



## Are Bible Smugglers Deceivers?

*by Richard Wurmbrand*

On February 22nd, the Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland informed our office in that country that the Department has been threatened by the Soviet Embassy with "deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries," if it does not stop the promotion which we make for the cause of the persecuted church in Communist countries.

"Radianska Ukraina," a Soviet newspaper, of February 8th, has a furious article accusing me as heading a conspiracy of former Nazis to smuggle Christian books into the Soviet Union. However I find this rather ridiculous since the Nazis were not at all fond of the Bible, which they considered a dirty Jewish book.

At the very same time, attacks directed against our smuggling work appeared in some Christian magazines of different countries. The authors' intentions may be good, only that they are in bad company. It is not normal for a Christian writer to be on the same wave length with the atheist murderers of Christians. There must be a serious thinking error which placed them in this position. If an article or book of mine on the subject of how to evangelize the Communist world would correspond to the Communist views about it, being sure that it can only be wrong, I would change my position.

The thinking error consists in generalizing. It is not true that all smugglers are deceivers, as it is asserted.

When David's life was threatened by King Saul, Mical and Jonathan "smuggled" him out of the reach of his persecutor. Mical used for this purpose deceptive means. She put a big doll in David's bed. Saul's policemen had the impression that they saw him sleeping. Thus she had saved the life of an innocent anointed by God. Was she wrong?

The Bible tells us about Rahab how she helped spies of the chosen people to smuggle themselves out of an enemy city by simply telling the persecutors a lie. Rahab is given as an example of faith in the New Testament.

Virgin Mary smuggled the babe Jesus out of Bethlehem. The law of Herod demanded her to give Him to be killed.

A few men had a friend sick of palsy. They wished to see him healed, but there was no means for them to arrive to Jesus, the healer, otherwise than through breaking the roof of somebody else's house and smuggling the patient into the house, lowering his bed with ropes. Have they been wrong to do so? The Bible says, "Jesus saw their faith." We would have seen them as breaking all the laws of decency.

St. Paul, when threatened, was smuggled out of the city of Damascus in a basket. At that time one had to leave a city only through a gate and identify himself if asked. Had Paul and his companions been deceivers?

In Westminster Abbey there is a plate with great words of honor for Tyndale, the father of Christian smugglers, the one who smuggled the Bible into England. A noble deceiver, in whose footsteps I am glad to walk. He died on a stake for Christ.

In Nazi times, Swedes risked their lives and smuggled Jews out of Denmark which was occupied by the Nazis. Do those smugglers deserve the name of deceivers?

I myself have smuggled children out of Jewish concentration camps. They had been destined to be burned. I have seen the joy when their fathers could embrace them. In that case, I am happy to have been a "deceiver."

Afterwards, the Soviets occupied my homeland, Romania, and now the reverse came. Every German was liable to deportation, German girls to rape, only for the guilt of being Germans. I helped Germans to escape this injustice. I am happy about this "deceit," too. The best Christians of my country and from abroad were with me in this smuggling work.

In Hungary, the Fascist government of Szalassy killed the Jews. In Romania, though also under Fascism, the situation was relatively easier. The Romanian government had passed a law punishing with death any help extended to a Hungarian Jew to

pass the frontier. I smuggled Jews over the frontier and lives were saved. If this smuggling is "deceit," I do not mind to have been a deceiver.

Smuggling is deceit? The manuscripts of Solzhenitsyn, of Krasnov Levitin and other Russian Christians have been smuggled out of Russia. Has this been wrong? "Christianity Today" published in due time with indignation the picture of the Soviet soldier, Ivan Moiseev, killed by the Communists because of his Christian faith. This picture has been smuggled out of the Soviet Union in a lady's underwear. It would not have arrived to the West otherwise. If to deceive is wrong, to use a photograph smuggled out through deceit would be wrong, too, in this case.

When God made me, he did it for the purpose that I should be myself, *that I should serve Him in the special way in which He guides me*. Apparently the authors of the articles against me have another guidance. But every individual is as unique as God. One cannot apply to him general patterns valid for all circumstances.

If you say that all smugglers are deceivers, you may say also that all killers are criminals, which would make the world full of "criminals" considering all those who killed in self defense like policemen who shot gangsters in order to save some innocent child, the war heroes who died for their fatherland or in some other just battle in which they had to fight with weapons against enemies who had weapons.

But supposing that all smugglers are deceivers, why single out Bible smugglers for attack? Why not write against the World Council of Churches which smuggles money to guerrillas in South Africa and Portuguese territories? By legal means, guerrillas cannot and should not be financed.

I understand the good intentions of my opponents who take the ethical position — "The end does not justify the means," herewith I agree, *but it is unethical to leave a country without the word of God, when Jesus has commanded us to preach the Gospel to all creation*.

The Chinese are without the Word of God. They are 800 millions. Thousands die every day in a very dangerous state for their soul. Mao-Tse-Tung forbids the Bible. There is almost no tourism in Red China. Even if a few Bibles pass the customs, what are they for almost one billion people? To keep my own person "unstained" and not to "smuggle" Bibles does not apply to this case when a whole people remain otherwise without the knowledge of Christ.

*The Soviets have no law forbidding the importation of Bibles*. They make visitors sign a declaration *which makes them believe that there exists a legal obligation to declare printed matter*. But this is not the first Communist lie. I defy anyone to show me such a



Soviet law. Their law guarantees freedom of religious worship. The Bible is an indispensable part of this worship. We help the Soviet people fulfill their own constitution. Thus the Soviet government seems to be the law-breaker by hindering me arbitrarily to bring Bibles in. *They oblige me to smuggle. The sin is theirs.*

There exists a Christian obligation to render to Caesar what is Caesar's. The Caesar of Russia was Czar Nicholas II. He has been killed in cold blood with his whole family without any judgment by a group of rebels who have imposed themselves as dictators over the nation through terror. In that case, "Render to Caesar" means "Render to Caesar's murderers," then the second part, "Render to God what is God's" must be interpreted as meaning "Render the devil what is due to God." I cannot agree with that.

Therefore I smuggle Bibles into Communist countries and rejoice if for this I am treated with evil words. My reward will be so much greater.

Are there no legal means to bring great quantities of Bibles into Communist countries?

Yes there are. Romania has authorized the printing of 200,000 Bibles. However, "Swiss Evangelical Press Service" of May 2, 1973 announced that *the whole quantity has been sold for dollars to Romanian-speaking Americans, Australians, etc., in the Free World.*

Let us have no illusion. Tyndale had to smuggle the Bible. We have no other choice either.

R. Wurmbrand

Donations to help late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand missionary work may be sent to:  
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