and any other material to support other Christians living inside the Iron Curtain who were in some form of need. The examination will include printed work by past Bible smugglers telling their stories and academic literature written on the subject. While persecution was present and, in many cases, seminal to the work of Bible smugglers, it is not the primary focus of this thesis. Persecuted Christians did have physical, medical, and legal needs; however, many in both Eastern Europe and the West saw the Bible as holding supreme value; as God’s very Word, and a vital resource for spiritual growth necessary for everyday life. Because of these elements, the Bible was also a source of encouragement in the face of persecution. As the foundational document to the Christian faith,⁶ the Bible and the spiritual need to have access to it took center stage in many believers’ lives. It is this aspect of the Bible’s foundational value that is primarily being considered here, with physical needs a minor point.⁷

³ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 35th anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2001), 107–8; Lloyd Sparks, *Detour: My Brief but Amusing Career as a Bible Smuggler* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011), 10–11; Thomas Henderson, *Tripping: A True Story of Bible Smugglers and How the East German Stasi Tried to Stop Them*, 2nd ed. (USA: self-published, 2016), 27; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 70, 78; Bent Boel, “Bible Smuggling and Human Rights in the Cold War,” *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks*, Ed. Luc van Dongen, Stephanie Roulin, and Giles Scott-Smith (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 263–4, 266, 269; Pentti Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 2nd ed. (Gummersbach, Germany: Missionswerk Friedenstimme, 2003), 13. Note: “Streng Vertraulich” is German for “Strictly Confidential.”

⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 151–2, 159, 167, 187–8, 198–201.

⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5, 158–9, 161, 209.

⁶ See Psalm 19, especially verse 11; Psalm 119; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; I Timothy 3:16–17.

⁷ While some might consider any affront to health or liberty to be a primary concern, Christians are called to rejoice in persecution (John 16:33, and James 1:2-4), and, as the Apostle Paul said, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us,” speaking of heaven’s rewards coming after the trials of this life (Romans 8:18, NIV; see also 2 Corinthians 4:17).

B. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis was written in order to answer several specific questions, with the purpose of incorporating a variety of sources. The questions in primary focus are historically inclined. What was the extent of Western support to minority Christian populations in Communist Central and Eastern Europe by informal networks of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the period between 1960 and 1989? This question forms the primary focus of this thesis.

Additional questions help to clarify the context. Which elements of Soviet security were overcome by tactics, and which ones were deemed to be overcome by coincidence, or perceived supernatural events? Were active (planned) or passive (faith-based, i.e., prayer) techniques more effective during Bible smuggling operations? How effective were Bible-, raw supplies-, and money-smuggling techniques behind the Iron Curtain? Were other items or people smuggled as well? Was the support requested, volunteered, or both? What were the roles of churches in the supported areas in peaceful revolutions? It is also the intent of this thesis to determine if accusations of misguided support are true: to wit, that some of the Christians who received Bibles and other support from the West did not ask for it, did not want it, and accurately foresaw the pain and trouble they would receive from the Soviet authorities if they did receive it. Lloyd Sparks claims this case outright, and Brother Andrew gives one similar such account—although the person who hesitated to accept Bibles from Brother Andrew decided to take them in the end.⁸

C. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

There are societal implications of the persistence of faith under persecution, as there are of government legitimacy during religious persecution. This study could be the stepping-off point for other research to answer questions about how Christianity can survive in closed, hostile countries, or whether the impact of Bible smuggling was existentially critical to that faith in the officially atheistic Second World; however, this

⁸ Sparks, *Detour*, 10–11, 185–7, 212–3; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 200–2.

thesis will focus on investigating the written eye-witness accounts rather than researching the impact of Christianity on the Soviet Union.

Christians in Central and Eastern Europe were prominent in democratic revolutions in several post-soviet state governments. Perhaps the most prominent examples are Germany's current Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and previous President, Joachim Gauck, both Lutherans. Both grew up under East German communism, yet they were part of their respective churches—Gauck even served as a Lutheran pastor.⁹ Both led politically during the reunification of Germany. Recently, Merkel was listed as the “most powerful woman in the world” for nine years by *Forbes*,¹⁰ and she publicly claims that Christian values continue to shape her personally¹¹ and politically.¹² Even in resolutely secular Western Europe, such figures associated with Christianity resonate with voters—certainly as proven anti-authoritarian activists, but also likely because people of faith can be a beacon of hope in difficult times.

Biblical Christianity writ large is not a church separate from the state; it is a belief that envelops every aspect of society and, when followed to the letter, makes every facet of society better. However, the theology surrounding the view of state and church authority works itself out differently depending on each local church in question. Divided Germany, for example, included Roman Catholics (most, but not all of whom were in West Germany), and both Evangelical-Lutheran and Reformed (Calvinist) Protestants.¹³ Each theological distinction had unique ways of responding to the authority of the state within which it existed.¹⁴ Lutherans tended to embrace the authority of the state as supreme; Reformists (in the Calvinist school) contested that church and state could “enjoy a

⁹ Federal President Joachim Gauck, *Der Bundespräsident*, last modified 2016, <http://www.bundespraesident.de/EN/Federal-President/federal-president-node.html>.

¹⁰ Forbes, “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women,” <http://www.forbes.com/power-women/>.

¹¹ Personal, <https://www.angela-merkel.de/persönlich.html>. Translated by this author.

¹² Political, <https://www.angela-merkel.de/politik.html>. Translated by this author.

¹³ Robert F. Goekel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change Under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 13–18.

¹⁴ Goekel, *Lutheran Church and East German State*, 13–18.

theocratic union,”¹⁵ in which both church and state executed power based on God’s law as portrayed in the Bible. This debate becomes especially salient when the state extends its power into the realm of the church. How will the church respond? When Soviet political power claims intend to influence and subvert the church, this question needs to be answered.

State legitimacy is a social issue that is directly tied to national security, and is a pertinent topic of study in every corner of the globe. In Cold-War Czechoslovakia, religious activism included a Catholic underground church that persisted from the mid-1970s to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and that had an impact on the society behind that portion of the Iron Curtain.¹⁶ The religious convictions of these people were not easily suppressed by the Soviet political structure; they even had their own internal printing presses with which they published so prolifically, that they were said to have surpassed even the official presses in volume by 1985.¹⁷ In this case, the state had lost legitimacy in the eyes of the church. When this happened, the church (both domestic and external elements) worked to carry on its Biblical mandate to make disciples—it just had to do it underground.

Having grown up for more than half my formative years in Western Europe, and having made dozens of trips into Eastern Europe, it is of great interest to me to study the teams of international missionaries who made it their life’s work to support persecuted and hidden Christians inside communist countries of Eastern Europe. Many risked their freedom, health, and safety in order to accomplish their missions.¹⁸ My parents were also missionaries in Europe. Their work centered on providing help and hope to the refugees passing through Vienna from the war-torn regions of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and even Eastern Europe.

¹⁵ Goekel, *Lutheran Church and East German State*, 17.

¹⁶ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation*, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 129–131.

¹⁷ Ramet, *Social Currents*, 132–4.

¹⁸ See Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 30th anniversary ed., Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1998; Henderson; Sparks; Babcock; and Brother Andrew.

I share a geographical connection to the work of many Bible smugglers headquartered in Vienna (it was also the CIA's Book Program's "most important distribution point"),¹⁹ but I also share a common faith with my parents, and with those who worked to spread the Bible into areas of oppression. I have seen the impact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can have on an oppressed life, and that seems to be a scalable effect—entire people groups and nations have been changed by this message of hope! I hope that by investigating the operations of Christian smugglers during this time period of religious oppression, I will find evidence of success and impact on individual lives and possibly even on entire social movements.

An important part of understanding the social contract within a nation-state is having an awareness of the national culture and the direction of intra- and inter-state social movements. Bible smuggling therefore, as an indicator of underground social movement, is a small part of all that makes up the rational-actor model of social behavior. Central and Eastern Europe underwent massive socio-cultural upheaval from WWII (due to some Nazi occupation) to Communist Stalinism (also occupational in Central Europe). Understanding social behavior leads to better understanding the impact that social movements have on the socio-political structure of the state. Sabrina Petra Ramet articulates this point thoroughly, yet concisely:

Diverse social currents (mainly ethnic, *religious*, trade unionist, civic, feminist, musical-cultural, and youth) do not exist in isolation . . . they often follow parallel lines of development . . . changing social currents present political authorities with policy challenges, indeed with challenges that may bear on the fundamental questions of governance: system *legitimacy* and system *stability*.²⁰

Indeed, she characterizes religious phenomena in three ways: as "symptoms of change," as reactions to change and stress, and as "forces for further change."²¹ Social movements—

¹⁹ Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War: The West's CIA-funded Secret Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), accessed June 13, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu>, 295–308.

²⁰ Ramet, *Social Currents*, xi. Emphasis added.

²¹ Ramet, *Social Currents*, 176–7.

and religious ones specifically—are therefore not wisely ignored by state leaders, even under the most totalitarian systems, particularly within societies in transition.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature available for the topic is sparse; in fact, it is for this purpose, in part, that I chose this less-traveled road. However, several first-hand accounts of Bible smuggling actions give a glimpse of the plight of religious persecution in such countries as Romania²² and, decades later, Bulgaria.²³ People in every Communist nation faced great risks even for harboring a Bible.²⁴ In addition, a few scholars have written accounts of persecution in Eastern Europe under Communism, activity of those indigenous Christian churches that survived the Cold War, and how those churches interacted with other communities of Christians from outside the Iron Curtain.²⁵

The sources range from academic and news articles to scholarly books and personally published autobiographical books from the United States, Austria, Germany, and Finland. My original intention of including personal interviews with some of the people involved in the smuggling operations and support proved to be logistically beyond the scope of this project. As an oral history, the interview section was intended to fill in gaps in knowledge left out of the books and articles. Even without the interviews, however, the result of this synthesis aims to be a comprehensive overview of Christian Bible smuggling in the last 30 years before the Iron Curtain fell, with an application of the value rationality theory, instrumental rationality theory, and the influence factors described by Cialdini used to categorize the motivations of some or most of the Bible smugglers.

It is almost unnecessary to explain why some smugglers have maintained their cover to this day: The East has opened, but some of these men and women still have a

²² Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 8, 13.

²³ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 151, 157–63; Sparks, *Detour*, 41–72.

²⁴ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 126–7, 201.

²⁵ See Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981); Joe Gouverneur, “Underground Evangelism: Missions During the Cold War,” *Transformation – An International Journal of Holistic Missions Studies*, April 2007, 81, <http://trn.sagepub.com>; Boel, “Bible Smuggling and Human Rights in the Cold War.”

criminal history on the record books of the nations within which they were caught smuggling. Not every legal battle became moot when the Berlin Wall fell—at least some prior smugglers felt this was the case based on their secrecy in recent printed accounts. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, some authors published using pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity for those in the account. Nevertheless, several of the personally published accounts represent oral historical accounts of participants that provide unique first-person perspectives on the operations, the successes and failures, and the value of the work of smuggling Bibles into closed countries. Aside from the primary source books and the few scholarly articles, current articles about social currents and religious trends will help to establish the currency of the social concerns such as freedom of religion, legitimacy of government, and authoritarian oppression addressed here.

Undisputed is the secularization forced on Eastern European nations under Communism. The Soviet system was built on an institutional atheism, in which children were forcibly indoctrinated so as to separate them from the “superstitious” faith of their families—occasionally separating them from the families themselves.²⁶ Christians were arrested, imprisoned, fined, tortured; they lost their jobs, their titles, and sometimes, even their lives, if they would not denounce their faith in favor of atheism.²⁷ The first-hand accounts also give a picture of the communist mindset in Poland and Czechoslovakia early in the Cold War²⁸ beginning in the decade before the focus time-period. They seem to make up the main body of primary sources that tell these stories—and, importantly, they overlap with and mostly complement each other on many points, as will be discussed shortly between Henderson, Brother Andrew, Wurmbrand, Heinilä and Babcock, especially.

There are several still-living eye-witnesses who may be able to verify or expand on the accounts of the smuggling teams like those of the Finnish Mission and Operation

²⁶ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 110–1, 135–6.

²⁷ See Wurmbrand, Henderson, Babcock, Brother Andrew, Sparks.

²⁸ Andrew van der Bijl is most commonly known as Brother Andrew; See Francis D. Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe: A Cold War Story,” *Hungarian Review*, May 2015, 40; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*.

Mobilization (OM). A possible reason why several of these primary source books have been printed so recently is that it is now just over 27 years since the near-complete opening of the Iron Curtain borders, and many of the operatives who were previously concealing their identities may now feel safe enough to reveal them. This possibility is well-aligned with the declassification of some government operations of that era.²⁹ However, some authors who feel comfortable revealing their own names still keep the names of their teammates and contacts hidden through pseudonyms, in order to afford them the courtesy of revealing themselves when they choose, in case danger still exists.³⁰ The author regrets not having sufficient time to conduct interviews that could fill in many of the gaps in the abundance of stories on this topic. Many of the printed sources listed in the references seem to be merely the tips of icebergs, and one can assume that many of the covert missions have not been recounted in print anywhere. This work, therefore, does not claim to be exhaustive, or to follow every narrative trail to its full conclusion.

1. Where to Start

Analyzing the scope of operations must start with Richard Wurmbrand in Romania and Brother Andrew in Holland. Brother Andrew's book was originally published in the United States in 1967, and likely used in recruiting many of the American smugglers who operated in the 1970s. It was published early enough that KGB agents taught it to new agents as training material.³¹ Wurmbrand's book was published later the same year, and it is even more urgent of a call to action on the part of Western Christians than Brother Andrew's work. It is understandable that Wurmbrand's level of intensity in calling for aid to the persecuted church in Eastern and Central Europe likely stems from his own imprisonment and torture for his faith.

²⁹ Standard U. S. government declassification timeframe is 25 years after initial classification.

³⁰ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 14, 74–75, 309; Henderson, *Tripping*, 6.

³¹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 246–7.

2. Additional Questions

This thesis will follow the progression and growth of smuggling operations through the end of the Cold War to determine how operations and teams grew, and to help measure their impact. Secondary questions are explored that will bring the picture into clearer focus. Did operations in Vienna arise as a result of Brother Andrew's work, or were they independently started? Was Holland the strategic headquarters, and Vienna the front line? Or, did Holland also function as a front line into East Germany (through West Germany) and Poland? The answers to all these questions may be revealed through the historical timeline method combined with privately published and academic works.

3. Autobiographic Sources

Both Henderson and Babcock open their books by crediting the success of their missions to the protection and guidance of God, and then they further detail the efforts of fellow Christians in planning and executing the missions. There are times when both proclaimed (and even Sparks admitted)³² that circumstances they faced seem to resolve supernaturally,³³ and the books are part of giving God credit for the things He has done in their lives. All three published after retiring from the mission field, and they want the stories to be known. These books seem to be the effort of only a sliver of all the operatives who have stories to tell. Personal interviews may be valuable to gain more insight and confirmation of the scope and depth of these smuggling operations beyond what the existing literature can provide.

So far only one source casts the support operations in a somewhat negative light from the perspective of an eye-witness—Lloyd Sparks' *Detour*, published in 2011 and covering the time period of 1977–1989.³⁴ Sparks, a former military intelligence specialist, participated in smuggling Bibles, money, and other materials into several communist countries, but later became disillusioned with the operations after hearing that some

³² Sparks, *Detour*, 61–62, 68, 144–5.

³³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 133–4; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 6.

³⁴ Sparks, *Detour*.

recipients neither asked for nor really wanted the support.³⁵ He describes bringing “stacks and stacks of religious literature, mostly children’s stories, and some Christian adventure stories . . . that kind of material was rarely, if ever, requested by believers in the unregistered churches.”³⁶ In some cases, the reluctance to ask for help was due to the danger present for the recipients if they were exposed to state security by a botched or watched delivery. He was appalled at the poor tactics some smuggling organizations used—he saw and heard the results of much pain caused by careless or untrained Bible smugglers during smuggling runs or when questioned by guards.³⁷ After studying some of the team’s operational failures, he concludes at one fateful point: “We [Bible smugglers] ourselves had become one of the Communists’ most powerful weapons for destroying the Underground Church!”³⁸

Sparks’ departure from Bible smuggling also stemmed from his disillusionment with his organization. He recalls a conversation in which it became clear that he was going to have to cover much of the financial burden that his organization had pledged to pay, in denial of the agreement he made with the missions group upon joining.³⁹ He ends his narrative in disgust at the way he was treated on that team in particular, referring to the “petty Bible smuggling operation,”⁴⁰ and finds the silver lining that he “never would have had the spine to break with religion had not I been the victim of something this foul.”⁴¹ He actually came to see many of these operations as futile in effecting any change, and he seemed to conclude that the boots-on-the-ground social movement efforts of small churches in Eastern Europe were a far greater impetus for social change than the operations he had risked so much to accomplish.⁴² It is unclear in his book whether he did or did not see the pressure from the Pope and Polish Roman Catholics as a factor in the massive social

³⁵ Sparks, *Detour*, 10–11, 185–7, 212–3.

³⁶ Sparks, *Detour*, 10.

³⁷ Sparks, *Detour*, 41–42, 137–8, 151–157, 185–7.

³⁸ Sparks, *Detour*, 156.

³⁹ Sparks, *Detour*, 78, 231–2, 235–7.

⁴⁰ Sparks, *Detour*, 234.

⁴¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 237.

⁴² Sparks, *Detour*, 185–7, 239–40.

mobilization and momentum of the Solidarity Movement, but excluding them as viable influencers is a weak point in his narrative.

While Sparks was disillusioned, his interesting point is that he saw disconnection between some organizations pushing what they wanted to bring vs. supplying to meet demand, and other issues with how supplying was being executed. Other authors described these challenges too—but in the end, most authors believed (as did those whose stories they told) that the pain was fully worth the satisfaction of fulfilling God’s command to love: in this case, by delivering Bibles to those who had restricted access to God’s Word.⁴³ Brother Andrew was willing to face a firing squad, if necessary.⁴⁴

Brother Andrew, Pentti Heinilä, and David Babcock, in contrast to Sparks, write from the perspective of being both long-term missionaries and Bible smugglers. Each spent several decades traveling in Eastern Europe, and all had committed themselves to the work of smuggling Bibles. Henderson opens with a statement about his team, but writes the rest of the book in the third person, without specifying his own role. He writes as if from first- or second-hand experience, but alludes to personal involvement.⁴⁵ Brother Andrew and Wurmbrand’s accounts seems to be the starting points from which most or all other operations sprang, seeming to inspire many of the support movements that followed through the end of the Cold War.⁴⁶ Several other books⁴⁷ refer to Brother Andrew’s prayer as he crossed the Yugoslavian border with his first load of Bibles, thinly concealed:

Lord, in my luggage I have Scripture that I want to take to Your children across this border. When you were on earth, You made blind eyes see. Now, I pray, make seeing eyes blind. Do not let the guards see those things that You do not want them to see.⁴⁸

⁴³ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 77; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 116–8, 210–1; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 69–70; Sparks, *Detour*, 60–63.

⁴⁴ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 210–1.

⁴⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5–6.

⁴⁶ Brother Andrew started the organization Open Doors, which continued through the end of the Cold War (see Sparks, *Detour*, 3); Richard Wurmbrand started Voice of the Martyrs (VOM): see Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 152; and Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

⁴⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13; Sparks, *Detour*, 50.

⁴⁸ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8.

Furthermore, he gives some of the first accounts of seeing the need for Bibles in churches inside the Iron Curtain—entire congregations with only a handful, or no Bible at all.⁴⁹ His efforts to deliver Bibles to the places most needed continued through 1991, with an off-shore delivery (by setting afloat) of Bibles to China at a cost of \$7 million.⁵⁰

Babcock, Heinilä, and Henderson’s stories are centered on the individuals on the teams who did the planning and smuggling, the operations themselves, the contacts and deliveries made, and the amazing stories of close calls with border security. Like Brother Andrew, they weave their faith and dedication to the cause into each chapter with the goal of thanking God for the work He enabled through them.

E. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

It seems most likely that my investigation will demonstrate a shared value rationality and instrumental rationality among supporting teams and individuals that explains their self-less actions despite recurring personal danger. Ashutosh Varshney uses these terms to identify how seemingly irrational actions actually have an underlying conscious belief driving them.⁵¹ People “consciously embrace great personal sacrifices ... [for] some spheres or goals of life [which] are considered so valuable [as to] not normally be up for sale or compromise, however costly the pursuit of their realization might be.”⁵² While these terms are intended to describe aspects of ethnic and national behavior, they can also be applied to religious ideology in the context of martyrdom and perseverance in the faith while under persecution.

I believe these off-shoots of rationality theory describe the motivation for most of the Christians who put themselves in danger for the cause of getting Bibles into Soviet nations. A rational agent is considered to calculate the outcomes of different courses of action and choose the one with the best outcome for him or her. Game theory is applied

⁴⁹ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 92–93, 107–8, 116, 153–60.

⁵⁰ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 250.

⁵¹ Ashutosh Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (March 2003): 85–86, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3687814>.

⁵² Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 86.

under these assumptions; however, there are clearly observable cases in which individuals act in ways that might bring outcomes that are (in some ways) worse for them. A person living a content and prosperous life in Western Europe or America would not risk their freedom, waste their money, or risk possible arrest and torture to smuggle a book unless there are more factors at work than simple rationality.

What were those other factors? Some of the authors felt spiritual callings to take the risks they took.⁵³ Others thought that smuggling Bibles was a way to subvert communist oppression of thought through broadening ideological horizons inside communist nations.⁵⁴ Still others felt that the West held the moral high ground for being a primarily religious-identifying societal structure, as opposed to either the immorality of the Nazis or the atheism of the Communists.⁵⁵ For the Christians involved, spreading the good news (the Gospel) contained in the Bible world-wide results from a four-part motivation: a response to God's love, a compassion response to the lost, a promise of future rewards, and a mandate from God. All four will be addressed in Chapter IV.

I also investigate whether or not accusations of misguided support are true: that some of the Christians who received Bibles and other support from the West did not ask for it, did not want it, and foresaw accurately the pain and trouble they would receive from the authorities if they did receive such support.⁵⁶ Beyond that, there is potential for a generalization of tactics and methods for strategic messaging by democratic governments or organizations supporting democracy to ideologically closed nations and cultures such as the conservative Islamic Middle East, and nations like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).⁵⁷ That said, this thesis is intended to take a primarily historical look at the circumstances, methods, and impact of Bible smuggling, focusing on Central and Eastern Europe, and primarily during the latter 30 years of Communism.

⁵³ See Brother Andrew, Henderson, Babcock, Heinilä.

⁵⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 148–9; Reisch, *Hot Books*, 516.

⁵⁵ Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church in the Cold War* (London: Penguin, 1992), 3.

⁵⁶ Sparks claims this case outright, but thus far, other works have not shown it; Sparks, *Detour*, 10–11, 185–7, 212–3.

⁵⁷ North Korea's official name.

F. RESEARCH DESIGN

I take a historical approach to evaluating the organization, methods, and ideology of as many Bible smuggling organizations and individuals (any who acted alone) as are codified in writing today. Preparing a concurrent timeline between separate accounts demonstrates a progression in operations and opportunity and shows how social movements compare with the Bible smuggling timeline. I analyze the scope of operations, which should start with Wurmbrand in Romania and Brother Andrew in Holland; Brother Andrew's book was originally published in the United States in 1967, and used in recruiting many of the American smugglers who operated in the 1970s. I follow the progression and growth of smuggling operations through the end of the Cold War to determine how they grew and to help measure their impact in some loose way.

The historical approach is especially viable today because many of the people who did the smuggling work are just now beginning to publish books that tell their stories. These books are focused primarily on the individual and his or her organization (autobiographical in nature); there is little synthesizing work that captures the bird's-eye view of what happened across efforts in these three decades. The few articles that exist are limited in length, but they provide broad overviews. I complement these two source types with other published theses, books, and research works that provide background setting and briefly describe communist ideology regarding free speech, free religion, and free press in order to better set the stage for the validity of the smuggling and support operations in the communist time period. The result is a more comprehensive picture—both in breadth and depth—of how many teams and people were working on supporting fellow Christians living in what Americans might consider enemy territory because of the persecution present.

G. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis opened with an introduction that recounts a commonly experienced story of smugglers being detained, searched, questioned, and barred from a Soviet country, emphasizing that their only crime was bringing religious literature into a country that claimed religious freedom. This opener sets the stage for the uniqueness of Bible

smuggling. This first chapter continued the groundwork through a literature review, with the second chapter describing the historical background, and discussing the need for Christians in communist countries to receive support from the West: the common conditions of Christians living in communist countries, some communist laws and practices, and some specific limits of freedom of religion. The third chapter deals with the way support was provided (operations and tactics) and the measures of effectiveness used (or why MOEs were not used) by different organizations in determining how well they supported their intended beneficiaries. The fourth chapter addresses motives for those Bible smugglers who purposely went into harm's way to support others. The fifth and final chapter discusses conclusions of the thesis.

II. BACKGROUND: THE SOVIET RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

In some ways, the Iron Curtain was a religious divide of Europe as much as it was a political and ideological one.⁵⁸ In general, religious ideas in the West were tolerated and freedom of religion existed; more uniformly, religious freedom was oppressed under Communism in Eastern and Central Europe.⁵⁹ This chapter shows in broad strokes how the socio-political forces of communist ideology and atheism aligned to suppress religious practice in the East, how the oppression shifted throughout the time period, and how the church as a body responded to it.

A. COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANISM: SECULARIZATION

Communist leaders used totalitarian tactics to attempt to enculturate their people's professional and social lives with socialist principles. Oversight of this enculturation was accomplished by enlisting (willingly or not) their people to spy and report on each other. The spying was implemented especially well in the GDR, Romania, and Bulgaria, but to some degree in all of the Soviet Union. In part because the religious hierarchy presented an alternative authority structure to the state, Communists pursued secularization as part of the totalitarian rule.

The secularization forced on Eastern European nations and Russia proper under Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist Communism is undisputed. The specific levels of secularization include social persecution, youth indoctrination, marginalization, arrest, and in some cases, torture. Institutional atheism, on which the Soviet philosophy was built, included children being forcibly indoctrinated so as to separate them from the “superstitious” faith of their families—with the occasional result of separating them from the families themselves.⁶⁰ Religion was made out to be an instrument of social power of

⁵⁸ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 4.

⁵⁹ Central Europe is a term that seems to more appropriately define the countries situated between the greater Eastern powers (Russia) and the Western powers (France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland). Specifically, Central Europe consisted of Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Albania, Bulgaria, and East Germany (despite it being named “East”).

⁶⁰ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 110–11, 135–6.

the bourgeoisie over the proletariat; this assertion was especially used to positively paint the Western church's position to Western Communists and to rationalize the supposed suppression of workers under Capitalism.⁶¹ Christians under Communism were initially marginalized—then arrested, imprisoned, fined, and tortured; they lost their jobs, their titles, and sometimes even their lives, if they would not denounce their faith in favor of atheism.⁶² Froese claims that the soviet goal was to eradicate religion through enlightenment, education, industrialization, and modernization;⁶³ add social and political pressure (i.e., persecution) to force the desired change, and one begins to see the extent of the soviet atmosphere of secularization.

Soviet leaders pushed the elevation of class struggle and humanist atheism over religion; in their eyes, religion was the unscientific “opiate of the masses,” to quote their idol, Marx. Furthermore, Froese saw Communist thought also influenced by English philosopher and theologian John Hick, who declared: “‘The sociological theory of religion’ is one of the primary arguments against the existence of the supernatural,”⁶⁴ and Marx wrote that “religious sentiment is itself a social product;”⁶⁵ that is, it is self-constructed as an element of society. Communist leaders clung to these theories to bolster what they saw as the correctness of atheism.

The dichotomy of religious freedom differences between East and West in Europe does not reflect the only forces that were arrayed on the ideological battlefield. Secular Humanism also advanced along the lines of Modernism in the open marketplace of Western ideas. Chadwick describes the effect of this two-front pressure against the Christians of all of Europe in the post-war period. In the East, behind the Iron Curtain, the Soviet machine attempted to drive atheism into the lives of all of its citizens. In the West, secularism grew steadily to confront religion as well. These two simultaneous events led some, like German

⁶¹ Ralph Lord Roy, *Communism and the Churches* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), 30–31.

⁶² See Wurmbrand, Beattie, Henderson, Babcock, Brother Andrew, and Sparks.

⁶³ Paul Froese, *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 167.

⁶⁴ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 166 (quoting Jon Hick).

⁶⁵ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 167.

Pastor Martin Niemöller, to claim that Germany's future would be determined by the influence and support of Protestant churches in Germany and America.⁶⁶ His point here is that the churches themselves will be the only element of society upholding the standards of morality. Chadwick reminds his readers of the German heritage of the American Lutheran Church; American Lutherans recognized their historical connection as well as the "need to save and rebuild the Lutheran churches of Germany."⁶⁷ Rather than American Lutherans tending the German Lutheran Church, this comment speaks to American Lutherans having an ancestral duty to support European Lutherans in their plight, in the same way that the Apostle Paul called the Christians of Asia Minor to support the believers in Jerusalem as the root from which they themselves had grown.⁶⁸ Pastor Wurmbrand and others echoed this call to help fellow believers in Europe throughout the post-war period.

B. IDEOLOGICAL SHIFTS IN SOVIET SECULARISM: MARXISM-LENINISM TO STALINISM

Communism's self-reliance was upheld by an underlying secular humanism and materialism, but these atheistic philosophies were in direct conflict with religious beliefs and traditions already held in large parts of Russia and Central Europe. As part of the tenets of true belief in Communism, secularization would eventually replace religion as the people began to embrace logic over what some considered the superstition of religion. Therefore, the direction of forced secularization (considered progress) brought people face to face with religious persecution.

Religious persecution at many levels was the outworking of the clash between the pre-existing religious cultures in Central and Eastern Europe and the progressive humanism that Communism brought in. A historical perspective on the Cold War period such as this need not center around the leaders of the day, but can add understanding of life as it really was under communism through attention to the common man. One such group of ordinary people is the religiously oppressed citizens of the Soviet bloc. Their lives were strongly

⁶⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 3.

⁶⁷ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 3.

⁶⁸ Romans 15:25-27.

affected—even occasionally cut short—by the oppression of Communist atheism. They were—to varying degrees—not free to practice their faith inside the Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, briefly considering the thought and political leaders of Communist Russia leading up to and into the time period of the post-WWII era is significantly helpful to explain why ordinary Christians specifically suffered so much under Communism. This section begins to explain some of the differences between Communist thought leaders—Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. What matters in this discussion of these three is how their thoughts impacted the Communist attitude toward religion. All three saw religion as unnecessary, but each approached it slightly differently. In broad strokes, Marx laid the foundation—the subjection of religion in the public sphere; Lenin began painting religion in general as socially harmful belief; and Stalin supported the full-court press to eradicate religion from the entire Soviet Bloc.

1. Marxism-Leninism

In the early- to mid-20th century, the Soviet Union struggled through the implications of its transition from Marxism to Stalinism. Communist thought of this time period was shaped by Marx, Engels, and later Lenin, who shared common foundations in their views of religion. These men considered religion first a false perception of reality, constructed either to explain the unknown or to psychologically protect the masses from fear; secondly, they considered religion a real response to real suffering; finally, they agreed that religion would become extinct eventually, with the help of science and knowledge.⁶⁹ Chadwick believes that the fundamental underpinnings of this opposition to religion derived from the lack of socialist plot lines in the narratives of the most prominent world religions: “none of [them—world religions, that is—] reconciled their adherents to doctrines of class war or the dictatorship of the proletariat.”⁷⁰ Religions, in their minds, were therefore useless to furthering the socialist narrative; a distraction at best, an enemy of progress at worst.

⁶⁹ Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and East German State*, 23–25.

⁷⁰ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 17.

Marxism in practice changed somewhat up until Stalin came to power. Early Orthodox Marxism derided religion, but often allowed its practice so long as it stayed inside the churches and out of public view.⁷¹ Maaz, while admitting that the church writ large became the only dependable moral compass in Communist East Germany, also describes how even counter-political conversation was allowed inside the “safe space” of the church because it vented the people’s frustration with the oppressive system before it could explode in public or violent revolt.⁷² While Marxist governments pursued the eradication of public religion, they considered the interior of church to be a haven for—as they saw it—the dying sentiments of religion to be allowed to die in peace, in order to avoid accidentally strengthening religion through martyrdom.⁷³ Eventually, Marxist-Leninist governments abandoned this tactic, offering no quarter to religious adherents. In this regard, Stalinism was not a big transition—Stalin also advocated militantly pursuing religion to extinction.⁷⁴ Chadwick details both militant persecution of and compromise with Church leaders in Soviet lands, but the compromise was really cooptation of the church; it amounted to another prong of the main attack on the Church as a whole, lulling it to sleep with words and doctrine affirming friendship between Stalin and the Church.⁷⁵

Wurmbrand lamented that Leninism introduced a more severe view of religion as a plague: “Every religious idea, every idea of God—even flirting with the idea of God—is unutterable vileness of the most dangerous kind. Millions of sins, filthy deeds, acts of violence, and physical contagion are far less dangerous than the subtle, spiritual idea of a God.”⁷⁶ What began as hardline anti-religious thoughts in the 19th century laid the philosophical foundation for religious persecution in the next century.

⁷¹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 19.

⁷² Hans-Joachim Maaz, *Behind the Wall: The Inner Life of Communist Germany* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 48–49.

⁷³ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 19.

⁷⁴ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 93.

⁷⁵ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 93.

⁷⁶ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 80.

2. Stalinism

Ironically, Sawatsky reports that the high Stalinist period saw significant spiritual hunger in Russia, probably because of the tragedy of WWII that the nation had just experienced.⁷⁷ This hunger had a tangible outworking; some of Russia's Baptist churches grew in numbers (of congregants and of churches) and fervor throughout the period, despite the general concern to keep baptisms out of the eyes of the state.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Stalinists actively sought to drive religion out of people's lives by greater action than the Marxists had mustered—violently opposing those who confessed faith, indoctrinating children in humanistic atheism, and driving adult believers to practice their faith underground—if they dared practice at all.⁷⁹

As part of this secularization effort, the state sought to cut church ties with external leadership (i.e., the Pope in Rome,⁸⁰ as when the socialist Hungarian government promoted three priests after the Vatican excommunicated them solely for their government involvement).⁸¹ Those domestic church leaders who saved (or gained)⁸² their positions and lives by bending to the Communist Party lines were usually disavowed by their congregations as sellouts.⁸³ For example, Bishop Gienke in the GDR tried to build a bridge between the church and the GDR government head, Erich Honecker, through a private letter; shortly after it was leaked for the public to read, Gienke was voted out of office.⁸⁴ Other times, senior church leaders stayed silent (though they opposed communism) because they felt they could maintain their spiritual impact upon believers by staying in their positions, rather than to speak out and be deposed by communist leadership. Josif, a

⁷⁷ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 55–56.

⁷⁸ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 55–62.

⁷⁹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 20–24.

⁸⁰ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 35.

⁸¹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 36–37.

⁸² See Hungary discussion in the Appendix.

⁸³ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 35–38, 44–45.

⁸⁴ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 44–45.

Metropole in Siberia expressed this threat as his reason for silent tolerance.⁸⁵ Stalinist Russian authorities made a point to close churches whenever possible, and throughout the Communist Bloc religious education was oppressed by the government so that virtually all the communist nations either forbade religious education, restricted it to non-class hours, or constrained it within church premises.⁸⁶

While these three men were succeeded by Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and later Gorbachev as Communist rulers during the time period addressed here, the philosophical thought that Marx, Lenin, and Stalin taught became a biblical-equivalent for Communist leaders until the end of the 20th century. It was only during the late 1970s to mid-1980s that religious persecution waned. This relief was partly due to a growing political power of the Church in some countries. Maaz testified that between May and September 1989, the Synod of East German alliance of churches had become a political opposition voice to the GDR government.⁸⁷

C. CHURCH RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

For those who did not have the desire or the strength to resist the governmental pressure to conform, becoming counterfeit or coopted were common responses apart from disbanding entirely. Those churches that did not take these paths either faced open persecution or went underground.

1. Counterfeit Churches

Some further cooption of religious life happened at the church leadership level. In Bulgaria, Brother Andrew heard of the communist “counterfeit church,” in which former church leaders became mouthpieces of the Soviet government; in those cases, the real body of believers sometimes left the congregation and went underground.⁸⁸ Despite this conflict in the form of cooptation, Brother Andrew observed that even a church led by a pastor with

⁸⁵ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 96–97.

⁸⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 20–21.

⁸⁷ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 162.

⁸⁸ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 158–9.

loyalty to the secret police still grew in numbers and in faith, and he concludes that this growth even under challenging circumstances was a work of God that he could not have even hoped to bring about himself.⁸⁹

As an example of this decidedly unholy collusion, some prominent Orthodox priests—on both sides of the Iron Curtain—became state police informants or even spy handlers for the political gain of the Communist state. One such handler was Igor Susemihl, foster-brother to the eventual U.S. Army Reserve Colonel George R. Trofimoff—the highest ranking American military officer to be convicted of spying on his own country.⁹⁰ Susemihl (then Metropole of Vienna) was also a KGB handler who personally recruited Trofimoff to provide him thousands of photographs of U.S. and allied classified data from the Nuremberg Joint Interrogation Center (JIC) in Germany.⁹¹ The Soviet secret services used their spies for religious persecution as well as for national security purposes; perhaps they saw the two spheres as overlapping.

Socialist state infiltration of religious institutions was ecumenical. Henderson's research of declassified Stasi files confirmed The Team's suspicions: the files detailed the employment of Lutheran Minister Gerd Bambowski, who served as an informant and propaganda agent not only in East Berlin, but even into the West through his own interactions with Western church ministers.⁹² Maaz describes a portion of the church in Communist East Germany that was spiritually shallow; it served as a structure for communist government leaders to indirectly control the people's thinking through religious structures.⁹³

⁸⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 161–3.

⁹⁰ Andy J. Byers, *The Imperfect Spy: The Inside Story of a Convicted Spy* (St. Petersburg, FL: Vandamere Press, 2005), vii, 8–13, 51, 52, 68–69, 111.

⁹¹ Byers, *Imperfect Spy*, 114.

⁹² Henderson, *Tripping*, 75–112, 116–121.

⁹³ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 48–49.

2. Coopted Rituals

Another distinct part of counterfeit church was the degree to which the state coopted certain religious rituals and made them into state-sponsored rituals, intending to push God out of the deepest-held societal traditions and to use those same rituals as elements of building socialism. Examples include the *Jugend Weihe*, Welcoming Services, state weddings, and state funerals. *Jugend Weihe* (literally, youth baptism) was an attempt in Communist Germany (with analogs in other states) to take the place of religious ceremonies by substitution: in place of an already established Lutheran coming-of-age ceremony, Confirmation, children were required to pledge loyalty to the State instead of to God.⁹⁴ Infant baptisms found competition from a “Welcoming Service,” which served to register the baby officially—with family and friends in attendance.⁹⁵ State marriages neatly arranged for the consolidation of two ceremonies (the church wedding and the government wedding) into one, with the addition of state-funding to cover the ceremony, flowers and food for guests...some churches saw this ritual replacement as an underhanded incentive to buy state loyalty.⁹⁶

Funerals, likewise, became state-funded and -run events, with very little modification from the conventional church funeral except that the state eulogies praised each fallen as a “valiant soldier of the People’s Democracy.”⁹⁷ In this manner, the state competed for the sacred space of traditional rituals in the lives of its citizens. In many cases, particularly after sustained practice, the state posted a solid score against the traditional home team, religion.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 135–6, 141; Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 25–28, 44.

⁹⁵ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 141; Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 25–28.

⁹⁶ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 141; Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 25–28.

⁹⁷ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 141; Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 25–28.

⁹⁸ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 135–6, 141; Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 25–28, 44.

D. RELIGIOUS PERSISTENCE

Despite the magnitude of persecution endured by Christians under Communism, the Christian Church and faith endured. A brief discussion of first-hand persecution accounts demonstrates the need for the Church to hide; but simply hiding did not result in total reprieve from persecution, as the Communist governments pursued the underground church even further.

1. Eye-Witness Accounts of Religious Persecution

On the one hand, state-run tour agents showcased the overtly state-run churches to demonstrate the presence of religious freedom to tourists and visiting dignitaries; seeing a “strong church,” was supposed to convince foreigners that communism did indeed allow for free religious practice.⁹⁹ Sometimes the show was unconvincing: seeing a church from the outside, but not being able to enter; touting a domestically published Bible with no way to order it;¹⁰⁰ and former pastors citing the party line about religious freedom while hiding the scars they bore from inquisition-like torture.¹⁰¹ Other times, visitors encountered vibrant churches that seemed to be unhindered by state censorship or interference.¹⁰² It was occasionally the case that the church met so far off the beaten path that it was out of sight of the state police, even if no other measures were used to hide it.¹⁰³ Still other times, the church was allowed to continue because the pastor had been coopted by the state to inform on his members, or to preach the party line—willing or not, some pastors felt they had no choice but to comply.¹⁰⁴ Whatever the case, some Christians worshipped in relative freedom compared to others even within the same country.

On the other hand, significant, indisputable, first-hand evidence of persecution prevents any serious denial that a strong anti-religious sentiment existed in power positions

⁹⁹ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 11–12; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 82–84.

¹⁰⁰ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 92–93.

¹⁰¹ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 200–1.

¹⁰² Sparks, *Detour*, 23–27. This reference describes a church in Poland.

¹⁰³ Sparks, *Detour*, 24–30; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 163–4; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 112.

¹⁰⁴ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 15–17, 90; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 138–142, 200–1.

inside the Soviet Bloc.¹⁰⁵ The early Communist strategy was to squeeze the religious belief out of people and force a secularization upon society.¹⁰⁶ This forced secularization was attempted partly by societal pressure, initiated and perpetuated through state propaganda. The stories spread by state media of which rituals occurred in Christian worship services included strange graveyard rites and child sacrifice.¹⁰⁷ In 1966, Soviet newspapers accused Russian Baptists of ritual killing of their own children in order to atone for their sins.¹⁰⁸ After he was “disappeared” by the Securitate,¹⁰⁹ Richard Wurmbrand’s wife was tricked by false “fellow prisoners” who claimed to have seen his burial ceremony at the prison.¹¹⁰ Other parents were deprived of their children for teaching them religion in Romania.¹¹¹ Estranging those of faith in this manner was a prevalent tactic—its goal was uniformity by secularization.

2. Going Underground

Sawatsky raises a valid question in light of this persecution strategy: How can a church exist under an authoritarian regime that desires secularization as an end goal?¹¹² A partial answer to this question seems to be that part of the church goes underground to survive. The unregistered Baptists in the Eastern Soviet Union and Romania not only went underground,¹¹³ they also became as logistically self-sufficient as possible, through steps such as building hidden Bible printing presses in order to supply Bibles internally to their

¹⁰⁵ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 11–12; see also Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 34–44, 63, 82, 88, 129; Jesus Freaks, 30–35, 76–79, 84–87, 100–2, 141–2, 224–5, 268–9, 278–9, 304; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 40–41, 57–63.

¹⁰⁶ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 167; Ramet, *Social Currents*, 156, 176.

¹⁰⁷ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 87.

¹⁰⁹ The Securitate were the Romanian secret police.

¹¹⁰ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 33.

¹¹¹ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 134–5.

¹¹² Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 13.

¹¹³ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 17, 29–32, 93–142.

communities of believers.¹¹⁴ Some of these presses were ingenious: fashioned from entirely self-manufactured or repurposed parts of other machines, such as bicycle chains and washing machine motors.¹¹⁵ Even so, printing supplies were not easy to come by and often had to be smuggled in from the West.¹¹⁶

3. Pursuing the Underground Church

Christians (in addition to believers of other religions) often suffered severely for their faith under Communism,¹¹⁷ and maintaining a consistent hard line against religion, Soviet authorities cracked down on foreign Bible possession for visitors and Bible smugglers too. The KGB¹¹⁸ permanently confiscated some 30 cars from Pentti Heinilä and his team from 1970 to 1990.¹¹⁹ KGB/Stasi archives declassified in 1993 named 16 church-affiliated organizations that operated between the West and East, which the Stasi and KGB targeted to penetrate with operatives.¹²⁰

Sawatsky confirms the shortage of Bibles, referring to the “Soviet Bible famine,”¹²¹ quantified by the small numbers of Russian Bibles available to the existing Russian Orthodox and Russian Baptists as of the late 1960s. Records show about 190,000 Bibles for roughly 33 million aforementioned believers, which calculates to roughly 0.6 percent of the Protestant population owning one.¹²² One could look optimistically at this data in hopes that the few existing scriptures were at least held by key spiritual leaders, who could

¹¹⁴ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 139–164; Sawatsky, 305, 337; Henderson, *Tripping*, 5, 104–5, 109, 158–9, 161, 209; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 101–3; Sparks, *Detour*, 152, 159, 187–8; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 131.

¹¹⁵ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 147; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 305.

¹¹⁶ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 101–3; Sparks, *Detour*, 152, 159, 187–8; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 131.

¹¹⁷ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 71; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 68, 71–72, 131–153; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 96, 109–111; see also Wurmbrand, *Tortured* and Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*.

¹¹⁸ The implication in Heinilä’s writing is that these confiscations happened in Russia and East Germany, so his number may include what the Stasi took from them as well.

¹¹⁹ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 13, 449.

¹²⁰ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 449.

¹²¹ Sawatsky, “Bible Work in Eastern Europe,” 9; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 18.

¹²² Sawatsky, “Bible Work in Eastern Europe,” 9–10.

make the most use of them in leading their congregations; but there is at least one account of a Russian theology student in Leningrad who did not own even a New Testament.¹²³ Furthermore, Brother Andrew gives some of the first accounts of seeing the need for Bibles in churches inside the Iron Curtain—entire congregations with only a handful, or no Bibles at all.¹²⁴ Some entire nations (Albania) seemed to mirror this deficiency.¹²⁵ Both the registered churches and the underground churches had severe shortages of Bibles, a major problem for the Christian believers, who saw (as they do today) the Bible as the standard for moral behavior, as well as the key to understanding one's place before God and in the world. Christians needed the Bible spiritually like they needed food to eat physically. The demand for Bibles was there, and with the state in hot pursuit of their faith, there were few-to-no open ways to get it.

¹²³ Sawatsky, "Bible Work in Eastern Europe," 10.

¹²⁴ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 92–93, 107–8, 116, 153–60.

¹²⁵ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 231–4.

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III. SMUGGLING OPERATIONS

In this complex environment of diverse, Communist-controlled nations, the story of West-to-East Bible smuggling played out for nearly 35 years. This chapter aims to describe in some depth the origin and growth of some of the teams that smuggled Bibles, the operational tactics they used, and finally, to measure broadly—if possible—the quantities of Bibles, tracts, money, and other supplies that they delivered during the majority of the Cold War, from 1960 to 1989.

A. HOW THE BIBLE SMUGGLING BEGAN AND GREW: A MARTYR, A PRAYER, AND TWO BOOKS

The two primary initiators of Bible smuggling operations were Pastor Richard Wurmbrand from Romania and Brother Andrew from Holland. When these two men published their respective books in 1967, their calls pierced the hearts of Christians in the West. American Bible colleges were already a fertile field for short-term missionary recruitment; students looking to do something meaningful over summer months were eager to jump on the opportunity of a mission trip. Brother Andrew’s account seemed to inspire many of the support movements—including Bible smuggling operations—that ensued through the end of the Cold War.¹²⁶ As he crossed the Yugoslavian border with his first load of thinly concealed contraband Bibles, his “Bible smuggler’s prayer” uttered in that moment would become legendary¹²⁷:

Lord, in my luggage I have Scripture that I want to take to Your children across this border. When you were on earth, You made blind eyes see. Now, I pray, make seeing eyes blind. Do not let the guards see those things that You do not want them to see.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Brother Andrew started the organization Open Doors, which continued through the end of the Cold War (see Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 243; Sparks, *Detour*, 3); Richard Wurmbrand started Voice of the Martyrs (VOM): see Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 152; and Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹²⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13; Sparks, *Detour*, 50.

¹²⁸ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8.

In this instance—as it would happen many times thereafter—he successfully passed the border with his Bibles undetected. One guard was more interested in the Volkswagen car that he was driving than in looking for contraband, while the other stared straight at some tracts spread throughout his suitcase without recognizing them as contraband.¹²⁹ The success of this trip would propel Brother Andrew both to continue his smuggling trips into the Iron Curtain and to expand his operation in partners and in volume of Bibles and literature delivered to the underground church in the East.

Brother Andrew's account of his first two decades of Bible smuggling was published in 1967—the same year as Richard Wurmbrand's autobiographic, *Tortured for Christ*, recounted his 14 years of imprisonment and torture, and sounded his call for Christians in the West to support their brothers and sisters in the East. The impact of these two works simultaneously issuing calls for support and advocating for the underground church (using underground methods of supporting it) began a dramatic expansion of long and short-term missionaries and Bible smugglers in the late 1960s and 1970s.¹³⁰ Table 1 lists alphabetically many of the organizations engaged in Bible smuggling in Eastern and Central Europe, or supporting those efforts.

¹²⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 108.

¹³⁰ Sparks, *Detour*, 41–42; Henderson, *Tripping*, 31–32; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 72–73.

Table 1. Bible Smuggling Organizations

Communauté de secours aux Églises Martyres (Organization for the Relief of the Churches of the Martyrs), based in Geneva, Switzerland ¹³¹
Danish European Mission (Denmark) ¹³²
Door of Hope—Founded by expatriated Bulgarian pastor Harlan Popov ¹³³
<i>Glaube in der 2. Welt</i> (Switzerland) ¹³⁴
The Global Alliance of International Teams
Jesus to the Communist World—Founded by Richard Wurmbrand; later became Voice of the Martyrs ¹³⁵
<i>Licht Im Osten</i> (Light in the East), based in Stuttgart, Germany ¹³⁶
<i>Misjon bak Jernteppet</i> (Mission behind the Iron Curtain), based in Oslo, Norway ¹³⁷
The Navigators—Lonnie Berger describes in limited detail some operations in the East ¹³⁸
Open Doors—Founded by Brother Andrew (Andrew van der Bijl) ¹³⁹
Operation Mobilization—Founded by George Verwer
<i>Russia Cristiana</i> (Russia)—only known Catholic group dedicated to Bible smuggling ¹⁴⁰
<i>Slaviska Mission</i> (Slavic Mission), based in Stockholm, Sweden ¹⁴¹
<i>Suomen Evankelisluterlainen Kansanlätys</i> (Finnish Lutheran Mission), based in Ryttyla, Finland ¹⁴²
The Team—Special arm of a larger mission, founded before the 1970s ¹⁴³
Underground Evangelism—Founded by L. Joe Bass ¹⁴⁴

¹³¹ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹³² Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40.

¹³³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 31.

¹³⁴ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40. Translation: Faith in the 2nd World.

¹³⁵ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 171–2.

¹³⁶ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹³⁷ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹³⁸ Lonnie Berger, *Every Man a Warrior: Helping Men Succeed in Life. Book 1: Walking with God* (NavPress: Omaha, 2014), 12–13, 127.

¹³⁹ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40.

¹⁴⁰ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40.

¹⁴¹ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹⁴² Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 73.

¹⁴³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 36.

¹⁴⁴ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40, 43.

B. BIBLE SMUGGLING OPERATIONS

Having previously explained the vast disparity between demand for Bibles and supply of them inside Communist nations, a further question arises: how did the smugglers meet the defined need? In order to examine this question, a closer look at the actual smuggling operations and tactics is in order. This will primarily be done through first and second-hand accounts published by retired Bible smugglers themselves. The following section will discuss key elements of what is known about Bible smuggling organization, tactics, and materials.

1. Recruitment

Brother Andrew and Pastor Wurmbrand's initial push then drove the momentum of recruitment as well. Recruitment of short and long-term missionary Bible smugglers (mostly younger men and women) came from several sources. One of the largest sources was Christian college campuses in the United States.¹⁴⁵ George Verwer was on the leading edge of the college missions movement at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and the fervor for evangelism spread to Wheaton College outside Chicago and Emmaus Bible School in the United Kingdom as well.¹⁴⁶ Also in the U.K., Keston College (initially named the *Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism*) fed the missions and support movement with information and dialogue about the status of believers behind the Iron Curtain, including the publication of a full book detailing the status of believers and the persecution they faced.¹⁴⁷ This organization, while not physically involved in sending teams into the East, nevertheless made it on the KGB's list of "dangerous anti-Soviet organizations."¹⁴⁸ Table 2 shows a timeline of significant historical events in the Cold War along with several milestones in the development of European Bible smuggling.

¹⁴⁵ Dorothee Hinkelmann and Frank Hinkelmann, *Mehr als Studenten, Klapperkisten und Traktate: Operation Mobilisation in Österreich 1961–2011* (Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW) [Culture and Science Publishers]: Bonn, Germany, 2011), 15–19. English translation of the title: *More Than Just Students, Rust Buckets and Tracts: Operation Mobilization in Austria 1961–2011*.

¹⁴⁶ Hinkelmann and Hinkelmann, *Mehr als Studenten*, 22–23.

¹⁴⁷ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*; Raška, "Bibles for Communist Europe," 40, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Raška, "Bibles for Communist Europe," 40; A. V. Belov and A. D. Shilkin, *Diversion Without Dynamite*, "Politizdat," Moscow, 1976, cited in Kathleen Matchett.

Table 2. Abbreviated Timeline of Bible Smuggling Events

-
- 1945 – WWII ends
- 1946 – Winston Churchill declares that an “Iron Curtain has descended,” dividing Europe
- 1948 – Pastor Richard Wurmbrand is “disappeared” on 29 February by Romanian secret police for publicly adhering to the Bible’s teachings rather than following the political current of communism
- 1955 – Brother Andrew visits Poland for his first time intent on evangelism to Soviets (15 July)¹⁴⁹; he visits Czechoslovakia weeks later¹⁵⁰
- 1956 – Hungarian Revolt; Brother Andrew volunteers in refugee camps in West Berlin¹⁵¹
- 1957 – Brother Andrew crosses the Austrian-Yugoslavian border with the first contraband: a car full of Bibles, first uttering his “Smuggler’s Prayer”¹⁵² and traveling as far as Macedonia¹⁵³; later, Hungary,¹⁵⁴ where persecuted Christians encourage him to continue spreading the Gospel despite any suffering or added persecution¹⁵⁵; persecution of the Christian church begins in some places throughout the Soviet Union¹⁵⁶
- 1958 – Brother Andrew enters East Germany, finds “counterfeit church”¹⁵⁷
- 1959 – 5-year anti-religious campaign begun by Khrushchev¹⁵⁸; L. Joe Bass founds “the Evangelism Center,” later to be called Underground Evangelism¹⁵⁹; Wurmbrand is imprisoned for his second term¹⁶⁰
- 1961 – Soviets begin cracking down on churches through secret restrictive legislation¹⁶¹; Brother Andrew is inspired by a pocket-sized Ukrainian Bible to print his own Russian Bibles in a size more readily hidden and transported¹⁶²
- 1963 – The Dutch Bible Society offers Brother Andrew to fund pocket-sized Russian Bibles to be printed in England¹⁶³

¹⁴⁹ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 80–88.

¹⁵⁰ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 92–97.

¹⁵¹ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 101–4.

¹⁵² Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8.

¹⁵³ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 113–4.

¹⁵⁴ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 124–130.

¹⁵⁵ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 132.

¹⁵⁶ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 67.

¹⁵⁷ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 139–141.

¹⁵⁸ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 68.

¹⁵⁹ Malnic and Chandler, “Mission or Power Trip?,” 3.

¹⁶⁰ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 171.

¹⁶¹ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 67.

¹⁶² Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 202–8.

¹⁶³ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 209.

- 1965 – Brother Andrew first brings Bibles to China¹⁶⁴
 Wurmbrand released from second prison term,¹⁶⁵ emigrates to United States after he is ransomed by the Norwegian Mission to the Jews and the Hebrew Christian Alliance;¹⁶⁶ Brother Andrew brings tracts and printed scripture passages into Albania¹⁶⁷
- 1966 – Joe Bass enlists Wurmbrand to recruit for Underground Evangelism¹⁶⁸;
 Wurmbrand breaks association with Bass, founds rival “Jesus to the Communist World,”¹⁶⁹ which would later be renamed “Voice of the Martyrs” (VOM)
- 1967 – Brother Andrew publishes *God’s Smuggler*; Wurmbrand publishes *Tortured for Christ*
- 1968 – Brother Sam founds The Team and begins operations¹⁷⁰
- 1972 – East Germany signs Transit Agreement with West Germany allowing expedited travel to and from West Berlin
- 1977 – Lloyd Sparks begins his travels with a Pentecostal missionary organization¹⁷¹
- 1982 – Stasi “Operation Container” is authorized throughout Communist nations (22 March)¹⁷²
- 1983 – *OM Österreich* (Austria) and *Christliche Literaturverein*¹⁷³ formed¹⁷⁴
- 1989 – Berlin Wall comes down; U.S.S.R. begins to visibly erode
- 1991 – The author’s family moves to the vicinity of Vienna, Austria in April
-

2. Organization and Training

Many Bible smuggling operations mirrored the intelligence spy craft of the day. CIA agents go through extensive training and preparation for their operations, and they take as much time as able to train their assets as well.¹⁷⁵ The reason for this effort is that operations must be pulled off smoothly, efficiently, and without drawing the wrong

¹⁶⁴ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 213–8.

¹⁶⁵ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 51–52.

¹⁶⁷ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 230–1.

¹⁶⁸ Malnic and Chandler, “Mission or Power Trip?,” 4.

¹⁶⁹ Malnic and Chandler, “Mission or Power Trip?,” 4.

¹⁷⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 113–4.

¹⁷¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 1–3.

¹⁷² Henderson, *Tripping*, I, 213–4.

¹⁷³ A. k. a. CLV; literally, Christian Literature Association.

¹⁷⁴ Hinkelmann and Hinkelmann, *Mehr als Studenten*, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Antonio J. Mendez, “A Classic Case of Deception,” *Studies in Intelligence* 43, no. 3 (2000) https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB438/docs/doc_50.pdf, 3, 13.

attention in order to keep it clandestine or covert. Clandestine action is defined as action, the results of which are intended to not be known by anyone outside the few entrusted with planning and executing the action,¹⁷⁶ whereas covert action (CA) involves hiding the hand of the organization behind the action, accepting that the action will be observable to many.¹⁷⁷ Most Bible operations were planned to be completely clandestine; however, when observed or caught, the goal was to protect the greater operation by hiding the identities of host-nation contacts, hiding the identity of the sending organization, and minimizing loss or damage to assets involved—be they team members, vehicles, or contraband.¹⁷⁸ In this sense, Bible smuggling included both clandestine and covert action. While many organizations coordinated with each other for help executing operations, the segmentation of Bible smuggling teams overall and the lack of public networking between them served to increase the secrecy of their missions.¹⁷⁹

Among the Bible smuggling organizations of the 1950s through the 1980s, training varied from virtually none (as Brother Andrew figured it out for himself),¹⁸⁰ to on-the-job-training (OJT) only (as Sparks describes),¹⁸¹ to The Team's¹⁸² multifaceted program involving extensively studying after-action reports, group discussions, mock interrogation drills, and OJT runs.¹⁸³ The holistic training program paid off for The Team in anonymity for the greater part of a decade, and a massive amount of material smuggled to host nation contacts.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁶ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 11–12.

¹⁷⁷ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 12–13.

¹⁷⁸ Henderson, *Tripping*, 36, 46–47, 62, 68; Sparks, *Detour*, 200.

¹⁷⁹ Boel, “Bible Smuggling and Human Rights in the Cold War,” 263.

¹⁸⁰ See Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*.

¹⁸¹ See Sparks, *Detour*.

¹⁸² Cover name for a specific team of missionaries who trained for especially clandestine Bible smuggling. Henderson, *Tripping*, 13, 35–57, 116.

¹⁸³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13, 44.

¹⁸⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 116–18.

3. Tactics and Terminology

“Bible smuggling” is the term generally used to describe the gamut of clandestine, cross-border transportation of all the literature and various elements of support (money, printing supplies, etc.) for Christians inside the Soviet-controlled territory. Henderson uses the term “Trippers” to describe the teams that travelled from West to East under some other pretense to either covertly smuggle goods, or for reconnaissance and planning for future trips; “Tripping” became the verb for undertaking such journeys.¹⁸⁵ Tripping became a major undertaking for the NGOs who had the desire to do this smuggling as their part in the conflict against the oppression of their brothers and sisters in the East.¹⁸⁶ Each organization went about tripping slightly differently, but many used techniques which fit a very near definition of clandestine and covert action employed by the CIA.¹⁸⁷ Despite a lack of evidence that any Bible smugglers (except one)¹⁸⁸ had any intelligence training, many teams nevertheless used good spy craft techniques to defeat the obstacles posed by the Stasi,¹⁸⁹ KGB,¹⁹⁰ and other national secret service, law enforcement, and border patrol officers.

It should be noted that while many Bible smugglers were organized in NGOs, they virtually never presented themselves as organized at all—their common alibi was that they were tourists.¹⁹¹ Of the Trippers described in this study, Reverend Hathaway alone declared his organization; when the smuggled literature was discovered in his tour bus, he

¹⁸⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, especially p. 8, 116; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 91–93, 204; Sparks, *Detour*; Henderson, *Tripping*, especially 5–6.

¹⁸⁷ Central Intelligence Agency of the United States.

¹⁸⁸ Lloyd Sparks claimed to have U. S. Army Intelligence and Special Forces experience, including Bulgarian language studied at the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey: Sparks, *Detour*, 4, 7, 39, 47.

¹⁸⁹ Stasi is shorthand for Ministerium für Staatsicherheit (Ministry for State Security), the East German secret police: Joel D. Cameron, “Stasi,” Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Stasi>; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 246.

¹⁹⁰ *Komitet Gozudarstvennoye Bezupasnosti*, the Soviet Union's foreign intelligence service. William J. Daugherty, *Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency*, Lexington: University of Kentucky, 2004, xvii.

¹⁹¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 23–24, 46–47; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 77; Sparks, *Detour*, 18, 51.

was leading a trip into Czechoslovakia with his team organized as the tour guide company “Crusader Tours, Ltd.,” and was actually giving tours to cover his smuggling.¹⁹² The tactics they used for crossing borders, conducting travel and drops in hostile territory, and withstanding interrogation varied in scope and implementation. This section describes the preeminent tactics that Bible smugglers used to overcome Soviet border security and internal police. These tactics include identity protection, equipment, operational tactics, and finally, how many used prayer as part of their preparation and as a tactic itself.

a. *Identity Protection of Persons, Organization, and Contacts*

Just as CIA personnel take on cover identities, many Bible smugglers were known only by aliases to protect their identities during operations. Carrying these covers also protected their families and friends while living in the comfort of the safe countries they staged out of.¹⁹³ If they were caught, Bible smugglers would not acknowledge belonging to a team; any other members of the trip were either just friends, or were loosely affiliated through some common interest. This tactic of disavowing organizational affiliation made the entire trip seem less organized and more haphazard to the officials conducting the questioning—the goal was to minimize loss to the operation when under interrogation. Contact identities were protected through cypher (code) names in place of real names of foreign countries, contact names, vehicle names, and even their own names.¹⁹⁴ Even these code names were not written down, but were memorized along with corresponding maps to prevent compromise.¹⁹⁵ Host nation contacts could not know the details of the travelers’ plans for the trip so that they would not inadvertently compromise the travelers if interrogated.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 44–46.

¹⁹³ See Henderson, *Tripping*; Sparks, *Detour*; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*.

¹⁹⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 42, 58, 60, 62.

¹⁹⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 43.

¹⁹⁶ Henderson, *Tripping*, 36.

b. Equipment

A Bible smuggler's equipment included everything from vehicles to suitcases and gas canisters to printing presses. Vehicles were the primary conveyance of Bibles and literature for Trippers. They ranged from single motorcycles to small Eastern European cars to regular sedans, vans, busses, boats, and even full sized, multi-trailer trucks in some cases.¹⁹⁷ Occasionally, campers pulled behind their vehicle allowed Trippers both a good alibi (camping trip) and an extra place to store smuggled Bibles.¹⁹⁸ Some vehicles offered no greater hiding space than a standard trunk, with blankets piled on top.¹⁹⁹ Other times, vehicles were specifically modified to secretly hold a large number of Bibles and contraband literature. Henderson describes The Team entering Czechoslovakia with a large Ford Transit van that was outfitted with a false floor and wall compartment, including a sophisticated, electronic opening mechanism, the whole thing able to hide 1,400 Bibles.²⁰⁰ Within the vehicle, liquid propane gas canisters were modified to hold a small amount of propane; the rest of the space in the LPG tank was available to cram full of contraband Bibles and other literature.²⁰¹ While Western European publishers used commercial printing presses to print Bibles, Christian literature, and other books to be delivered to the East,²⁰² underground Christians behind the Iron Curtain built their own presses in hidden locations for printing their own forbidden Bibles.²⁰³ Some of the material was smuggled in, as were the required regular supplies such as ink and paper.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13, 58, IV, 126, 132; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 105, 256, 286, 377–8; Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 41, 44–47; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 74.

¹⁹⁸ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 82, 84–85.

¹⁹⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 107–8, 114–5.

²⁰⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13–22.

²⁰¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 9–11, 18; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, pictures 16, 17.

²⁰² Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 337; Henderson, *Tripping*, 63–65; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 205–210.

²⁰³ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 305, 337; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 134–164.

²⁰⁴ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 144–164; Henderson, *Tripping*, 5, 158–9, 161, 209; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 101–3.

c. Operational Tactics

On Lowenthal's Covert Action Ladder, the only rung that CIA and Bible smugglers share is the lowest: propaganda. While they did not use the higher rungs of political activity, economic activity, sabotage, coups, or paramilitary operations,²⁰⁵ Bible smugglers did use many CIA-style tactics to complete their operations. These smugglers needed to have a good cover story in order to not draw attention to themselves or reveal their purpose for traveling across borders and within hostile territory. As in the ARGO operation, CIA in- and ex-filtrations required the same anonymity for success. CIA operatives used fake Canadian and other national passports to avoid the attention of being U. S. citizens.²⁰⁶ Brother Andrew filled up his passport that contained the persona-non-grata stamps by travelling often in order to legally obtain a clean passport without those marks.²⁰⁷ The Navigators changed out legally obtained passports from each individual's country of citizenship in order to craft their historical pattern of countries visited and attempt to not arouse suspicion.²⁰⁸ Among the various Tripping teams, a go-to alibi was tourism, which was easy to associate with local events or historical places.²⁰⁹ A common tactic at police roadblocks and traffic stops was to start talking before the officer could ask any questions, play the lost tourist, and try to get directions to a local attraction.²¹⁰ Some teams kept these tactics recorded in a continuity binder for continued training and updating.²¹¹ Further tactics included ways to hide the contraband, Operations Security (OPSEC), drop site tactics, protecting contacts, and of course, border crossing tactics.

²⁰⁵ Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2012), 189.

²⁰⁶ Mendez, "Deception," 6, 7, 9.

²⁰⁷ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 146–8.

²⁰⁸ Berger, *Every Man a Warrior*, 12.

²⁰⁹ Sparks, *Detour*, 51–52, 207–30; Henderson, *Tripping*, 54–55.

²¹⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 46–47.

²¹¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 40.

(1) Hiding the Goods

Some Bible smugglers got quite creative in hiding their contraband for border crossings. Concealing printing ink bags taped to the body under clothing was a common method.²¹² Some barely hid the contraband at all, either loosely covering Bibles and tracts, or even being as bold as to leave them in the open in faith that God could and would protect them. This tactic worked sometimes.²¹³ Others hid the Bibles and goods on their persons (Sparks hid money for a contact inside a hole drilled in his shoe)²¹⁴ or underneath and inside cases, with a degree of disguise.²¹⁵ Finally, at the far end of the spectrum in terms of effort exerted at disguising the contraband, some teams went to great lengths to build secret compartments in their vehicles, campers, or even their propane gas cylinders in order to combine maximum security with maximum capacity. Sparks and Babcock detail the Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) cylinder with a complex opening mechanism;²¹⁶ Henderson and Babcock give details about their vehicles' secret compartments and operation.²¹⁷

(2) OPSEC

Understanding the personal danger of unlawful smuggling into Communist lands (both to themselves and to the indigenous believers to which they delivered the contraband), Bible smugglers developed varying degrees of operations security (OPSEC) to cover their tracks and avoid detection. Also, discovery of the Bible smugglers' identities could immediately shut down their operations, as members could easily be barred from entering Soviet countries. Perhaps the only thing worse than being labelled *persona-non-grata* was if Soviet authorities identified a Bible smuggler and followed their movements rather than arresting them immediately; this tactic could lead police to homes or drop sites used by domestic contacts, compromising an entire network. Border guards made use of

²¹² Henderson, *Tripping*, 5; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 101–3.

²¹³ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 165–6; Henderson, *Tripping*, 58.

²¹⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 151–2, 159, 167, 187–8, 198–201.

²¹⁵ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 14–15; Sparks, *Detour*, 56–57; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 13.

²¹⁶ Sparks, *Detour*, 9–11, 18; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, pictures 16, 17.

²¹⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 20–22, IV; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, picture 8.

the technology of the time (especially the SOUD system, an early computer database of vehicles and people on the Soviet watch list);²¹⁸ the communication between border crossing points was at times very sophisticated, allowing one entry location to notify another of when a certain vehicle had passed through. Brother Andrew recounts a couple from his team who arrived at a Russian border where the guards produced a list of the last four times and locations their vehicle had entered the U.S.S.R., simply out of suspicion at their arrival.²¹⁹ This synchronization between border points put extra pressure on Trippers running through the transit routes of East Berlin, since they knew their time on the route was being clocked, and it made them vulnerable to police detection when they exited the transit routes in the middle to meet a contact.²²⁰ The increased risk incurred through the enemy's use of technology made OPSEC that much more important. Even despite the increased risk, Trippers still frequently had success meeting contacts mid-transit route through planning, teamwork, and focused precision.²²¹

The makeup of the group traveling together could make a difference in how thoroughly guards searched. Brother Andrew noted that a man and woman traveling together were a team less likely to look suspicious to border or internal guards than other combinations.²²² Henderson described an intentional family make-up with a child, in which they could use an un-changed diaper as a deterrent to longer, more thorough searches.²²³ Attractive female team members could also serve to distract the guards from the focus of their search duties.²²⁴

Successful mission planning usually involved preparing for contingencies in many aspects. Any part of the initial mission plan could be compromised, necessitating an adjustment or abortion of the plan. Sparks' trip codenamed "Operation Heavy Bomber," in

²¹⁸ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 186–8; Henderson, *Tripping*, 141–150.

²¹⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 234–5.

²²⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–74.

²²¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–74; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 172–4.

²²² Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 145.

²²³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 47.

²²⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 47.

which he delivered some 40,000 Bibles via truck in a single trip, included the use of an emergency contact—who was especially valuable since the initial contact fell through.²²⁵ Sparks highlights the value of the anonymity of an emergency contact, while recognizing that this anonymity also made contacting him a serious challenge for the team.²²⁶ This operation was planned with such careful degree of anonymity and non-specificity of timeline that Sparks considered it a supernatural occurrence that the contact was ready for them on the exact day they arrived, some three years after planning began.²²⁷

Henderson describes some very deliberate and careful OPSEC steps that The Team used to ensure they protected their contacts, teammates, and operations. The 25km-rule meant that 25 kilometers before arriving at a border crossing they sanitized their vehicle and equipment, removing and destroying any receipts that could link them to their home base location, or to the location of their travel and contacts.²²⁸ They would never park less than 500–1000 meters from the contact’s actual house upon arriving²²⁹ and upon departing, would not stop again for anything until at least 50 kilometers from the contact’s house so that no one could connect them as being seen in the vicinity, and in order to throw any local authorities off their trail.²³⁰ This tactic also lessened the chance of a team being identified, even if they were spotted driving by.

(3) Drop Sites

While some distribution involved random door-step tract and Bible drops,²³¹ more often the Trippers had specific contacts or drop sites where they needed to deliver to meet a specific request or need. Sparks details this tactic in depth in his account of “Operation Heavy Bomber.”²³² His tactics in this case included pre-arranged markings near the drop

²²⁵ Sparks, *Detour*, 141–3,

²²⁶ Sparks, *Detour*, 141.

²²⁷ Sparks, *Detour*, 145.

²²⁸ Henderson, *Tripping*, 13.

²²⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 68.

²³⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 147.

²³¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 37–39.

²³² Sparks, *Detour*, 140–4, 146–7.

site to indicate if the site was clear or not during the arranged window of time (go, or safe signal), if the cargo had been dropped or not (in this case, they exchanged a verbal sign-countersign to let each other know that they perceived the coast was clear), and even a final signal if the pickup had gone as planned.²³³ Sparks occasionally used double “go” signs, in case the first was observed and the contact compromised by setting it.²³⁴

(4) Contacts

Protecting the identity and plausible deniability of a contact was a major concern for Bible smugglers. If this security step was not accomplished, it would undo the support and help that was the goal of the Tripper. Furthermore, underground Christians willing and able to be smuggling distribution contacts were often rare; they could not simply be replaced, and the trust built up between Bible smuggler and drop contact over time working together was also difficult to replace. For these reasons, the same contacts were sometimes used over and over again for years, despite the increased risk that repeated visits brought.²³⁵ Much of the security procedure protecting contacts was covered under OPSEC, but other procedures factored in as well. Dead drops were a valuable way to prevent actual contact between smuggler and contact, and in empty rural areas these were especially effective.²³⁶ If dead drops were not possible, then smugglers and contacts would arrange other ways of communicating ahead of time. It was easy to arrange a readily found meeting place and a window of time, coupled with a description of a vehicle or a symbol given to follow. The Trippers then did not need specific directions to the contact’s house, and the contact could abort the meeting if he or she determined all was not well.

Finally, contacts were given as little information about Bible smuggling teams and their methods as possible, to allow them plausible deniability, and to protect the network and operations from the police in case the contacts were interrogated.²³⁷ Often, though not

²³³ Sparks, *Detour*, 139–140, 147.

²³⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 139–140.

²³⁵ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 59–61; Henderson, *Tripping*, 67–69.

²³⁶ Sparks, *Detour*, 138–140.

²³⁷ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 62–63; Henderson, *Tripping*, 62.

always, pseudonyms were used by the Bible smugglers to protect their own identity from spies within the distribution network, and to give their contacts plausible deniability.²³⁸

The Team had established procedures to never admit to knowing any contact information until they knew for sure that their association with the contact was known to the police.²³⁹ They used multiple routes of travel over the course of consecutive trips,²⁴⁰ told their contacts little to nothing about their own travel and smuggling operations,²⁴¹ used code names for vehicles and countries, and used pseudonyms for themselves.²⁴² Unless they could park hidden within their contacts' properties, they observed the aforementioned distance rules regarding vehicle distance kept from a contact's house.²⁴³

(5) Border Crossing Techniques

Many Bible smugglers prayed a version of Brother Andrew's "Smuggler's Prayer" before crossing a Communist border, but most also had other tactics ready to use to thwart discovery of their contraband. They watched for patterns indicating which cars were searched in case it was possible to avoid being the randomly numbered vehicle subjected to extensive searching.²⁴⁴ Sparks noted one time when his team recognized the pattern the guards were using for their intensive searches, and they were able to let another drive in line ahead of them to take the place as the 4th car for random intensive searching.²⁴⁵ Since there were frequently several routes of travel possible, Trippers either made a point to use ones that were out of the way, or they favored heavy traffic points where guards would hurry searches.²⁴⁶ Brother Andrew stumbled upon this principle early on his first

²³⁸ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 42; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 14, 74–75, 309; Henderson, *Tripping*, 6.

²³⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 20–25, 46.

²⁴⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 36, 60–61.

²⁴¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 36.

²⁴² Henderson, *Tripping*, 6, 42, 58, 62, 80; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 42; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 14, 74–75, 309.

²⁴³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 47, 68.

²⁴⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 4–5.

²⁴⁵ Sparks, *Detour*, 3–7.

²⁴⁶ Henderson, *Tripping*, 60–61; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 121.

smuggling trip, noticing how the guards examined his passport and received him as if they rarely saw anyone cross at their station.²⁴⁷ He also downplayed the tracts he was bringing in, referring to them as “small things.”²⁴⁸ Other Trippers used similar verbal techniques when questioned, but many border guards were better trained to dig deeper—or the secret police were doing the questioning, in which case the interrogation was very thorough.²⁴⁹

d. Prayer

Prayer was considered both training and preparation by Christians on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Many Bible smugglers spent considerable time devoted to praying for the success of their missions and for the safety of all involved.²⁵⁰ While measuring effectiveness of supernatural phenomenon is both difficult and not the purpose of this study, it is worth mentioning that primary sources recount multiple events where supernatural protection seemed to be the only explanation for the outcome of their situations.²⁵¹ The Team even incorporated prayer and other spiritual disciplines into their training and trip preparation plan, as well as making it a scheduled event while on a mission.²⁵² Brother Andrew and his team took on the task of Bible smuggling with the belief that God was calling them to it. This foundational concept meant that they needed to seek His guidance and protection in each operation if it was to be successful. This attitude inspired his *Smuggler’s Prayer*, after which he passed a Yugoslavian checkpoint virtually unsearched with his hundreds of Bibles and tracts loosely concealed in a VW beetle, despite the border crackdown on any printed material.²⁵³

²⁴⁷ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8.

²⁴⁸ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 108.

²⁴⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 16, 145; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 115–6, 119; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 76–79; Sparks, *Detour*, 164–8, 192, 197–202.

²⁵⁰ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 80, 107–8; Henderson, *Tripping*, 13, 43; Sparks, *Detour*, 50.

²⁵¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 45, 62, 67, 145; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8, 114–5, 124–6, 129–30, 165–6, 185–6, 190; Henderson, *Tripping*, 127–8.

²⁵² Henderson, *Tripping*, 13, 42–45.

²⁵³ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 107–8.

Prayer was not just used as preparation, but also as a method during unexpected security hurdles or captivity. Brother Andrew’s newest team brought an entire van into Russia in 1966 with a trunk full of Bibles “hidden no better than even an amateur adventurer could contrive.”²⁵⁴ The goods were not found despite a thorough search, and despite the guards recognizing the van and knowing of the last several times it had entered the country; he attributes the narrow escape to God answering their prayers before and during the search.²⁵⁵ Henderson describes a team leader explaining his perspective on the balance between prayer and proper tactics—codified by his team as “The Principles,” and strictly adhered to: “The Principles deal with basic security, but it’s God who is the basis and ever-present out-working of our security. Security comes from Him, not from these Principles, or our daily work.”²⁵⁶ Since it reflected the faith they had that God could protect them in any situation, prayer was as much a security tactic to Bible smugglers as any of the other tactics they took so seriously.

4. Support to Bible Smugglers

The types of support provided from the West to the East depended on the need, the understanding of the need, and the degree of confidence that support could be provided. The need was communicated at times from the East, or observed and reported back to the West, as Brother Andrew and Richard Wurmbrand did. Later on, reporting the needs of the Underground Church became a mission in itself, one that was taken on by Keston College; Richard Wurmbrand’s organization, Jesus to the Communist World (later renamed Voice of the Martyrs); and some of the more organized teams such as The Team.²⁵⁷ Sparks’ team also took plenty of effort to chart and relay information gathered inside the Iron Curtain for missionary Bible smuggling efforts.²⁵⁸ This section covers how Bible smugglers

²⁵⁴ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 234–5.

²⁵⁵ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 234–5.

²⁵⁶ Henderson, *Tripping*, 41.

²⁵⁷ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*; Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40, 43; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 113–150; Henderson, *Tripping*, 73.

²⁵⁸ Sparks, *Detour*, 103, 110–4.

financed their trips and raised support for supplies, and what support locations they used for staging trips safely.

a. Financing

Funding for Bible smuggling operations came from multiple sources. Some Trippers, such as Brother Andrew, did not raise their own money, but accepted donations from fellow Christians who wanted to support the Bible distribution that they saw as God's work.²⁵⁹ Brother Andrew worked with personal funding and these donations to run his entire operation: trip expenses, Bible and literature production, and vehicles. L. Joe Bass's organization, Underground Evangelism (UE), financed several Bible smuggling efforts, and partnered with Reverend Hathaway after the latter was released from prison for a term he served for smuggling Christian literature into Central Europe.²⁶⁰ UE also bankrolled The Team until 1973, at which point the partnership was severed for unclarified reasons.²⁶¹ After The Team's members prayed for several days about how the mission should continue, Light in the East (LiO) called to say that they would finance The Team at the exact same level that UE had before.²⁶² Some other Christians, who owned publishing businesses in Western Europe and the United States, also donated vast amounts of Christian literature and Bibles to be smuggled.²⁶³

b. Support Bases

Bible smuggling operations were planned and staged out of Western European nations like Austria, Finland, and West Germany.²⁶⁴ Limited details on the West Germany locations were discovered in this study, therefore, it will focus on the former two. Various locations in these safer countries housed team headquarters functions, operational planning

²⁵⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 55–56, 68–69, 99, 105, 181–2, 206–9.

²⁶⁰ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 398.

²⁶¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 114.

²⁶² Henderson, *Tripping*, 114–5.

²⁶³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 63–64; Beattie, *Caught With Bibles*, 10–12; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 174–5.

²⁶⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 35, 43, 62, 63–65; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 74, 100; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 13–16, 182–204, 318–323.

files, training areas, staging areas, and even vehicle repair and modification garages. These key geographic locations had several benefits in terms of enabling the Bible smuggling mission, including proximity to the Soviet Bloc, a large international community to provide anonymity, and reliable infrastructure for local sustainment and transportation.

(1) Vienna

Austria had a unique post-WWII trajectory, opting for neutrality in exchange for the withdrawal of occupying allied power forces, and its independence in 1955.²⁶⁵ This decision potentially sealed its fate as a haven in between the East and West opposing forces into which the Cold War spiraled. Vienna's destiny was still in question at the time Winston Churchill made his famous Iron Curtain address on an American college campus; he actually named Vienna as one of the cities over which "an Iron Curtain has fallen," seemingly because at the time, it was considered possible that it could have still been parsed out to the Soviet Union among the occupying forces.²⁶⁶

The CIA's covert actions surrounding literature distribution hinged largely on distributing requested literature to Eastern travelers as they visited neutral Vienna, rather than attempting to smuggle literature into the Iron Curtain. Since a large amount of the Romanian literature requested in this manner was Bibles, the CIA had a limited part in the spreading of God's Word into the Soviet Union between 1969 and 1974.²⁶⁷ Austria's capitol city, Vienna, was the CIA Book Program's "most important distribution point,"²⁶⁸ and it was a similar hub, headquarters, and staging point for Christian Bible smugglers as well. It should therefore be a central geographic focus in any further study endeavoring to dig deeper into this topic. Vienna was geographically important, being within a few hours' drive of major cities in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Slovenia. The significant size of the international community within Vienna provided a curtain of anonymity for Americans,

²⁶⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 125.

²⁶⁶ Winston Churchill, "Iron Curtain Speech" in Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001), <https://books.google.com/books?id=vjSliiGAx1MC>, 11–12, 41.

²⁶⁷ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 271, 288, 293.

²⁶⁸ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 295–308.

Finns, Brits, Germans, Swiss, and Christians of other nationalities to blend in to the mix. Furthermore, it was also (as it remains today) a vibrant center for the Arts, and therefore provided solid purpose (read: plausible alibi) for tourists and student visitors coming from both the East and the West to meet for non-political purposes.

(2) Finland

Finland's significant border with Russia proper (1309 km; and 1250 km of coastline very close to Russia's coast), as well as its far northern location, allowed it to be a potentially easy in-roads from the West to the East. Several Finnish missions conducted Bible smuggling operations with these factors helping their cause.²⁶⁹ Furthermore, a Soviet Union transit route existed between Austria and Finland, which the Finnish Trippers demonstrated could be put to good smuggling use as they traversed it back and forth.²⁷⁰ The route was long, going through Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Moscow before getting into Finland, but it allowed the en-route delivery of, among other things, several printing press parts for the underground Bible printing in the U.S.S.R.²⁷¹

C. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

How effectively did Western Bible smugglers rise to the challenge of delivering the number of Bibles needed? For the purpose of measuring effectiveness of Bible smuggling, two methods are employed: measuring quantities of material moved, and adaptation of methods to meet changing adversary tactics. It is not possible at this time to measure quantities of successful versus unsuccessful trips, as none of the authors list these data exhaustively; rather, they weave their trips into a narrative in which some trips were successful, others not.

1. Smuggled Materials

This section attempts to outline and describe a brief overview of the scope and breadth of what Bible smugglers transported, how much at a time, and how much overall.

²⁶⁹ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 318–323; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 180–2, 185–8, 215–7.

²⁷⁰ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 194.

²⁷¹ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 194–8.

Totals should not be considered exhaustive, but reflect a representation of this author's findings in the referenced works. As mentioned in Chapter I, the greatest cry for aid was the request for Bibles. Brother Andrew was one of the first to smuggle Bibles into Communist lands. At times he took only a few, other times he brought a suitcase or a car-full, and at the culmination of his efforts into this region, his organization transported many hundreds of Bibles at a time in a larger truck.²⁷² When he began to focus on China, his payload size went up to the thousands and tens of thousands, finally reaching a pinnacle with "Project Pearl," a sea-born infiltration of a million Chinese Bibles onto a single beach.²⁷³ Sparks also conducted smaller operations, but worked up to a massive haul with "Operation Heavy Bomber,"²⁷⁴ and Heinilä operated several large Bible smuggling vehicles including a multi-trailer semi that could carry 100,000 or more Bibles at a time.²⁷⁵

Brother Andrew's organization, Open Doors, focused on delivering tracts or printed Bibles in the native language of each nation they visited. They raised their own funds and partnered with established missionary organizations that already had printing operations set up to print new Bibles in most-needed languages, or to miniaturize Russian and Ukrainian Bibles for easier transportation, smuggling, and hiding.²⁷⁶ Other teams, however, also branched out to supply other materials to support domestic Eastern and Central European believers. Some supplied raw materials (ink, paper, and a guillotine-style paper cutter for cutting bound pages) to underground churches that had their own homemade printing presses.²⁷⁷

Beattie relays how her eventual husband, Stephen, smuggled 75,000 Romanian kid's books into the country.²⁷⁸ Beattie had designed these books as illustrated Bible

²⁷² Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 234–5.

²⁷³ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 249–250.

²⁷⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 1–11, 131–149.

²⁷⁵ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 324–382.

²⁷⁶ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 205–9.

²⁷⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 101–3.

²⁷⁸ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 82.

stories, finding that her nation lacked such teaching materials for young children.²⁷⁹ She even enlisted a well-known American illustrator—Samuel Butcher, famous for the “Precious Moments” publications—to illustrate and print them pro-bono for the cause.²⁸⁰ Stephen’s primary method of smuggling these books (and Bibles that he smuggled elsewhere into the Iron Curtain) was hiding them in secret compartments inside a van or other large vehicle.²⁸¹ The Team claimed to shuttle an aggregate of 150,000–250,000 Bibles each year, done over the course of dozens of trips, for over a decade.²⁸²

2. Adaptation to Enemy Tactics

How dynamic were the teams when confronted by effective customs and tighter security procedures? Were they ahead of the guard tactics, or did they have to respond after someone got caught? How did they communicate and share guard tactics? The published stories show that most Trippers were serious enough about their work to honestly evaluate their methods, attempt to measure effectiveness, and make adaptations to increase effectiveness on a regular basis. An example of such adaptation follows.

In Albania it was especially difficult to get material in and then to distribute it in a population that was hyper-vigilantly anti-religion. Babcock tells of his team floating up to 5,000 plastic trash bags filled with Bibles and tracts down the several rivers into Albania, since tourism (their cover) into the country was not allowed for most Westerners.²⁸³ It was only through some Finnish team members who were able to get visas that the team could reconnoiter and get an idea of what this operation’s impact had been. They discovered an unopened bag of theirs in the Tirana Museum of Atheism with an inscription decrying the way that Western nations attempted to send propaganda into Albania.²⁸⁴ The display further detailed that screens now filtered each of the rivers to prevent such propaganda

²⁷⁹ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 10–12.

²⁸⁰ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 10–12.

²⁸¹ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 12.

²⁸² Henderson, *Tripping*, 49.

²⁸³ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 243–4.

²⁸⁴ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 243–4.

from polluting the people.²⁸⁵ In response to this, Babcock's team stopped using this method, and tried elaborate contraptions to float literature into the country via air balloons with special releases; but after one drastically failed attempt, they determined that route was not worth a second try.²⁸⁶

Brother Andrew was one of the primary innovators, being the first of the Bible smugglers to put the trade into practice, which necessitated multiple adaptations along the way. His initial goal was to preach inside the Iron Curtain; this morphed into meeting the demonstrated need to supply Bibles in every language under Communism; then the secrecy and efficiency required for this second goal necessitated printing Bibles in smaller, pocket-sized editions.²⁸⁷ Later, as the European theater of Communism opened with the end of the Cold War, Open Doors adjusted its methods to openly delivering massive amounts of Bibles to Eastern Europe, and finally, Brother Andrew found himself preaching the Gospel in China and Cuba.²⁸⁸ His methods were not always based on effectiveness, but on following the guidance he believed he was receiving from God; seeing a need, and responding to it, no matter how illogical it sounded at first. An exception to this trend was his inspiration for printing his own Russian pocket Bibles; holding a Ukrainian pocket Bible, he realized how many more Bibles of this size he could transport on each trip he made.²⁸⁹ These were sometimes one-time trips never repeated, so every ounce of payload mattered on each trip. Other Trippers produced micro Bibles in plastic and leather, so they could be durable enough to hide fully submerged in whatever hiding place was available: a full coffee cup, toilet, or any other suitable hiding place.²⁹⁰

Sparks' account describes him exercising critical thinking in many situations, constantly problem solving to overcome challenges he faced. He attempted to apply his

²⁸⁵ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 244.

²⁸⁶ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 244–5.

²⁸⁷ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 80–88, 92–95, 102, 107–9, 116, 202–9.

²⁸⁸ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 218–222.

²⁸⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 202.

²⁹⁰ Piia Latvala, *Light to the East? – The Finnish Lutheran Mission and the Soviet Union 1967–1973* (Helsinki, Finland: Suomen Kirkkohistoriallinen Seura, 2008), 264.

intelligence training to cataloguing and analyzing information from Trippers getting caught during operations so that the entire mission team could adjust tactics, techniques, and procedures and minimize future losses.²⁹¹ The Team also spent time planning and analyzing thus, and some of their tactical adaptation involved contacts they used to plan operations—they had to cut ties with a significant contact after they suspected (later verified) that he was actually a Stasi agent.²⁹²

D. COMPARISON TO STATE-LEVEL IDEOLOGICAL OPPOSITION AND COVERT ACTION

From the Western side of the Cold War, the U.S. government also desired to infiltrate Western ideology—or at least Western literature to promote independent thinking—into Soviet-bloc nations for the purpose of exposing the secluded Soviet denizen to Western ideas that they might find to be not so bad after all.²⁹³ It was a bipolar battle, and instead of using the nuclear warheads that stood ready, both sides frequently traded ideological rhetoric fire; Soviet nationalized press countered the propaganda they encountered coming east with pamphlets and books of their own that raved about the evils of Capitalism.²⁹⁴ In this tense environment, Bibles seemed to be another attempt at ideological warfare through propaganda. Soviets suspected that many Trippers were working for the CIA, and responded by implementing counter-smuggling efforts targeting Bible smugglers specifically.

Christians consider the Bible to be truthful (historically and in every other way); they would therefore categorize it as “white propaganda” by the CIA’s definition.²⁹⁵ On the Soviet side, Stasi and KGB officials (further referred to as “opposing forces”) categorized the Bible closer to “black propaganda.”²⁹⁶ They saw the subversive effects of

²⁹¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 135–8.

²⁹² Henderson, *Tripping*, 77–121.

²⁹³ Reisch, *Hot Books*, IX, X.

²⁹⁴ Gouverneur, “Underground Evangelism,” 81; Reisch, *Hot Books*, IX-X. See also *Diversion Without Dynamite* as an example of Soviet counter-propaganda.

²⁹⁵ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 75.

²⁹⁶ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 76; Henderson, *Tripping*, 71–73.

Biblical Christianity on the oppressive communist system, and several officers made multiple promotions by focusing effort toward stopping the spread of biblical literature into the Iron Curtain.²⁹⁷ Indeed, the debate surrounding ideological conflict and information warfare is still viable today, in an age where information is easily manipulated.²⁹⁸ Bibles were outlawed by the Soviets, and categorized as pornography and black market materials as a way of trying to control the flow of religious ideas, and especially a religion seen as primarily Western.²⁹⁹ These two categories seemed to be used because pornography and most other Western literature were also classified as Western propaganda,³⁰⁰ or because Bibles were occasionally moved using the same methods and logistical lines as black market smugglers used.³⁰¹ Using existing smuggling lines is a method CIA agents have used when attempting to move suspicious items covertly across borders.³⁰²

1. Actual CIA Programs Intersecting with Bible Smuggling

CIA political influence operations in Soviet countries included the Book Project,³⁰³ the *Samizdat* distribution and Nationalities programs begun by President Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s,³⁰⁴ and another propaganda campaign under NSDD-32, signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1982.³⁰⁵ It is not clear that Soviet government officials were aware of these specific U.S. government programs at the time, but they ran concurrently with the Bible smuggling operations examined here, and the Soviets certainly tried to close their borders when they discovered that unwanted western literature was getting through.³⁰⁶

²⁹⁷ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 70–112, 116–121, 134–135.

²⁹⁸ See Jolanta Darczewska, “The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare: The Crimean Operation, a Case Study,” *Point of View* 42, May 2014, <https://cle.nps.edu/xsl-portal/site/8dd1de25-b6c9-4f7e-be5c-79c282021ae3>.

²⁹⁹ Sparks, *Detour*, 5–6, 193–4, 200–1; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 85, 158–9; Henderson, *Tripping*, 16, 71–72.

³⁰⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 71–73.

³⁰¹ See Henderson, Sparks, Brother Andrew.

³⁰² Dr. D. Robarge, guest speaker, Covert Action, NPS, 17 February 2017.

³⁰³ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 15–19, 42–43.

³⁰⁴ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 186–87.

³⁰⁵ NSDD-32; Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 196–98, 201–3.

³⁰⁶ Reisch, *Hot Books*, X, XXIII.

2. Soviet Counter-Bible Smuggling Operations

As the Stasi recognized the increase of Bible smuggling channels into East Germany (7 were identified by their agent by 1973), they began to shift resources toward countering what they thought was a serious CIA operation.³⁰⁷ Targeting specific Bible smuggling teams from Open Doors, LiO, Gustav-Adolf-Werk, and VOM, the Stasi teams conducted several operations to uncover the extent of this smuggling and to eventually shut it down: Operations “Apostle,” “Transport,” and “Container” would significantly damage the resources and operations of these and other teams connected to them.³⁰⁸ These counter-smuggling operations, while damaging to Bible smuggling efforts, were shut down with the fall of the Berlin Wall,³⁰⁹ as the Stasi shifted their focus to what would become of them in the new world order being established.

³⁰⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 100–2.

³⁰⁸ Henderson, *Tripping*, 101, 111, I, II, 121, 213–4.

³⁰⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 213–4.

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IV. MOTIVES FOR SMUGGLING

For the Christians involved in Bible smuggling, the world-wide spread of the good news (the Gospel) contained in the Bible results from a four-part theology-based motivation: a response to God's love, a compassion response to the spiritually lost, a promise of future rewards, and obedience to a mandate from God. This chapter will also discuss how the alignment of Communist ideology against religion in the East caused some Western believers to attribute a moral superiority to their own democratic ideology, which reinforced their motivation to support Communism's downfall—or at least to contribute small steps toward its subversion. To a significant degree, Western Christians believed that it was worthwhile to support the ideological subversion of Communism (because of Communism's suppression of all faith and of the Word of God specifically) as much as it was worthwhile to support the individual Christians living under the shadow of the Iron Curtain.³¹⁰ These motivators drove them to take the significant personal risks they faced in order to accomplish the mission of spreading the Bible to those inside the Iron Curtain.

Through biographical works recently published, there is new access to look inside the minds of many of the Bible smugglers of this time period. Academically—as in other contexts—one struggles to judge people's true motives aside from comparing their stated motives with the follow-through of their actions. Using this words-and-actions methodology, the majority of Bible smugglers whose stories are recorded in print fell into the category of motivation aligned with their words. Some, however, seemed to have side motivations or ulterior motives, not following through with the lofty purposes they claimed. An examination of smugglers' motivations here addresses both cases.

³¹⁰ Wurmbrand calls for this (and the response from the West demonstrates the agreement) in *Tortured*, 54, 60; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 234–5; Henderson, *Tripping*, 135; Sparks, *Detour*, 78–79; Latvala, *Light to the East?*, 6.

A. WHY DID WESTERN CHRISTIANS SMUGGLE BIBLES? A STUDY OF MOTIVATIONS

What makes people intentionally, with forethought and planning, break laws knowing full well that their actions could result in negative social stress,³¹¹ interrogation, arrest, imprisonment, and even possible torture or death? Some might say lots and lots of money could motivate someone to accept such risk; and money is indeed one influence tool used globally to recruit spies. Yet, there does not appear to be any significant personal financial gain associated with Bible smuggling that could balance out the personal risks at stake. Were Bible smugglers classically rational actors, did they exercise unusual agency against common sociological models, or was something else at work? This chapter will consider the Office of Strategic Services' (OSS)³¹² MICE (money, ideology, coercion, and ego)³¹³ and Cialdini's RASCLS (reciprocation, authority, scarcity, commitment and consistency, liking, and social proof) motivators, the ethical concerns surrounding Bible smuggling (and how ethics affect the ideological and theological motives), ulterior motives among Bible smugglers, and finally, application of the theories of Value Rationality and Instrumental Rationality. Given the ethical questions raised by the use of clandestine tactics to circumvent government authority, a discussion of the origin of Bible smugglers' motives is needed to understand how they came to be smugglers. A study of influence factors includes those employed by other clandestine and covert organizations like the CIA.

1. Applicable MICE and RASCLS

Bible smugglers used spy craft—to the degree that they were essentially acting as spies—in clandestinely transporting material and information through security checkpoints and ideologically hostile territory. One can compare the individual-level motivations that drove them to the influence and motivation factors involved in human intelligence. The OSS listed four main motivations for why spies do their work: money, ideology, coercion, and ego (MICE). Randy Burkett claims that Robert Cialdini's six principles of influence

³¹¹ This is a reference to Ramet's list of social movement factors: Ramet, *Social Currents*, 176–7.

³¹² OSS was the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of today.

³¹³ Randy Burkett, "An Alternative Framework for Agent Recruitment: From MICE to RASCLS," *Studies in Intelligence* 57, no. 1 (March 2013), 7–17.

are even more important today in agent recruitment and handling than MICE are. Cialdini describes RASCLS as important social rules that trigger natural human reactions—without the subject consciously applying much thought to a response.³¹⁴ Many Bible smugglers considered themselves missionaries, and they did not get recruited lightly to engage in clandestine activity which they knew could land them in jail. Their activities and commitment to the cause and mission were purposeful and deliberate. Nevertheless, many of these influence factors apply to their motivations.

While ego and excitement were likely factors for some smugglers, ideology—supported by a Christian worldview generally, and spreading democratic freedom of religion, more specifically—was the key motivator for the majority of the Bible smugglers.³¹⁵ In the aftermath of their WWII victory over Nazism, Western powers came to hold a strong perception that their nations were both ideologically and morally superior.³¹⁶ Just like intelligence agents, it seems that once ideologically committed to the cause of Bible smuggling, men and women usually did not need most of the other influence and motivation factors (especially some of the more common ones like money, coercion, and revenge). As Burkett said of agents, “an agent committed to an ideology can be a powerful weapon.”³¹⁷

Reciprocity is the principle that if person A initiates a favor for person B, person B feels a strong need—a genuine desire even—to reciprocate a favor back to person A. Person B may even go to great lengths to repay an insignificant debt, simply because they feel they owe it back.³¹⁸ In this same way, Christians know they owe a debt of gratitude to God for the forgiveness they have been shown according to Biblical teaching, and this gratitude manifests itself in reciprocating love by obeying God’s commands, even to the

³¹⁴ Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: Science and Practice* 5th ed., Boston: Pearson Education, 2009, 2–8.

³¹⁵ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 234–5; Henderson, *Tripping*, 70–71, 135; Latvala, *Light to the East?*, 6; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 152–160; Sparks, *Detour*, 78–79; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 234–5; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 127–132, 138–9, 143.

³¹⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 3–4.

³¹⁷ Burkett, “MICE to RASCLS,” 10.

³¹⁸ Cialdini, *Influence*, 19–20, 22–49.

point of death.³¹⁹ Commitment and consistency are both significant motivation factors for Christian Bible smugglers, in that the act of covertly smuggling Bibles into dangerous lands was seen as a measure of one's commitment to the spread of the Gospel, and was a demonstration that one's actions were consistent with the beliefs one claimed. No one wanted to be called a hypocrite in the way Jesus called out the Pharisees of his time for saying one thing but doing another—being committed in word only, but not in deeds.³²⁰

Liking is the influence factor that appeals to one's general feelings about another person. If the influencer is attractive, or seems to have something in common with the influenced, then the power of that influence is greater.³²¹ A shared emotion or common experience can also affect this influence. The Christian parallel of this element is that Christians recognize and empathize with the hopeless, oppressed, and lost people in the world, and are called to follow Jesus' command to love people in these circumstances as he did.³²² This definition may not describe influence from the object over the Christian, but it has a similar effect; the Christian in many cases acts in the best interests of the person they care about, rather than their own self-interest. Such actions were demonstrated many times by Bible smugglers, to the degree that their actions were influenced far beyond liking. In reality, they were fueled by love; this motive will be addressed specifically later in the chapter.

2. Non-applicable MICE and RASCLS

Some of these influence factors did not appear frequently among the Bible smuggling community. This section will briefly explain some possible reasons why they are not evident in this demographic.

³¹⁹ Jesus told a parable of two servants who had been forgiven different debt amounts, the moral of which was that the one who was forgiven more would love more—this is a form of reciprocity.

³²⁰ See Matthew 23.

³²¹ Cialdini, *Influence*, 141–9.

³²² Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19. In verses 16–21, he made it clear that he himself was taking on the very mission described in this passage of Isaiah: “to proclaim good news to the poor. . . proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.” See also I John 3:16-17.

a. Money and Coercion

Of the MICE factors, money of any substantial amount was not promised to anyone in the Bible smuggling line of work. There is also no evidence of coercion being used to motivate Bible smugglers, nor could it have worked, since the banner for Bible smuggling operations was evangelism (the spread and support of the Gospel message of Christianity), for which blackmail would be counter-effective. One can influence compassion for those in need, but it cannot be forced in a coercive way.³²³

b. Revenge

Although revenge can be a tempting reaction after being harassed, persecuted, questioned, or jailed, Bible smugglers often did not see the opposing security guards and intelligence agents as enemies. Rather, they considered the entire battlespace to be a contest of spiritual forces with physical manifestations as described in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.³²⁴ There is simply no other explanation for the way that these men and women could not only bear up under torture, but also (in some cases) make statements of forgiveness and love to the very guards who carried out their torture,³²⁵ other than to recognize the parallels to Jesus' command to love one's enemies³²⁶ and the example he set in following this command.³²⁷ In the same way that Pastor Wurmbrand was able to separate the Communist ideology from the men who carried out his torture, many Bible smugglers saw themselves opposed only to the ideology or spiritual forces, not opposed to the guards and policemen themselves.

In light of the possibility of spiritual warfare, many smugglers and missionaries wrote of how they experienced supernatural events and outcomes during their normal smuggling trips. Brother Andrew tells dozens of stories of how his failure—purposeful or

³²³ There is no significant evidence of coercion as a motivator for the Bible smugglers within the scope of this study.

³²⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 47; Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 35–44; Ephesians 6:12.

³²⁵ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 35–44, 52, 77; Sparks, *Detour*, 60–61, 68.

³²⁶ Matthew 5:44.

³²⁷ Luke 23:34.

unintended—to use correct covert tradecraft nevertheless resulted in successful smuggling missions.³²⁸ His prayer for God to “make seeing eyes blind”³²⁹ was the first of many times he relied upon spiritual help for mission success. In one example in 1966, he and a team brought hundreds of Russian Bibles into the country that should have been found during the inspection of their station wagon, but were missed despite the fervent search that the guards conducted.³³⁰ Furthermore, when KGB files became available for public consumption, Brother Andrew found that many of his contacts had informed on him; other contacts had been compromised; and his own book had become required reading to train new KGB officers.³³¹ Despite this infiltration of his organization, his work continued uninhibited, a fact that he attributes to divine protection.³³²

Others also encountered astounding circumstances during their operations: Sparks had several close encounters with guards that led him to believe God was actively involved with their operations.³³³ Babcock recorded, among other events, several instances where vehicles that his team was driving literally fell apart in their home shop, having completed a long journey.³³⁴ Henderson also attributed divine protection to some of the events he recorded.³³⁵ This spiritual perspective of Bible smuggling in the physical world gave Bibles smugglers the ability to see opposing forces not just as enemies, but as fellow human beings who needed the truth of the Bible as much as anyone else. With such a perspective, solidified by the supernatural evidence during smuggling operations, there was no room for revenge as a motivator.

³²⁸ Henderson, *Tripping*, 147; Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 166, 188–190, 198–9; or resulted in successful escapes from soviet authorities, as in Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 129–130.

³²⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 107–8.

³³⁰ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 234–5.

³³¹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 246–7.

³³² Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 246.

³³³ Sparks, *Detour*, 56–57, 62, 67.

³³⁴ Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 179.

³³⁵ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5, 133–4, 162, 176–8.

3. Lesser Applicable Motivation Factors

Those MICE and RASCLS factors left to discuss are authority, scarcity, ego, and social proof. Authority could still be a factor of motivation—but it is a matter of whose authority people place themselves under. On a human level, Wurmbrand’s experiences in communist prison (and the scars that proved his trials), as well as Brother Andrew’s decade of Bible smuggling and evangelism inside the Iron Curtain gave these two men massive credibility (which translated to a type of authority) among Western Christians, whom they called forth to aid underground believers in Eastern and Central Europe.

Scarcity is also a partial factor in many people’s decision making process. Missionaries ask themselves the question: “If God is sending me to do this work, who else will go if I do not?” Jesus himself said: “The harvest is plentiful, but *the workers are few*. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”³³⁶ Missionaries of all forms, and Bible smugglers especially, recognize that there is much work to be done in the spread of the Gospel, and that the question stands: if I don’t do it, who will? This adds an element of urgency, as well as one of importance of their individual efforts, easily fueling excitement³³⁷ and a type of ego³³⁸ motivation for smuggling operations. Aside from this point, ego does not seem to be a significant motivation factor for Bible smugglers, mainly because one cannot brag about clandestine actions until long after the operations are conducted, thus leaving the ego un-stroked for all but those who slip up and brag—to their own detriment.

Social proof is only a factor insofar as workers within the community of Bible smugglers encouraged each other to continue the work despite health and logistical challenges, hardship, and persecution;³³⁹ on the contrary, Bible smugglers sometimes faced opposition even from fellow believers who thought their deliberate covert actions

³³⁶ Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV); Luke 10:1-2 (NIV). Emphasis added.

³³⁷ Jim Jackson is an example of this motivation in Henderson, *Tripping*, 31–40; Sparks, *Detour*, 76–77. See also Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*.

³³⁸ See Sparks, *Detour*, 77–78.

³³⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 40–58; Sparks, *Detour*, 110–2; Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 131–2, 151, 184–4, 205–7, 241–2.

were unethical, counter-scriptural or faithless.³⁴⁰ Social proof may have also played a part during short-term missions recruiting: joining the Bible smugglers seems to have been a popular missions call across American colleges in the 1970s.³⁴¹

B. ETHICS OF BIBLE SMUGGLING: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE ON SUBSERVIENCE TO STATE GOVERNMENT (OR: HOW TO SERVE TWO MASTERS)

The debate about whether Christians should be subservient even to persecuting government authority is not merely a hypothetical question, but rather a theological point that has been debated and tested regularly throughout history. Even two millennia ago, in Jesus' time, the question posed difficult paradigms for rabbis: "Is it right for us [Jews] to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"³⁴² Jesus answered them in the affirmative: "render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar's, and to God, that which is God's";³⁴³ in his round-about way of reminding these Jewish teachers that God was their ultimate authority, but that they had a simultaneous obligation to respect the current human governments which exercised power over them.³⁴⁴ It mattered not that Rome was an occupying force that virtually all Jews saw as an illegitimate state power. The Apostle Paul, some years later, went even further to say specifically that God himself gives all governments their authority: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established."³⁴⁵

Others, however, point to examples of civil disobedience lauded in the Biblical scriptures: Shiprah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives in Moses' time (who saved Hebrew babies and lied about it) and Rahab (who hid Hebrew spies as they scouted Jericho to attack

³⁴⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 5–6; Sparks, *Detour*, 31–36.

³⁴¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 42, 95, 132–7; Henderson, *Tripping*, 31–36; Babcock, *Stones of Remembrance*, 13–18; Hinkelmann and Hinkelmann, *Mehr als Studenten*, 11, 15–19.

³⁴² Luke 20:20-26 (NIV).

³⁴³ Luke 20:25 (NIV).

³⁴⁴ Luke 20:20-27 illustrates this sentiment. The answer "pay taxes" was understood to have resulted in disfavor from Jesus' followers, since it would be legitimizing the occupying force that the Jews saw as illegitimate.

³⁴⁵ Romans 13:1; see further Romans 13:2-4 (NIV).

it).³⁴⁶ Furthermore, even the remaining 12 Apostles disobeyed an order from their own high priest—a spiritual authority, as well as a legal authority in Hebrew culture—to stop preaching about Jesus after getting out of prison for this same offense.³⁴⁷ Peter’s proclamation, “we must obey God rather than men,”³⁴⁸ highlights God as the source and giver of ultimate authority. This phrase became a battle cry that some Bible smugglers took to the point of drawing the ire of members of their own governments, as in the case of Reverend Hathaway from the United Kingdom.³⁴⁹

The main concept underlying Peter’s statement is that mankind is susceptible to misusing governmental authority, and Peter was proclaiming this to be the case at hand. When it became clear that men were abusing the authority God had given them, the authority reverted back to God and the known commands He gave in Scripture. In this case specifically, the authoritative command from God was the one to preach the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, and eventually, the entire world (“to the very ends of the earth,” making disciples “of all nations”).³⁵⁰ The Apostles publicly stated that they were compelled to disobey their own government because it was forbidding their obedience to the mission God had given them. It is not a difficult jump to make from this rationale to the disobedience of the laws of a foreign government in order to continue obedience to God; this was the ethical rationale of many Bible smugglers.

Having discussed the menu of influence factors, it remains to focus on the two primary motives: ideology and theology. The two stand out as the main motivators that virtually every Bible smuggler in this era ascribed to.

1. Ideological Motivation

In the bipolar world of the Cold War years, it seemed easy to know who the enemy was, and the result was a general anti-communist bent among most Western Christians.

³⁴⁶ Exodus 1:15-21; and Joshua 2; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25.

³⁴⁷ Acts 5:17-42.

³⁴⁸ Acts 5:29 (NASB).

³⁴⁹ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 50–51.

³⁵⁰ See Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20.

Communism became so entwined with everything counter to Western values—and especially once the harsh persecution of Christians became more well-known—that once Wurmbrand’s story became widely distributed, Americans felt a moral obligation to counter Communism in any way possible. Wurmbrand himself stands at the furthest end of the spectrum in rejection of political Communism—few people can have suffered as much as he has under this particular ideology. As a Christian, however, he gave a voice to many of this sentiment when he claimed: “I hate the communist system, but I love the men.”³⁵¹ This message is so simple and acceptable that it appealed to many Christians in the West, no matter where they stood politically, ideologically, or with regard to the ethics of smuggling.

Nevertheless, Sawatsky underscores that Wurmbrand was strongly ideological in his theologically-grounded passion to contribute to the overthrow of Communism, seeing the system as inherently evil.³⁵² Others simply saw defeating Communism as the best way to make the world a better place—though the politics of it were perhaps not a Biblical-theological imperative. As early as 1977, Sparks felt that it was just a matter of time until Communism collapsed, and he intended to play a role in bringing that event about through his involvement with literature distribution;³⁵³ he proudly touts his contributions to the fall of Communism—both as a Bible smuggler and after he had quit that role and simply joined the overt social movement against Communism in Hungary.³⁵⁴

2. Theological Motivation

Babcock, Heinilä, Sparks, and Henderson’s stories are centered on individuals who made up the teams that did the planning and smuggling, the operations themselves, the contacts and deliveries made, and the amazing stories of close calls with border security. Like Brother Andrew before them, they wove their faith and dedication to the cause into

³⁵¹ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 52.

³⁵² Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 398–400, 405–6.

³⁵³ Sparks, *Detour*, 78–79.

³⁵⁴ Sparks, *Detour*, 239–40.

each chapter of their respective books with the goal of thanking God for the work He enabled through them. In a similar way, Beattie and Wurmbrand tell of the motivation that drove Christians within Communist Romania to continue living out what they believed despite the persecution it brought. Both describe the hardships and torture that came on them as leaders and contacts in the underground church. Wurmbrand worked to preach the Bible within Romania, and to equip Western Christians to smuggle Bibles into Romania;³⁵⁵ Beattie tells of similar persecution, but more from the role of a contact for Bible smugglers, as the receiver and distributor of Bibles within Romania.³⁵⁶

These cases demonstrate how biblical theology can overcome the ethical concerns posed by Bible smuggling. The authors of these works published on the subject of Bible smuggling spell out several accounts of personal motivations for smuggling. Nearly all of them center around a theological conviction: that God's law is superior to man's laws, and that God has commanded his followers to spread the Gospel, the good news of salvation;³⁵⁷ therefore, man's laws would not keep them from obeying God's laws. Sawatsky quotes Solzhenitsyn to make the point: "when Caesar, having exacted what is Caesar's, demands still more insistently that we render unto him what is God's—that is a sacrifice we dare not make!"³⁵⁸ This is the conclusion that Bible-based ethics eventually comes to. In a clear sense, it reflects the same loyalty to an absolute standard as the U.S. Constitution provides to state officials. American military officers, judges, and other public officials swear allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, not to a person (the President) or even to the political party in power. The purpose for this allegiance to the Constitution rather than to a person is to prevent a cult of personality leading to corruptive power—such as that displayed in the U.S.S.R.

³⁵⁵ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 50–51.

³⁵⁶ Beattie, *Caught With Bibles*, 17–41, 59–63.

³⁵⁷ Matthew 28:18-20.

³⁵⁸ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 114.

C. ULTERIOR MOTIVES?

In any group of people, motives for joining and participating in the common activities can run the gamut. Even the noblest endeavors can attract half-committed followers with self-seeking motives. In a prime example from Christianity, Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus' 12 disciples—his inner circle of followers—yet he stole money from the group and ultimately betrayed Jesus to his captors who led him to his death.³⁵⁹ So too, some evidence suggests that not all Bible smugglers were seeking only eternal rewards for their earthly efforts. Several players on either side of these battle lines demonstrated self-centered motivations for their participation in smuggling. This section will briefly discuss each of their apparent motives for involvement with Bible smuggling as demonstrated by their codified conversations and actions.

1. Lloyd Sparks and His Missions Team

One of the younger smugglers, Lloyd Sparks encountered greed and dishonesty in his church, missions team leadership, and in the team itself that clearly demonstrated a desire to skim funds out of donations for purposes other than the intended missions work. Sparks claims that he smuggled for noble reasons; but the attitude of his book makes a turning point out of the financial hardship he endured from his church and missions team not following through on their agreed support to him.³⁶⁰ His attitude is understandable—the church's failure to follow through on its promise did put him in a difficult situation, and even played a part in his disillusionment with his faith in general.³⁶¹ The title of his book alone alludes to this: one does not describe a valid, worthwhile sacrifice made in service to God as a “detour,” or as “amusing,” in a less-than-worthy endeavor sense. Both are terms that ascribe a sense of purposelessness to his Bible smuggling endeavor.

A worker is certainly due his wages, and Sparks did take a substantial personal financial loss because of how they treated him. Sparks' expectations were short-term, so it is unrealistic to expect him to view the mission as a long-term calling. In contrast to him,

³⁵⁹ John 13:10-20; John 12:4-6.

³⁶⁰ Sparks, *Detour*, 76–79, 231–8.

³⁶¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 231–40.

however, several of his peer Bible smugglers saw these operations as a cause noble enough to devote their entire lives to, with great personal loss being an acceptable cost through which they persisted in faith and work.³⁶² Many missionaries knowingly risked both financial deprivation and loss of freedom (i.e., prison sentences) in order to bring support and encouragement to their persecuted and oppressed brothers and sisters in the faith. In the end, Sparks was sorely disappointed (primarily) with losing his promised financial support. While he writes decades later with a tone of neutrality about the letdown, he clearly admits that he turned away from both the calling and the faith, primarily as a result of his financial loss; and the denominational mission he was a part of played a significant role in this reversal.³⁶³

2. L. Joe Bass

L. Joe Bass personally benefitted from several different endeavors (mostly categorized as non-profits) that he started. Focusing solely on those associated with the topic at hand, he is the founder of Underground Evangelism (UE), which Sawatsky credited as “the largest mission to Eastern Europe,”³⁶⁴ bringing large amounts of smuggled Bibles and literature to the needy underground church that his organization represented in name.³⁶⁵ Despite the size of this charitable undertaking, Bass was later charged with mishandling his organization’s donations in a variety of ways. He was taken to court (though the matter was settled out of court), was disowned by Pastor Wurmbrand (whom Bass recruited for several months), and several articles and a book were published³⁶⁶

³⁶² See Brother Andrew, Henderson, Beattie, Babcock, and Heinilä.

³⁶³ Sparks, *Detour*, 236–40.

³⁶⁴ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 396.

³⁶⁵ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 396–9.

³⁶⁶ The book was Richard Wurmbrand’s *The Evidence Against Joe Bass, Steven Bankov, and Underground Evangelism*, 1978—see Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 407–9.

attempting to expose mishandling of his NGO's funds.³⁶⁷ The financial mishandling included low-interest home loans from the organization's coffers to family members, large loans to select employees, and a record of only 20 percent to 40 percent of donations reaching the intended (and promised) recipients—partly due to high organizational spending and held assets.³⁶⁸

Adding to the concern about his motives, Malnic and Chandler report that Bass moved on from funding Bible smuggling and supporting Eastern Christians a decade before the wall came down.³⁶⁹ They cite organization officials claiming that the switch came because it was easier to fundraise millions of dollars for impoverished children than to continue to fund ethically controversial support to the Eastern Church.³⁷⁰ Broadly speaking, Bass gets credit for the volume of support material that Underground Evangelism (UE) delivered to the underground church in Central Europe, despite reports portraying him as power-hungry and selfish.³⁷¹ Perhaps he fits less into the category of Bible smuggler himself, as the organizing head of UE. His own skin was not at risk in the tactical smuggling sense, so this could be why he appears to have been motivated by money (more than others who were reviewed in this work) in the execution of Iron Curtain Bible smuggling.

3. Reverend David Hathaway

Raška relays that during the early 1970s, British Minister David Hathaway was arrested and imprisoned for several months for smuggling Bibles, money, and political

³⁶⁷ See Eric Malnic and Russell Chandler, "Says Only a Small Part of ICA Money Is Used for Relief: Ex-Charity Aide Tells of Donations Drain," *LA Times*, 27 January 1985, http://articles.latimes.com/1985-01-27/news/mn-10152_1_relief-organization, accessed 28 November 2016; Eric Malnic and Russell Chandler, "International Christian Aid Founder: L. Joe Bass--a Man on a Mission or a Power Trip?," 8 April 1985, http://articles.latimes.com/1985-04-08/news/mn-18510_1_joe-bass/2, accessed 5 September 2016.

³⁶⁸ Malnic and Chandler, "Small Part of ICA Money Is Used for Relief," 1–2; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 400, 414.

³⁶⁹ Malnic and Chandler, "Mission or Power Trip?," 5.

³⁷⁰ Malnic and Chandler, "Mission or Power Trip?," 5.

³⁷¹ Malnic and Chandler, "Mission or Power Trip?," 1; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 407–11; Raška, "Bibles for Communist Europe," 40, 43, 60; Henderson, *Tripping*, 31.

literature through Czechoslovakia.³⁷² While one of his Members of Parliament spoke on his behalf to secure his release, others spoke in less-than-favorable terms of him as a “non-conformist minister,”³⁷³ seeking attention without the wits to follow other nations’ laws.³⁷⁴ Despite this negative painting from some in his own government, Hathaway returned to work supporting persecuted Christians in the Eastern Communist Bloc after his release. While he worked with L. Joe Bass for a time, he later split with him.³⁷⁵ It is unclear if any of his Bible smuggling credentials were subsequently used for personal gain among his church following, although it was painted that way in a publication shortly after his release.³⁷⁶

4. Gerd Bambowski

Finally—on the opposite side of the conflict in more ways than one—Gerd Bambowski, an East German Lutheran Priest, spied against underground believers and Western Bible smugglers as an agent of the Stasi and KGB in return for a financial kickback to line his personal pockets.³⁷⁷ Bambowski even played the West on his own, stealing money from a West-Germany-to-East-Germany church donation titled *Bruderhilfe*.³⁷⁸ Bambowski is listed here because, according to Stasi files, he was trusted enough by the church to play a key part in ensuring the delivery of smuggled Bibles and goods to the GDR underground church.³⁷⁹

His allegiance, however, was up for sale. He used his position to appear to help Bible smugglers support his GDR family, when in reality, he used that trust to inform on his Western connections, causing major damage to The Team and others in the late

³⁷² Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 40–62.

³⁷³ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 55.

³⁷⁴ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 50–51.

³⁷⁵ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 58.

³⁷⁶ Raška, “Bibles for Communist Europe,” 57.

³⁷⁷ Henderson, *Tripping*, 75–121.

³⁷⁸ Henderson, *Tripping*, 88. *Bruderhilfe* translates to “brotherly help.”

³⁷⁹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 108–12, 116–21.

1970s.³⁸⁰ Despite losing his pension and all position in the Lutheran Church when his treachery was exposed after the *Wende*,³⁸¹ Bambowski appeared even afterwards to have no remorse for his personal financial gain at the high cost of the freedom of so many others.³⁸² Selfish greed for money was clearly his main motivation.

D. APPLYING VALUE RATIONALITY AND INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY

Bible smugglers (supporting teams and individuals) generally demonstrated both *value rationality* and *instrumental rationality*, which explain their self-less actions despite recurring personal danger. Ashutosh Varshney uses these terms to clarify how seemingly irrational actions actually have an underlying conscious belief driving them.³⁸³ While Varshney uses these terms to describe aspects of ethnic and nationalist behavior, they can also be applied to religious ideology in the context of martyrdom and perseverance under persecution.

1. Value Rationality

In *value rationality*, Varshney says that people:

consciously embrace great personal sacrifices . . . [for] some spheres or goals of life [which] are considered so valuable not normally be [sic] up for sale or compromise, however costly the pursuit of their realization might be.³⁸⁴

This definition means that people employ *value rationality* when they choose to abide by a principle or value that they so deeply believe in, that it is non-negotiable to them. They will sacrifice other possible gains and accept losses in order to maintain the priority of the value they hold as superior.

³⁸⁰ Henderson, *Tripping*, 108–12, 116–21.

³⁸¹ *Wende* refers to the “change,” or the political and social adjustments of abruptly changing (after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989) from Stalinism’s totalitarian communism to a new, free, Western democracy.

³⁸² Henderson, *Tripping*, 212–3.

³⁸³ Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 85–86.

³⁸⁴ Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 86.

An example of such a value in today's U.S. military is integrity. It is a common core value to each branch of service. An application of integrity is that it is acceptable to admit failure or shortcomings rather than to lose one's integrity by lying to portray a failure as success. This depth of adherence to integrity is so much a part of the culture that the following inscription, mirroring the core honor code, still stands prominently displayed at the U.S. Air Force Academy: "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does." The value of integrity overrules the competitive desire to win—intense though that drive may be. Winning is not done "at all costs," because the cost of integrity (a personally held value) is too high a price to pay.

Under Communist persecution, many believers (those native to the Soviet-controlled lands, as well as Bible smugglers from outside of them) did not disavow their religious belief in Jesus Christ, or adhere to government censorship of Scripture as they were pressured to do, choosing instead to face the hardships, tortures, or humiliations presented as the alternative.³⁸⁵ Their value was obedience to God, and to them it was non-negotiable. In this way, they demonstrated value rationality.

2. Instrumental Rationality

Instrumental rationality is a thought process that Varshney describes as: "a strict cost-benefit calculus with respect to goals, necessitating the abandonment or adjustment of goals if the costs of realizing them are too high."³⁸⁶ Stated another way, this type of rationality dictates that one choose between the cost and benefits of two or more actions and outcomes, deciding which one is the more valuable choice overall. Perhaps the most clearly applicable display of this attitude in the context of this thesis is when Bible smugglers intentionally disobeyed laws of the nations they visited, for two purposes: first, in order to attain the goal of obedience to God as manifested in living out the command to evangelize, and also to thwart the governments' legal barriers to bringing support to Christians inside the oppressed nations.

³⁸⁵ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 15–16, 37–38; Henderson, *Tripping*, 13–27, 36, 54, 56, 183–99; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 8, 20–21, 23, 42.

³⁸⁶ Varshney, "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality," 86.

To paraphrase Solzhenitsyn's addendum to Jesus' command: Render unto Caesar, until Caesar steps into the realm of God's exclusive authority. At all costs, do not overstep God's boundaries, because the consequences of displeasing God are far greater than those of displeasing any authority on earth. The Hebrew King Solomon said: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,"³⁸⁷ meaning that a follower of God will be guided in wisdom if he or she makes their value decisions based on the desire to do what God wants them to do, and in order to not displease or disappoint Him.

A final example puts this rationality into the Christian context. Despite the effort to choke off access to religious literature, Heinilä believes that good things came out of the spotlight of persecution under Communism; he is convinced that 70 years of limited Bible access and oppressive atheism created an incredible spiritual hunger in Russians to hear, read, and experience the Bible.³⁸⁸ Heinilä's expression of persecution as having a good final outcome in the context of eternity is a prime example of instrumental rationality; his goal is eternal, and he adjusted his earthly goal to accept pain and suffering as long as the eternal goal is met—in this case, seeing people in Communist Russia read the Bible and experience eternal life through the knowledge of God that the Bible brought them.

These two rationality theories together describe the motivation for most of the Christians who put themselves in danger for the cause of getting Bibles into Soviet nations. Some Bible smugglers felt spiritually called to these risks;³⁸⁹ others desired to subvert Communist oppression by broadening the thinking of Soviet citizens;³⁹⁰ still other Christians simply wanted to obey God's command to evangelize the world.³⁹¹

There is a delayed gratification (future rewards) element to Bible smuggling as well. The Bible praises and promises rewards and status to those who spread the Gospel: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"³⁹² Because of the Christian's

³⁸⁷ Proverbs 1:7 (NIV).

³⁸⁸ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 450.

³⁸⁹ See Brother Andrew, Henderson, and Babcock.

³⁹⁰ Sparks, *Detour*, 78–79, 148–9; Reisch, *Hot Books*, 516.

³⁹¹ Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19.

³⁹² Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:15 (NIV).

thankful response to God’s love, and because of the promise of eternal rewards, it is natural for followers of Jesus to want to share the good news with others, and it becomes *value rationality* when they continue to do it despite the possibility that their lives will be worsened or ended on earth. In their eyes, it is not only good and right to spread God’s Word, but any adverse result on earth is worth the cost when considering the rewards of heaven. The Apostle Paul said: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us,”³⁹³ and, “set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”³⁹⁴ Jesus even foresaw the persecution that would come to those who obey his command, and warned them to expect it: “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven!”³⁹⁵

Some rewards were near-term benefits, and demonstrate value rationality: he considered the Bible a powerful agent of change in the individual lives of people.³⁹⁶ Value rationality is a belief that will not be abandoned no matter the cost, and in Varshney’s words, “independent of its prospects of success.”³⁹⁷ This attitude is also clearly present in many of the Bible smugglers and their contacts within Communist Europe and Russia. Richard Wurmbrand knew what he would face as a pastor to speak against Communism, yet he did so in order to speak the truth about the Bible that was being suppressed by the Stalinist regime newly in power.³⁹⁸ It is the same sentiment reflected by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Hebrew exiles to Babylon, who refused to bow to the king’s idol along with everyone else.³⁹⁹ Instead, they risked their own lives to disobey this order, stating:

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he

³⁹³ Romans 8:18 (NIV).

³⁹⁴ Colossians 3:2-3 (NIV).

³⁹⁵ Matthew 5:11-12a (NIV).

³⁹⁶ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 225.

³⁹⁷ Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 86.

³⁹⁸ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 15–16.

³⁹⁹ Daniel 3:1-30.

does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.⁴⁰⁰

Their statement neatly matches the definition of value rationality—no compromise on this value, no matter what. Heinilä saw Bible smuggling in the same light. He explains that the Bible contains the power to not only change people, but to transform them from lazy, lying, family-abusing thieves into people who live uprightly and love each other.⁴⁰¹ He wanted to be a part of the transformation in Russia especially (though his impact would go into several Soviet Bloc nations), regardless of how closed the country might be.⁴⁰² Pastor Wurmbrand, who called believers in the West to provide support to their fellow believers in the East by any means possible, also firmly believed in the power of the Gospel to overcome any evil—but especially to overcome Communism.⁴⁰³

If not for the promise of eternal rewards—including a place in heaven, a crown of jewels, a relationship with God that lasts forever, and the same things for everyone else who will come to believe through hearing the Gospel as well—the insurmountable desire would prevail for the Christian to place their own safety and comfort above that of their fellow man and above the command God gave them. Bible smugglers would not have risked any of their own skin for the needs of others, but rather, would have held to the self-centered, survival-of-the-fittest attitude that general rationality and game theory predict. This eternal perspective paradigm that focuses on the afterlife is also referred to as heavenly-mindedness. Christians are called to live with this perspective of eternity; it is a primary motivation, and it is their connection to *instrumental rationality* and *value rationality*.

3. Love in Action: Personal Sacrifice

Were the calls to action of Chadwick, Pastor Wurmbrand, and Brother Andrew heeded by Christians? Chadwick hinted that the German Lutheran Church could have

⁴⁰⁰ Daniel 3:17-18 (NIV).

⁴⁰¹ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 25.

⁴⁰² Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 25.

⁴⁰³ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 22–31, 55.

appealed to the American Lutheran Church for help based on the duty that came from ancestral lineage; however, duty is only a small part of the Christian's motivation to care for others. Wurmbrand and Brother Andrew made their appeals for help based on a sense of compassion—on the basis of charity, as the Apostle Paul writes in his famous love chapter: “If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.”⁴⁰⁴ Paul's bottom line in these poetic verses is that even personal sacrifice and humanitarian aid do not profit a person anything, unless he or she does them in the right spirit—out of love for the object of affection, not based solely on emotion, but based on providing what the object of affection needs. This perspective carries a strong appeal for the Christian, since it is a primary command given by Jesus to his Apostles throughout the Gospels, but especially in John: “A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”⁴⁰⁵ It certainly seems that some smugglers took these verses to heart, giving up their own time and freedom out of compassion for those suffering under Communism's oppression.

It seems that many Bible smugglers were indeed heeding these Biblical calls to action out of love for their brothers and sisters in the faith, and also for the spiritually lost people within Communism. The couriers of smuggled Bibles regularly had to question their own motives and commitment: were they ready to give their lives for this endeavor, and could they ask other recruits to do the same?⁴⁰⁶ “Counting the cost” is a phrase taken from a parable Jesus told, in which he cautioned against half-hearted commitment to being his disciple, because this path involves total personal sacrifice.⁴⁰⁷ In this passage, Jesus urges individual soul-searching in order to accurately assess two things: the adequacy of one's own resources or strength, and one's commitment to finish the task at hand. The prescribed degree of commitment was to the point of alienating all family members, giving up all earthly possessions, embracing suffering, and even placing one's own life at risk.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁴ I Corinthians 13:3 (NIV).

⁴⁰⁵ John 13:34 (NIV). See also Romans 12:10, 13:8, and I John 4:11, among others.

⁴⁰⁶ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 138–9.

⁴⁰⁷ Luke 14:25-33 (see especially verse 28).

⁴⁰⁸ See especially Luke 14:26, 27, 33.

Such sacrifices seem a steep price to pay—are they worth the rewards? Why did so many Bible smugglers see the risk as worthwhile? Instrumental and value rationality have both answered this question.

Varshney explained that instrumental rationality is demonstrated by “a strict cost-benefit calculus with respect to goals, necessitating the abandonment or adjustment if the cost of realizing them is too high.”⁴⁰⁹ It is “goal-directed behavior,” with the ability to “consciously embrace great personal sacrifices.”⁴¹⁰ Such analysis would drive a person to keep the government’s law to the point that it costs him or her the price of disobedience of God’s law, which is too high a price. Instrumental rationality further applies when Bible smugglers placed greater value on the eternal rewards to be gained than on what they planned to give up here on earth. In the words of missionary Steve Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”⁴¹¹ Elliot expressed his willingness to sacrifice even his own life (which he recognizes he cannot keep past this life on earth) for what he believes will be eternal rewards, as Jesus promised (something he cannot lose). In much the same way, Brother Andrew saw imperishable rewards in the work of Bible smuggling, for the spread of the Good News, as well as for obedience to God’s command, out of love for those living under Communism.

While not a Bible smuggler himself, Wurmbrand was an underground church pastor in Romania, a prisoner for his faith, and a recruiter and sender of Bible smugglers. He neatly sums up his impact, and the results of Bible smuggling in general over several decades in this section of his revised book:

Steady, regular help began to come to the Underground Church. By secret channels we got many Bibles and other Christian Literature, as well as relief for families of Christian martyrs. *Now, with their help, we of the Underground Church could work much better.* It was not only that they gave us the Word of God, but *we saw that we were beloved.* They brought us a word of comfort. [this counteracted the Communist brainwashing that no one cared about them] Now we saw American and English Christians who

⁴⁰⁹ Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 86.

⁴¹⁰ Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality,” 85–86.

⁴¹¹ Elizabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor: The Event That Shocked the World, Changed a People, and Inspired a Nation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndall House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 173.

risked their lives to show that they loved us. *We later helped them develop a technique of secret work, so they could creep undetected into houses surrounded by the secret police. The value of the Bibles smuggled in by these means cannot be understood by an American or an English Christian who “swims” in Bibles. My family and I would not have survived without the material help I received from praying Christians abroad. The same is true with many other underground pastors and martyrs in Communist countries.*⁴¹²

These Bible smugglers truly believed that the Bible’s impact was multi-faceted: it would change people’s hearts, interpersonal relationships, and at the national level, could eventually change the direction of the entire Soviet Bloc. Placing the people of the Soviet Union ahead of themselves, they demonstrated sacrificial love in conducting Bible smuggling operations at their own risk.

⁴¹² Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 50–51. Emphasis added.

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V. CONCLUSION

This final chapter will analyze Bible smuggling as a symptom of a social movement, discuss the socio-political ramifications of religion in society, and summarize this author's perspective on what should be thought of Bible smugglers during the last 30 years of Communism in Europe. The following will become clear: State oppression of religion undermines the state's legitimacy at the social level; Value Rationality and Instrumental Rationality in religion can cause people to resist subversion at the theological and ideological levels; and Bible smugglers acted nobly in aiding fellow Christians in their persecution within the Iron Curtain.

A. BIBLE SMUGGLING: SYMPTOM OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Sabrina Petra Ramet's discussion hinges around a diverse group of religions, but she still deduces that in general, the religious reactions she identified as social movements are "symptoms of change," reactions to change and social stress, and "forces for further change."⁴¹³ How is Bible smuggling connected to Ramet's social change factors? In three ways primarily. First, the smuggling of Bibles across borders (as with other black market goods) was a symptom of the internal religious oppression faced in the Eastern Bloc countries. Basic economics principles dictate that supply and demand are factors that directly influence the cost of an item. Smuggling is not necessary—nor is it worth the extra cost—when the market is open. Clandestine support in the form of Bible smuggling did not occur until Communist leaders attempted to secularize their society by force, aiming to subvert the faith of their own citizens by cutting off the supply of religious materials. These leaders hoped that an increase in scientific knowledge would force a decrease in religious adherence;⁴¹⁴ similarly, that a decrease in Bible supply would decrease the demand for Bibles. Instead, the opposite effect occurred: the scarcity of freedom of religion, and of Bibles to teach and grow the faithful, drove the initiation, growth, and sustainment of smuggling operations and also a black market for Scripture.

⁴¹³ Ramet, *Social Currents*, 176–7.

⁴¹⁴ Ramet, *Social Currents*, 155.

Second, Bible smuggling was an external reaction by Western Christians, and an internal reaction by indigenous Christians to the persecution of Eastern Christians that Communism engendered. At various points, pastors and other Christians around the world became alarmed at the plight of their spiritual brothers and sisters in the Soviet Bloc who were living without access to the scriptures, and they decided to take action to provide this need (as well as other encouragement and support) even in the face of various hardships they would endure, should they be caught. Brother Andrew led this charge in a sense, and his book, *God's Smuggler*, is a subtle encouragement for others to follow in his footsteps. Richard Wurmbrand's *Tortured for Christ* is an even more direct admonishment for Western Christians to take action to help the oppressed inside the Iron Curtain.

Finally, smuggling Bibles was seen by many as both a necessity for the survival of Soviet Christians and also a force for future positive change. Brother Andrew experienced a telling outward reaction to the Gospel tracts he held openly as he rode the train in Poland in 1955: a woman crossed herself and said aloud: "Ja, ja, this is what we need in Poland."⁴¹⁵ Theologically, Christians believe that the Bible is God's true word, and that the truth contained in it explains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a necessity for the salvation of people's souls. The Apostle Paul told his trainee Timothy that "all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."⁴¹⁶ The Bible is therefore for edifying believers, as well as a tool with which to impact the hearts and minds of unbelievers, introduce them to God—effecting life-change—and thereby revolutionize the world by starting at the heart of each person. Jesus made it clear that his goal was life-change for every individual person; his statement that his "kingdom is not of this world"⁴¹⁷ and his life demonstrated that he had no political ambitions. Christians following in Jesus' footsteps also believe that the heart is the turning point of each person, and that this change at the personal level can eventually impact every level of society. Therefore, partly driven

⁴¹⁵ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 86.

⁴¹⁶ II Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV).

⁴¹⁷ John 18:36 (NIV).

by discontentment with the Communist governments' shortcomings, getting Bibles into Communist countries was a way of working toward increased global unity and peace.

Ideologically, however, smuggling books as a way to bring about social or political change was not unique to Christians. Even the U. S. government was interested in opening the minds of Communists at every level to Western liberal thought and was working to do so through the CIA's "Book Program."⁴¹⁸ The goal of this program was parallel to the Christian goal: to open the minds of the men and women oppressed and insulated inside Communist lands. As Soviet citizens began to see that Western writing and ideas were not altogether bad, these citizens could begin to think more critically for themselves. The CIA's Book Program involved some significant smuggling of Western literature, and also some distribution in neutral lands (such as in Vienna, Austria)⁴¹⁹ of Western literature to travelers from Eastern and Central Europe. Occasionally, distributors got a chance to provide specific titles requested by their contacts. In this spirit, even the CIA provided Bibles to Communist residents for them to smuggle back with them.⁴²⁰

1. Socio-Political Ramifications of Religion in Society

State legitimacy is a social issue that is directly tied to national security, and is a pertinent topic of study in every corner of the globe. The extent of Bible smuggling and Underground Church activity within the Iron Curtain is a testimony to the way social issues intersect with state legitimacy. In Cold-War Czechoslovakia, for example, religious activism included a Catholic underground church that persisted from the mid-1970s to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and that had an impact on the society behind that portion of the Iron Curtain.⁴²¹ The religious convictions of these believers were not easily suppressed by the Soviet political structure; they even had their own internal printing presses with which they published so prolifically, that they were said to have surpassed even the official presses in

⁴¹⁸ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 516.

⁴¹⁹ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 295–308.

⁴²⁰ Reisch, *Hot Books*, 271, 285, 288, 293–4, 516.

⁴²¹ Ramet, *Social Currents*, 129–131.

volume by 1985.⁴²² In this case, representative of other Soviet-controlled nations, the state had lost legitimacy in the eyes of the church. When this happened, the global church (both indigenous and external elements) worked to carry on its Biblical mandate to make disciples; it just had to do it clandestinely. It is still theologically (Biblically) important to obey government authorities—until those authorities try to overrule God’s commands. Bible smugglers by all accounts followed all other laws during their travels, just not the ones against transporting Bibles and sharing the Gospel with people—the theologically unlawful ones. Though foreign visitors, they did not go anarchic.

2. The Remnant of Christians Inside the Iron Curtain That Outlasted Communism

So, what is the result of studying the impact of personal religious convictions on social movements? It is not the suggestion of this thesis that Bible smuggling by itself caused the fall of communism, or even that it was a primary factor; however, it is worth noting the failure that Soviet leaders experienced in attempting to subvert their various peoples under Communist secularism, and the sustained appetite for religion and faith that persisted through Communism. The religious traditions and beliefs bound up within Communist lands did not wane completely under their oppressive rule. Froese finds a generally applicable principle in this statement on religiosity by Pitrim Sorokin, who claims that most people the world over believe in:

supersensory, metalogical, or transcendental subjects: ‘God,’ ‘the soul,’ ‘the ultimate reality,’ and the like . . . one may like or dislike any of these aspects, but no sound empirical observer can fail to perceive that all of these aspects are *given as data* in sociocultural reality.⁴²³

Rather, “religious belief in the Soviet Union proved to be a social reality for millions of Soviet citizens, regardless of their changing social and economic circumstances.”⁴²⁴ On the contrary, despite the efforts of Communists to stamp out religion in Communist-controlled lands, Sawatsky postulates that the pressure of this persecution effectively

⁴²² Ramet, *Social Currents*, 132–4.

⁴²³ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 168; emphasis added.

⁴²⁴ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 169.

strengthened Christianity by weeding out the weak in faith, and affirming the calling of believers—even, or especially those under persecution. This theory applied both to those who experienced persecution while opting for public display of their faith and to those who remained underground, not publicly declaring their faith.⁴²⁵

Try as it might, the Soviet state was never able to show that religion was a dying thing of the past.⁴²⁶ Religion—and broader Christianity in particular—did not get eradicated from the Soviet bloc as the communist leaders had hoped. In the West, it is said there are no atheists in foxholes, and a significant number of the Soviet Bloc believers were in their foxholes of a sort during the communist years, hiding out against the oppression of the state. Froese goes so far as to claim that “these educational [i.e., persecution and secular indoctrination] efforts failed to undermine widespread belief in God,”⁴²⁷ indicating that faith remained widespread behind the Iron Curtain, even when it was driven underground. On the contrary: to their dismay, “Communist Party leaders discovered no clear causal relationship between modernization and declining religiosity, except that modern society alters the social conditions in which all ideologies exist.”⁴²⁸

The Protestant church in the East had a strong remnant that survived and grew during the communist years—though in numbers alone, the Communist system seemed to drastically reduce the size of the church. Nevertheless, believers persevered under this persecution. Part of the resistance to religious extermination was because some of the satellite states differed from the Stalinist approach of total opposition to religion; Poland especially had a strong, persistent religious culture (predominantly Catholic) that was not well suppressed by the Communist bent toward humanistic atheism as the foundation of nationalism.⁴²⁹ As Froese described,

The Soviet state directly attacked churches, synagogues, and temples . . . still, religious repression could not fully dislodge religious faith from the

⁴²⁵ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 14.

⁴²⁶ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 60.

⁴²⁷ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 167.

⁴²⁸ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 168.

⁴²⁹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 22–24.

predominantly Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim cultures of the Soviet Union.⁴³⁰

Froese further claims that Soviet secularism was often as dogmatic and unscientific as it saw religion as being, holding staunchly to its ideology with no awareness of the “weaknesses and inconsistencies” of its own ideology.⁴³¹ As Froese points out,

In addition to its massive intellectual scope, Marxist-Leninism quite brazenly claimed to be a science and dismissed alternative conceptions of social justice, metaphysics, ethics, and even aesthetics as “unscientific.” Ernst Gellner explains that Marxist-Leninism was “a belief-system that claimed a monopoly of truth, but [a truth] that was built from what were, officially, *this-worldly* elements. . . . Though of course there were similarities between Marxism and other religions, at the doctrinal and intellectual level the proud boast of Marxism was that it had exiled the supernatural from social life. It claimed to be scientific.” Alas, the “science” of Marxist-Leninism did not include what one normally thinks of as a science—the rigorous testing of hypotheses using empirical data. Within the Soviet Union, the term *scientific* became synonymous with official state ideology, regardless of whether any systematic study had actually been conducted.⁴³²

Many Communist leaders also attempted to “shut off all ideological alternatives to Marxist-Leninism,”⁴³³ further cementing the contradiction in their claim to scientific adherence. This hypocrisy was likely a blind spot weakness in Soviet secularization efforts. The weaknesses of religion that Communists believed existed did not have any real bearing on how the religious bodies of believers reacted to persecution; and Soviet leaders drastically underestimated the yards of ground that churches would take to rebound from suppression when the state eventually gave them an inch in the late 1980s.

B. POST-COMMUNISM: WHAT SHOULD WE THINK OF BIBLE SMUGGLERS FROM THIS TIME PERIOD?

Brother Andrew’s efforts to deliver Bibles to the places where they were most needed continued beyond 1981, reaching a crescendo with an off-shore delivery (by setting

⁴³⁰ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 168.

⁴³¹ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 68.

⁴³² Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 68. Emphasis in original.

⁴³³ Froese, *Plot to Kill God*, 69.

afloat) of hundreds of thousands of Bibles to China at a cost of \$7 million.⁴³⁴ Likewise, Wurmbrand also continued his campaign (despite some setbacks in partnerships) to support the underground churches of the Soviet Union, even after the time that the political structure changed to former Soviet Bloc nations and Russia.⁴³⁵ Smuggling turned into open mass delivery as *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* cracked the door open for religious freedom.⁴³⁶ Brother Andrew's current operations include funding printing and book sales in Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other continents.⁴³⁷ With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain it represented, Evangelicals' goal of reaching Soviets was not completed—it was just beginning. Bible smugglers should be considered successful in their efforts, creativity, motives, ethics, and theology.

Overall, Bible smugglers delivered massive amounts of Bibles, literature, supplies, and some money—as well as effecting significant encouragement—to Christians behind the Iron Curtain, despite the challenges they had to overcome in this endeavor. Additionally, Trippers displayed great creativity in overcoming the security challenges of Soviet border, police, and intelligence forces who tried to stop their Bible smuggling. From modifying vehicles and propane tanks, to learning and utilizing surveillance and spy craft tactics, to creating new delivery methods, and adapting to secret police security measures, Bible smugglers were constantly problem solving. In terms of motivation, Bible smugglers generally held noble values, and were willing to take on significant personal risk and loss for the sake of meeting the needs of others. Most left comfortable, safe lives to travel Europe in uncertainty, and with low funds, in order to meet the real needs of Christians in Communist lands. Finally, Bible smugglers used appropriately applied Biblical theology to inform and reconcile the ethical issues of whether smuggling Bibles was right or wrong. By incorporating prayer into their lives and Bible smuggling tactics, they demonstrated that they were committed to applying Biblical theology fully to their lives. One would be hard pressed to better describe a noble endeavor than in this manner: inviting personal risk

⁴³⁴ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 250.

⁴³⁵ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 111, 154.

⁴³⁶ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 431.

⁴³⁷ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 238–240.

in a challenging, complex endeavor in order to meet the deepest, dire needs of oppressed people on the other side of the world, with no promise of earthly rewards to speak of. Surely the love demonstrated by the actions of these Bible smugglers embodies the definition of noble. As Kentucky State Senator Gene Huff said: “In a period when it cost greatly even to profess Jesus Christ, that a man would sacrifice life and limb to provide the Word of God to a hungry, needy, persecuted people, is praiseworthy indeed.”⁴³⁸

C. POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH: RECEPTIVITY TO THE BIBLE AND NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

A sequel thesis work to this one could consider demonstrating whether or not knowledge of (and adherence to) the Bible’s teaching brings respect, peace, and contentment in every corner of the world, and is therefore a worthwhile endeavor to continue spreading. I would postulate the answer is that it depends on how the Gospel is received—or not. Jesus said: “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword”⁴³⁹; which is not because Jesus’ message is violent, but because the rebellious reaction against God’s Word tends to be violence by everyone who chooses not to follow him. I believe that a study of history through this lens would show this element of societal behavior: those who obey God’s Word perpetrate peace; those who reject His Word, or twist it to support self-centered agendas, perpetrate violence and oppression. Communism, as implemented in the 20th century, certainly demonstrated the latter. The Bible and its proper interpretation could therefore be directly tied to national and international security; they are occasionally considered in the international politics of Christian politicians today who continue to support Israel as a U.S. ally, partially because it is the most democratic nation in the turbulent Middle East, but in significant part because Israel is still the people group that God has chosen and protects as the Bible recounts and foretells for the future. Israel holds the roots of Christianity, and Christians cannot deny those roots; Jesus himself was born a Jew in what is today Israel. Christians therefore feel a spiritual duty to support the nation of Israel as a spiritual duty as well as an ideological allegiance.

⁴³⁸ Endorsement for Beattie, *Caught With Bibles*.

⁴³⁹ Matthew 10:34 (NIV).

There are major national security implications bound up in the social movements that occurred inside the Soviet Union-controlled nations of Eastern and Central Europe in the decades leading up to the collapse of Communism in Europe. The totalitarian oppression levied on every social aspect of people's lives contributed to discontent, leading to the loss of government legitimacy and eventually, social and political upheaval. Freedom of religion, or lack thereof, is an important one of these social aspects that governments should consider in order to stabilize national society, and to maintain the legitimacy of their governmental authority.

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APPENDIX. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACCOUNTS OF COMMUNIST IMPACT ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The following section briefly describes the religious conditions specific to Russia and nine Soviet satellite nations. Its focus is on state supremacy, religious oppression, and forced conformity specific to each nation. These nations are discussed in some order of importance and data available: Russia, East Germany (including East Berlin), Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia.

1. Russia

Politically, Russia was the head of the U.S.S.R., with Moscow the capitol city from which Stalin and successive Communist leaders ruled all of Communist Europe. Russia had a multi-century history of Orthodox Christianity that was severely opposed by the rise of the Marxist-Leninist ideology of atheistic nationalism and of Joseph Stalin's secularization.⁴⁴⁰ Christians inside Russia consisted primarily of Evangelicals, Mennonites, Lutherans, Pentecostals, and Baptists—registered (including Reform Baptists) and unregistered.⁴⁴¹ These believers were severely persecuted throughout the time period of post-war to the fall of Communism. It was in Russia, as well as in Czechoslovakia and some of the smaller states, that parents felt the most pressure to steer their children away from religion and toward the state-sponsored atheism as the truth.⁴⁴²

2. East Germany

The East German experience of government oppression under Communism was in stark contrast to the freedom and development experienced during the post-war recovery in West Germany. The wall that split Berlin for years symbolized both the stark divide between the freedom of the West and the restriction of the East, and also the totalitarian oppression of Communism's own citizens within its borders: the "total subjugation of a

⁴⁴⁰ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 36, 93–95.

⁴⁴¹ Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 141, 273.

⁴⁴² Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 32.

people,” as Maaz put it.⁴⁴³ For this reason, the fall of that wall also came to mark what many considered the fall of the Communist power in Central Europe, and a symbol of liberation.

The church in the GDR suffered under this oppression. Maaz estimated that the Protestant church attendance⁴⁴⁴ in the GDR shrank from 80 percent to 30 percent of the population through the post-war and communist era (1950-1989).⁴⁴⁵ He also underscored the support that the church inside East Germany received from the West, claiming that “without the contributions and gifts that came from West Germany, [the protestant church in East Germany] would not have survived.”⁴⁴⁶ While Maaz also hailed the massive amount of money that the Western church sent to support the Eastern church—between 250 and 400 million Deutschmarks (~\$208 million to \$333 million-equivalent)—he pointed out that this benefitted the GDR state by bringing currency into the economy, and also hid the dire position of the Eastern Protestants.⁴⁴⁷ This economic boon may have been a significant reason that GDR leaders partially tolerated the churches within their borders, since their persecution of domestic believers, as well as their vigorous opposition to spiritual support from the West (i.e., Bible imports) seems to belie any virtuous motive.

As discussed earlier about communist countries in general, some churches in the GDR were coopted by the communist government. Maaz saw instances in which the church was an accomplice to the state in enforcing (through its own hierarchical structure) a conformity and pacifist response to the total oppression of the East German people in virtually every sphere of life.⁴⁴⁸ His overall impression is that it is difficult to quantify the actual repressive power of the Protestant Church in the GDR, because he sees the church’s influence on the populace as weak; and yet the church exerted a moral influence that was

⁴⁴³ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 8.

⁴⁴⁴ Maaz does not specify attendance or formal membership in this statistic, but if one is wont to split hairs on these terms, Maaz likely means open attendance rather than formal membership, the latter of which was not as hard a requirement among Protestant churches as it was in the Catholic church.

⁴⁴⁵ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 50.

⁴⁴⁶ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 50.

⁴⁴⁷ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 50–52.

⁴⁴⁸ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 51–54.

not only the “only moral authority in [the] society,”⁴⁴⁹ but also tended to steer believers away from action against the state by advocating a “greater faith” (presumably to God’s control over the situation) in response to the observed (and openly criticized) evils and injustices of the Communist government.⁴⁵⁰

On the contrary to the claims of freedom of belief, the KGB worked with the Stasi to pursue believers, pastors, and Western Bible smugglers (whom they labelled as a threat to national security).⁴⁵¹ Henderson accessed declassified Stasi files that detailed how a Lutheran minister was a Stasi agent who collected and reported on other church ministers and missionaries from the West, and worked to influence East and West German Lutheran church leadership to bend theologically toward support for Communism.⁴⁵² This is detailed further in Chapter III.

One of the GDR’s major challenges during this timeframe was the location of West Berlin in the center of its territory, and the connection it had to the rest of West Germany. Because West Berlin was an island in the middle of Communist East Germany, GDR authorities strictly monitored the transit routes, highway routes running from the West German border to West Berlin. This restriction was the result of an East-West German transit agreement, signed in 1972, that ultimately resulted in 2.2-billion-Deutschmark income for the GDR.⁴⁵³ Checkpoints at either end allowed GDR guards and Stasi to track the start and arrival times of any foreigners traversing the routes, with the aim to prevent unauthorized activity between.⁴⁵⁴ This monitoring involved transit-route exclusive visas that allowed only travel on the designated route, and checkpoints off the routes, in case the travelers should stray from them.⁴⁵⁵ The benefit to West Germans (and Bible smugglers,

⁴⁴⁹ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 48.

⁴⁵⁰ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 49, 51–52.

⁴⁵¹ Henderson, *Tripping*, 73.

⁴⁵² Henderson, *Tripping*, 77–121.

⁴⁵³ Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–59.

⁴⁵⁴ Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–59; Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 95–97.

⁴⁵⁵ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 96; Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–59.

in this case), was that private vehicles passing through East Germany were not subject to search if they stayed on the transit routes;⁴⁵⁶ this reduced the travel time into West Berlin.

As the Soviet Bloc adjusted to Glasnost and Perestroika, East Germany also felt a lightening of the burden of total government oppression, which ultimately came to the point of residents of East and West Berlin tearing down the wall that divided them. The loosening was seen in the religious realm as well; between May and September 1989, the Synod of East German alliance of churches had become a political opposition voice to the GDR government.⁴⁵⁷ Before this time, such opposition was not tolerated.

3. Romania

The religious conditions in Soviet Romania are a story that can be represented by one prime example. After Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbrand stood up to oppose the Soviet leaders who demanded churches submit their message to political authorities, the Soviets threw him in jail in 1948 and tortured him on and off for 14 years.⁴⁵⁸ The torture he experienced to himself and his fellow prisoners (many of whom were in jail for adhering to their faith as he was) may be the deep end of the pool in terms of violent persecution under communism. Upon his release, he expanded his previous ministry by growing organizations to provide help for other Christians who were imprisoned or underground in communist nations.⁴⁵⁹ He also aided other similar international organizations, recruiting for Underground Evangelism in America for about a year.⁴⁶⁰ Wurmbrand's extended torture served to make him somewhat of a celebrity martyr to Christians inside and outside of Romania. Why else would he be ransomed from Romania's communist leaders for a

⁴⁵⁶ Henderson, *Tripping*, 58–59.

⁴⁵⁷ Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 162.

⁴⁵⁸ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 32–75.

⁴⁵⁹ For example, he supported Genovieva Beattie while her husband was in prison in 1985; see Genovieva Sfatcu Beattie with Stephen Beattie, *Caught With Bibles: A True Story From Communist Romania*, VMI Publishers (Sisters, Oregon: 2009), 70.

⁴⁶⁰ Raška, "Bibles for Communist Europe," 59; Malnic and Chandler, "Mission or Power Trip?," 2.

sum of \$10,000—about five times the price of any other preacher? This amount was paid by two Christian organizations in Europe in order to secure his release.⁴⁶¹

As for the atmosphere for those who remained in Romania, the personality cult leader Nicolae Ceausescu oversaw a continually brutal secret police, the Securitate, from 1967 until his execution in 1989. His leadership style was well-aligned with Moscow’s totalitarian views on micromanaging its citizens; yet he would eventually speak out against Moscow,⁴⁶² at which point his power became wrapped up solely in his own cult of personality. Beattie also describes her experience in Romania. Her family publicly maintained their Christian faith, and served for 20 years as in-country contacts for Western Bible smugglers to deliver Bibles to for local distribution.⁴⁶³ The Ceausescu regime targeted her family specifically through Securitate surveillance, intimidation, interrogation, and eventual imprisonment of one of the family for a year, from 1985–1986.⁴⁶⁴

4. Poland

Poland was as unique a Central European country as any. On the one hand, Communist rule resulted in persecution of broader Christianity within the country; on the other hand, the deep cultural roots of Catholicism, and the election of Polish-national Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II had a galvanizing effect toward support for religious freedom on many in Eastern Europe as a whole—and especially in Poland.⁴⁶⁵ Despite his upholding the conservative views of his two predecessors on church hot ethics topics of the day (i.e., abortion and contraceptive use) in the face of liberal trending from the Western Church, he nevertheless had the overall effect of emboldening the oppressed church in the Soviet Union—an effect that eventually spilled over from the religious sphere into the political sphere behind the Solidarity movement.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶¹ Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, 50–51, 171–2.

⁴⁶² “The Lost World of Communism, Part 3 – Romanian Revolution & Life in Communist Romania,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjbYhVDwd6k.

⁴⁶³ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*.

⁴⁶⁴ Beattie, *Caught with Bibles*, 20, 29, 41, 50–52, 58–60.

⁴⁶⁵ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 195–200.

⁴⁶⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 199–200.

Brother Andrew's first trip inside the Iron Curtain was to Poland. There he found at least one Reform Church in Poland in 1955 that was allowed to operate openly—so long as they did not discuss politics.⁴⁶⁷ In the same day, he visited a Baptist church whose members, while able to meet openly, spoke soberly of the oppression they felt for their faith.⁴⁶⁸ He encountered five denominations of Christian churches there, but he also saw how strong the politically active Communist element of society was compared to the churches, and this heightened his resolve to strengthen the believers in any way he could, leading him to begin his ministry and Bible smuggling into Communist Eastern Europe.⁴⁶⁹

5. Ukraine

Christians in Ukraine, as in other areas of the U.S.S.R., were persecuted and pressured to secularize using force and social pressures. Heinilä describes one family's experience, in which the parents were observed attending a secret church service, after which their names were publicly posted in schools and public places in order to create social pressure for them to change. Further pressure on the parents included special forms of "education" geared toward secularizing the children separately from their parents, multi-year jail sentences for parents, and state custody for the children—though the reason for custody in the case Heinilä presented was unsubstantiated.⁴⁷⁰

6. Czechoslovakia

The religious situation in Czechoslovakia reflected the hardline Communist attempts to curb religious freedom and reduce religious cultural influence. Brother Andrew visited Czechoslovakia on his second trip into Eastern Europe (1955).⁴⁷¹ He found Bibles were very scarce, although store owners boasted of newly printed Bible translations;⁴⁷² furthermore, the church of believers he visited briefly presented him a pin which they said

⁴⁶⁷ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 82–83.

⁴⁶⁸ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 83–84.

⁴⁶⁹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 87–88.

⁴⁷⁰ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 74–80.

⁴⁷¹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 92–97.

⁴⁷² Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 92–93.

represented the “cup of suffering” that Czechoslovakian believers endured for their faith.⁴⁷³ In the soviet years of Czechoslovakia, the government directly influenced many of the Catholic leaders by subsidizing those that belonged to a consortium called “Priests for Peace,” and by keeping those priests who did not belong out of influential appointments—against the will of the Vatican.⁴⁷⁴ The Protestant Church, in comparison, was less of an easy target. Josef Hromádka, a Czech Protestant leader, initially saw the possibility of a partnership between Christians and Communists—at least in opposition to Nazism—but he later spoke out against the state in 1958 when it mandated teaching Atheism in schools.⁴⁷⁵ From then, leading up to the Prague Spring in 1968, the Czechoslovakian government reduced pressure and influence upon the church; but the Prague Spring invasion reversed all that clemency and undid everything that Hromádka had accomplished in reconciling Communism to Protestantism.⁴⁷⁶ Havel’s writings on the Prague Spring—not to mention the event itself—gave insight into the oppressive religious conditions in Communist Czechoslovakia, and to the attitudes of people that reflect their circumstances more clearly. He describes people’s lives being so upset that they did not know what to think or believe in. Despite the comfort offered by “completeness . . . [of the] almost . . . secularized religion,” the ideology of the soviet dictatorship (as Havel calls it), turned out to be empty, unable to even answer any real question directed at it.⁴⁷⁷

Sparks claimed that members of the underground church in Czechoslovakia between 1977 and the mid-1980s documented a list of government violations of the Helsinki Accords; this may have included the imprisonment of one of the pastors he visited on his trip.⁴⁷⁸ Another pastor was held in a sanitarium as a dissident, when a better hospital would have been required.⁴⁷⁹ Still another pastor gave him news of five Czechoslovakian

⁴⁷³ Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler*, 96.

⁴⁷⁴ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 38–40.

⁴⁷⁵ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 40–41.

⁴⁷⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 41–42.

⁴⁷⁷ Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless*, Ed: John Keane (NY: Routledge, 2015), 25–26.

⁴⁷⁸ Sparks, *Detour*, 103, 107.

⁴⁷⁹ Sparks, *Detour*, 109–110.

pastors who had fled the Soviet Union but were being harbored at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, and a list of 126 other believers (jailed as political dissidents) to give to Amnesty International in a bid to levy international pressure for their release.⁴⁸⁰ Finally, Sparks met with a priest, from whom he heard of a new law the government had instituted that forbade religious proselytizing—to the point that it was unlawful for nuns to wear their habits in public, lest it influence young ladies to pursue such a path of religious devotion.⁴⁸¹

Henderson's account of the Czechoslovakian border crossing in 1983 details the thoroughness of the Czech border guards in searching for contraband, among which Bibles and religious literature were counted; while such literature was formally legal to bring into the country, the officials had unwritten orders to ensure it did not pass, and to prosecute and jail anyone who attempted to bring it in.⁴⁸² Czechoslovakia clearly fit into the more hardline communist-adherent Central European nations when it came to censorship of religious printed material.

7. Hungary

Hungary's failed Revolt of 1956 resulted in a bloody Communist crackdown and a refugee exodus of 200,000 Hungarians.⁴⁸³ Brother Andrew's experience in Hungary in the late 1950s revealed that the church was largely persecuted, Bibles were very scarce, and cooptation of religious ceremonies and symbols was in full swing, as evidenced by the youth group's red scarves and socialist mantras.⁴⁸⁴ Even preaching a straight evangelistic sermon was likely to bring police visits, so the church there used weddings and funerals as the occasion to make their alter calls.⁴⁸⁵ Nevertheless, even otherwise upstanding citizens

⁴⁸⁰ Sparks, *Detour*, 116.

⁴⁸¹ Sparks, *Detour*, 118.

⁴⁸² Henderson, *Tripping*, 20–27, 184–200 (esp. 185).

⁴⁸³ Peter Kenez, *Varieties of Fear: Growing up Jewish Under Nazism and Communism* (San Jose, CA: Author's Choice, 2001), viii.

⁴⁸⁴ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 126–8.

⁴⁸⁵ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 128–9.

like a university professor, whom Brother Andrew met with during his visit, lost their jobs in persecution for their faith.⁴⁸⁶

Hungarians did not fully accept Communism as a whole,⁴⁸⁷ and this became clearer as the decades went by. Sparks observed a pastor who had been officially deposed from his office still give extraordinary effort to travel after work to small evangelical congregations around the region he lived and do what he could to pastor them, despite the lack of recognition from the state of their status as churches.⁴⁸⁸ By the end of the Communist rule in 1989, Hungarians were seeking to restore their national heritage. The about 60% of Hungary that claimed Catholic faith was torn during the Communist rule between accepting (that is, voting for) the state-appointed, socialist-leaning church leaders, or simply playing the hold-out game in hopes of a more spiritually grounded candidate.⁴⁸⁹ So many priests became Communists that the “Patriotic Priests” formed a communist political party.⁴⁹⁰ Hungarian Lutherans had more success opposing those candidates they felt were too communist-friendly, because they could operate better in the absence of a Bishop than could the Catholics, so they were known to simply hold out against state-favored candidates.⁴⁹¹

8. Bulgaria

As Sparks prepared for his incursion into Bulgaria, he was told that the Bulgarians were “more Stalinist than the Russians, [or] even the Romanians.”⁴⁹² The police followed and closely watched both his team and the Christians they visited, and the resident Christians were aware their homes were bugged.⁴⁹³ Here, as in some other satellite nations, Communist leaders successfully started “atheist clubs” as a way of bringing people

⁴⁸⁶ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 128–132.

⁴⁸⁷ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 67.

⁴⁸⁸ Sparks, *Detour*, 86–89.

⁴⁸⁹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 33–34, 37–38.

⁴⁹⁰ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 37–38.

⁴⁹¹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 33–34.

⁴⁹² Sparks, *Detour*, 47.

⁴⁹³ Sparks, *Detour*, 53–55.

together in a clearly anti-religious activity.⁴⁹⁴ More Christians in Bulgaria were Orthodox, but a Catholic minority also existed.⁴⁹⁵

9. Albania

Albania was an Eastern European outlier in several ways: it was religiously split between a majority Muslims and a near tie between Orthodox Christians and Roman Catholics, and its Communist leader followed much more closely in the footsteps of China's violently hostile religious persecution, keeping Moscow at arm's length.⁴⁹⁶ They went so far as to incorporate atheism into the nation's own constitution in 1967, declaring itself "the first atheist State in the world."⁴⁹⁷ Religious leaders of any kind were violently pursued, in an attempt to wipe all religion from the country—though culturally, they did not succeed.⁴⁹⁸ It was, as Chadwick calls it, an attempt to eliminate that which divided the nation—religion.⁴⁹⁹ Ironically, it was through this very century that Albania's perhaps most world-famous native Christian developed her mission work in south Asia: Mother Teresa.⁵⁰⁰ Brother Andrew found that virtually no Bible—possibly not a single one—existed in the Albanian languages inside the small country when he visited sometime between 1956 and 1975.⁵⁰¹

Heinilä described the challenges of Christians inside Albania as well, beginning with the declaration of state atheism.⁵⁰² The government simultaneously declared that the few Christians that did remain in the nation would soon be disbanded.⁵⁰³ The pursuit of this endeavor was so vigorous, that there was even discussion about changing any names

⁴⁹⁴ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 24.

⁴⁹⁵ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 32, 51–52.

⁴⁹⁶ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 46–51.

⁴⁹⁷ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 48; Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 237.

⁴⁹⁸ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 47–49.

⁴⁹⁹ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 49.

⁵⁰⁰ Chadwick, *Christian Church in the Cold War*, 50–51.

⁵⁰¹ Brother Andrew, *God's Smuggler*, 231–4.

⁵⁰² Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 237–46.

⁵⁰³ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 237.

that had Christian origins.⁵⁰⁴ Over the next decade, all 2,100-some churches were closed and either destroyed or converted to other uses (their crosses changed out for red crescents), and church officials were brutally tortured to death or were publicly executed.⁵⁰⁵

10. Yugoslavia

Heinilä described Yugoslavia (and Macedonia especially) as having very little Christian presence, yet having strong penalties of prison for any resident found to possess Christian literature in the country.⁵⁰⁶ Nevertheless, some did find hope in religion: Drakulić tells of a young journalist in Yugoslavia who committed suicide sometime after she was scorned at her job for writing an article with a veiled criticism of economic nationalization.⁵⁰⁷ Drakulić found a Bible on her bed, which was apparently a new acquisition; the deceased lady had been searching for something beyond this life, struggling with the depressing realities of Communism.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁴ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 238.

⁵⁰⁵ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 238.

⁵⁰⁶ Heinilä, *Streng Vertraulich!*, 235–6.

⁵⁰⁷ Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (NY: Harper Perennial, 1993), 1–10.

⁵⁰⁸ Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism*, 9.

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