

rule of an atheistic Government in the Soviet Union, Prof Voronel said there is a re-birth of religious feeling for all, not only amongst Jews.

"Soviet authorities cannot accept that religious feelings are legitimate.

"Since every ideology is a political tool for them, they consider religion the tool of imperialism," Prof Voronel stressed.

He pointed out that any religious manifestation, Jewish or Christian, is suspect of evil thoughts or madness.

Jews, however, are considered not a religious but a national minority and deprived of their rights as such. Soviet authorities consider Hebrew a reactionary language, he said.

QUOTE

He quoted a Russian church authority stating that about 30 per cent of the priests in the Russian Orthodox Church are KGB officers and added that it has been suggested that some rabbis were also under KGB control.

These ministers justify their actions by considering that they are deceiving the KGB and really working for their congregations.

Church activities are regulated by the government. For instance, bibles are distributed by government officials, Prof. Voronel explained.

THAN PAY INCREASED FEE"

Sydney's only Beth Din supervised kosher take-away food shop may give up its licence rather than pay increased fees levied by the Kashrut Administration Committee (KAC).

Malcolm Lewis, owner of the shop in Bondi, said he would rather resort to such a drastic course of action than agree to the 150 per cent increase in his licence fee.

"There was no consultation about the possibility of an increase; they just upped it," Mr Lewis said.

"I wasn't asked if I thought it was a fair thing, or not."

The shop currently pays a sum of \$520 annually to the KAC for its licence, which would increase to \$1300 under the new proposal.

Mr Lewis said the only expense or effort on the part of the KAC for this sum is the cost of stationery and a postage stamp for the statement each month.

"I fully employ; I meet all the expenses, wages, holiday pay, sick pay and workers' compensation insurance," he said.

"When I met with the KAC recently I told them that I cannot afford to pay the new charges.

"Other expenses were already absorbed by the business, because we cannot keep passing on the in-

KOSHER TAKE AWAY SHOP OWNER SAYS

creases to the consumer; such a policy would eventually kill the business."

CLAIM

Mr Lewis claimed the KAC informed him they were instructed by the Beth Din to withdraw his licence if he refused to pay the new fee.

"The KAC claimed it would go bankrupt if there was no increase in its charges. I had to point out that I would go bankrupt if I paid them," he said.

"However, I did tell them that if my licence was withdrawn I would want the reasons and circumstances stated publicly and also informed them that no change of mind would be possible later on."

Mr Lewis said that a take-away food retailer works on a small margin of profit, which makes the absorption of the increased fee unrealistic.

"I also have a very high percentage of non-Jewish customers and it is impossible to pass the increase on to them; there is

only so much one can charge for a chicken."

The director of the Kashrut Administration Committee, Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick, defended the decision to increase Mr Lewis' licence fee.

"He does catering at Central Synagogue for Shabbatons, for which he pays no catering fees, but the increased licence fee will cover it," he said.

"The KAC also provides a service in investigating various food products and publishing lists of those which are acceptable for consumption.

"Mr Lewis also benefits from this and the service has to be financed by commercial outlets."

Rabbi Gutnick expressed his hope that "everything will be settled amicably."

NEGOTIATING

He pointed out that the butchers licenced by the Beth Din are still negotiating over the matter, but "have agreed to some increase," while there has been no official reaction from the caterers.

"We are contemplating calling a meeting with them, where the reasons



• Malcolm Lewis

He also gave an assurance that the identity of witnesses and their privacy will be respected.

Rabbi Gutnick welcomed the possibility of an inquiry into kosher prices and said the KAC's books will be opened for any inspection if requested.

"If anyone can come up with a better method of financing kosher in NSW his ideas would be welcomed by us," he said.

"Ideally, the eventual solution should be a system of communal subsidy for kosher, rather than just putting the burden on the kosher consumer."

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