MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 57, Folder 6, Consultation on Soviet Jewry, 1986.

3101 Clifton Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
(513) 221-1875 phone, (513) 221-7812 fax
americanjewisharchives.org

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY

September 28-29, 1986

AGENDA

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 (Doral Inn - 49th & Lexington Ave.)

5:30	RECEPTION	
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	SUPPER	
	INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:	**Maynard I. Wishner** Honorary President, AJC
7:00 - 7:20	PRESENTATIONS:	**Soviet Jewry:** **The Current Situation** **Dr. Zvi Gitelman** Professor of Political Science University of Michigan
7:20 - 7:50		**Exchange Agreements:** **Helpful or Harmful to Human Rights?** **Dr. Yoram Dinstein** Visiting Professor, NYU Pro-Rector Tel Aviv University & Former Dean Faculty of Law
7:50 - 8:05	DISCUSSANT:	**Dr. Uri Ra'Anan** Professor, International Politics Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy Tufts University
8:05 - 9:00	GENERAL DISCUSSION	

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 (AJC Headquarters - 165 E. 56th St.)

9:30 - 9:40 a.m.	OPENING REMARKS:	**Theodore Ellenoff** President, AJC
9:40 - 10:30	PRESENTATIONS:	**Summit II: Implications for** **Human Rights & Soviet Jewry** **Ambassador Richard Schifter** Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights & Humanitarian Affairs **Hon. Thomas W. Simons, Jr.** Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 (cont.)

10:30 - 11:30

Economic Leverage:
New Opportunities?

Dr. Susanne L. Lotarski
Director, Office of East
European & Soviet Affairs,
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Dr. Marshall I. Goldman
Assistant Director, Russian
Research Center
Harvard University

11:30 - 12:15 DISCUSSION

12:15 - 2:00 p.m. LUNCH

INTRODUCTION: **Miles Jaffe**
Chairman, Commission on
International Relations, AJC

GUEST SPEAKER: **Morris B. Abram**
President, National Conference
on Soviet Jewry
Member U.S. Delegation to Vienna
of Helsink Review Conference

2:00 p.m. SUMMATION **Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum**
Director
International Relations
Department, AJC

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

Conference Co-ordinator
David Geller
International Relations, AJC

SOVIET JEWRY RESEARCH BUREAU

Jewish Emigration From the USSR
Statistics

Oct. 1968 - 1970	4,235	1976		14,261
1971	13,022	1977		16,736
1972	31,681	1978		28,864
1973	34,733	1979		51,320
1974	20,628	1980		21,471
1975	13,221	1981		9,447
		1982		2,688

	1983	1984	1985	1986
January	81	88	61	79
February	125	90	88	84
March	101	51	98	47
April	114	74	166	72
May	116	109	51	49
June	102	72	36	55
July	167	85	174	31
August	130	83	29	88
September	135	69	93	
October	90	29	124	
November	56	55	128	
December	97	91	92	
	1,314	896	1,140	

From October 1968 - August 1986, 266,162 persons left the Soviet Union with Israeli visas. Approximately 163,675 of them went to Israel.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

National Office: 10 East 40th Street, Suite 907, New York, N.Y. 10016 • (212) 679-6122/Cable Address: AMCONSOV, N.Y. • Telex: 237311 NCSJ
Washington Office: 2027 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 • (202) 265-8114

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
10 East 40th Street, Suite 907
New York, New York 10016

SOVIET-AMERICAN EXCHANGES AND SOVIET JEWS

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this report is to track Soviet-American exchanges and their relation to the rate of Soviet Jewry emigration. Even though emigration and exchanges are not directly related, in past years, their "ups and downs" follow parallel paths. Recently though, the factors that have affected exchanges and emigration have not changed. Instead of both reacting to US policy in the same way, exchanges are growing while emigration barely continues. In addition, this study will explain how the American exchange groups approach their Soviet counterparts, the goals of these programs and of the Soviet and American governments, and their growth at the present time.

History of Soviet-American Exchanges

The first official exchange agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement, was signed in 1958. Otherwise known as the Cultural Agreement, this provided for exchanges in the cultural, technical, and educational fields, and for the first time it established direct air service between the US and the Soviet Union. Even though many of these exchanges were already occurring, the Soviet Union had, and still expresses a desire for, an agreement on paper. Subsequently, the treaty was drawn up.

The Cultural Agreement called for renewal every two years. Since the agreements were new, at least in this form, 1959-1972 were considered the "learning years." The key words in developments at this time include "suspicion, control, and strict reciprocity." While progress on dialogue between professionals was occurring, efforts were hampered by the mistrust of our two societies. In addition, each side approached exchanges differently.

In the USSR, the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries coordinated Soviet efforts until 1967 when the Cultural Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over. In the United States, the National Academy of Sciences administered the US role until 1968, when the International Research and Exchange Program (IREX) took responsibility.

In 1973, Brezhnev and Nixon signed the "General Agreement on Contacts, Exchanges and Cooperation." This agreement called for a wide variety of exchanges including teachers, artists, performing art groups, and one or two exhibitions a year. It also called for the distribution of the magazines "Amerika" and "Soviet Life."

During the next few years, in the period often described as "detente," eleven agreements, such as Agriculture, Studies of the World Ocean, and Environmental Protection, were signed in different areas of joint exploration and research. They encouraged cooperation in scientific and technical agreements.

Exchanges and tourism between the two countries blossomed. More students, scientists and lecturers visited the Soviet Union than ever before; the number of visiting Soviets to the US increased as well. The peak of these exchanges occurred in 1979, exemplified by a record-breaking year for tourism to the USSR.

However, at the end of 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and the period of detente ended. Exchanges in all areas were cut drastically and many were allowed to expire without renewal. Similarly, tourism declined sharply. In the early 1980's, exchanges were being revived when they suffered another setback with the shooting down of the KAL jetliner in 1983.

When Ronald Reagan took office, he ushered in a new era of Soviet-American relations, and with it, a new attitude towards exchanges. Scientific and technological agreements that were "unfair" to the US were allowed to lapse. In 1982, the President allowed the three cooperative agreements, Energy, Space, and Science and Technology to expire. Reagan exhibited a much tougher policy on the Soviets, but as relations between the two countries deteriorated, exchanges did not react as usual.

Exchange groups sprung up concerned by Reagan policies; many adopted anti-nuclear positions and acted in opposition to the deteriorating relationship with the Soviets. The Institute for Soviet-American Relations (ISAR) reported that between 1980-3, seventy-four groups began Soviet-American activities, the largest increase since these activities began. Since 1983, forty-one groups have begun activities.

At the end of 1985, Reagan met with Gorbachev at the Summit in Geneva. Both sides encouraged cultural exchanges. "Cultural exchange agreements totaling forty-one pages have been prepared for signature. These would start officially sponsored exchanges of theatrical and artistic groups and major exhibits that were suspended after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on December 24, 1979." Also, many of the bilateral exchanges were renewed.

Soviet Exchange Objectives

The kinds of exchanges that the Soviets allow and encourage exhibit their objectives -- access to US science and technology. The Soviets also wish to "gain recognition for their efforts to change a backward agricultural country into a modern industrial power, and their achievements in the arts, culture and science which they tout as achievements of a communist society." In addition, exchanges gave the Soviets a psychological boost as it makes them an equal with the United States.

American Exchange Objectives

American reasons for exchanges are similar to those of the Soviets -- access to Soviet advances in many fields. The American people have always been curious about the workings of this closed society and want to tour the Soviet Union to learn more about it. Professors and other intellectuals are hungry for information about this society.

Exchange groups approach exchanges in two basic, yet intertwined ways. Bridges For Peace, a citizens project for US-USSR dialogue states its objective as "working to build better understanding between the US and USSR, so that the threat of nuclear war will be reduced; furthermore, human, financial, and material resources now devoted to the arms race can be freed to meet the pressing needs of global development." Many groups echo this belief and wish to promote a better understanding of the Soviet Union through the exchange of people.

Other groups believe that by being completely open with the Soviet citizens to whom they have access, somehow there is a way to bring about change, even if minor, within the Soviet Union. Usually, those groups which follow an "honest policy" are not concerned with raising human rights issues.

Role of the Public and the Private Sector

Exchange programs have encountered difficulties in terms of responsibility. Because the USSR is state controlled it is much easier to institute exchange programs. In the United States, exchanges have evolved into primarily a private endeavor. When the first agreements were signed, the government took a much larger role in the implementation of the exchanges. Now, however, the private sector is taking the lead. The logistics of having to deal with the pluralism of the American society have been frustrating for Soviet officials.

Exchange Groups (The following groups are examples. For a complete listing, refer to ISAR's complete handbook Organizations Involved in Soviet-American Relations.)

Exchanges take place on a number of different levels. There are groups who exchange journalists; others send students and tourists. All kinds of exchanges are possible. Recently, Bridges For Peace sponsored and directed a group of Soviet priests. The following are examples of the wide range of groups, and some described here are among the largest and most involved.

US Information Agency (USIA)

As part of President Reagan's "Peace Initiative," he appointed a coordinator to work with the USIA who's role is to assist and coordinate reciprocal exchanges with the USSR. It also assists the private sector in exchanges in the performing arts, sports, education, health, exhibits, and with youth groups. The USIA accepts proposals from the private sector, helps raise money and implement the exchange. The USIA seeks to be non-controversial and therefore, does not take a position on human rights.

National Academy of Science (NAS)

The National Academy of Sciences has been involved with Soviet-American exchanges from the very beginning. Their program is unique in that it continues despite political tensions. For a number of years it actively raised human rights concerns, and spoke out on behalf of for Andrei Sakharov. In an April 4, 1986 press release discussing its new agreement with the Soviet Academy of Sciences the NAS stated that, "reflecting the National Academy of Sciences' continuing concerns over human rights, all activities conducted under the agreement will be based on 'the principles and conditions of the Final Act of the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,' known as the Helsinki Accords."

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

The FCNL is a Quaker lobbying group that began its involvement in Soviet-American issues because of their interest in preventing nuclear war. They have voiced concern over human rights in the Soviet Union, but many of their remedies for the Soviet Jewry question are different from that of the Jewish community. For instance, they oppose the Jackson-Vanik Amendment -- "The Jackson-Vanik Amendment of 1974 was one example of the belligerent approach. It sought to liberalize Soviet emigration policy for Jews by withholding certain trade advantages. But if anything it was counterproductive. Partly due to the Nixon-Kissinger policy of detente, emigration of Soviet Jews rose from 1,000 in 1970 to 33,500 in 1973. After the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was accepted, emigration declined to 13,000 in 1976."

The Dartmounth Conference

The Dartmouth Conference is an annual meeting between prominent Soviet and American scholars in which governmental issues are discussed. It resembles a citizens forum discussing current Soviet American relations and the policies of the two governments at the present time.

Organization for American-Soviet Exchanges (OASES)

OASES sponsors individual trips to and from the Soviet Union, for personal contact among people. "OASES believes that, despite antagonism between the world's two superpowers, long-term relations can be improved and peaceful change fostered through personal contacts among people in both countries." They seek exchange and an "honesty policy." OASES does not attempt to hide American faults, but rather, it attempts to teach the Soviets about our society by being completely open with them.

Human Rights, Soviet Jewry and Exchanges

Human rights, and specifically Soviet Jewry, is a very sensitive subject with many of the exchange groups. A majority believe that pressing human rights issues with the Soviets will jeopardize their program, and therefore, subsequently fail to take an active stand on the Soviets' human rights record. Many agree that the situation is despicable, but will go no further than that.

For the first time since exchanges began, Jewish emigration has not kept pace with the vigor of the program. Emigration remains at a trickle while exchanges grow.

How Should the Jewish Community Handle Exchange Groups?

Exchange groups must be convinced that if they take a more active role in human rights that they will not lose their programs. For many years, the National Academy of Sciences has raised the case of Andrei Sakharov, with no repercussions to their program. OASES has raised human rights issues with Soviet citizens, as well. Using such examples, we may be able to convince groups that they can express their opinions in a positive way.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of exchanges, US policy has played a major role in determining the number and extent of exchanges. US-Soviet relations have also affected the level of Soviet Jewish emigration. In this way emigration and exchanges have followed parallel paths.

However, despite continuing tenuous relations, exchanges and emigration are now following separate paths. While Jewish emigration reflects these tensions, exchanges have been growing and gaining strength. Exchange groups should utilize their opportunity to speak out on human rights and Soviet Jewry. Once convinced that they will not jeopardize programs by "speaking their mind," many may be willing to take a more active stand.

Researched by Renee Weiner, Houston
Intern, NCSJ Washington Office

September 1986
JG/D3/008

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1986

For Ties With Soviet Lawyers

By Morris B. Abram

The debate at the American Bar Association convention over the propriety of an agreement the association had entered into with a Soviet lawyers group was a healthy examination of an issue that has received too little public attention: what are the benefits our country should look for in the resurgence of exchange programs with the Soviet Union in arts, sports, science, education and other fields?

When the question came to a vote, the A.B.A.'s House of Delegates rejected a resolution that would have terminated the agreement. The resolution's supporters had argued that by developing formal ties to the Association of Soviet Lawyers, the A.B.A. was "legitimizing" a major agent of the Soviet Union's repressive Government. A majority felt, as I do, that it was important to develop ties to the only official Soviet lawyers body as a group to whom American lawyers could protest the denial of adequate legal procedures for dissidents, refuseniks and human rights advocates in the Soviet Union — and press the Soviet Union on that denial.

The Association of Soviet Lawyers is in no way an independent bar. Subservient to the state, as are all institutions under a totalitarian regime, the Soviet group has been the energetic sponsor of a stream of vicious libels against the defenders of human rights broadly and of Soviet Jewish emigration specifically. Thus, there is merit to the argument that the American association should cut off relations with the Soviet group and publicly reject its fraudulent claim to international status and respectability. But there is more to it than that.

Collaboration offers an opportunity to influence conduct on human rights

In my view, collaboration between the American and Soviet bar can be justified — but only if we use it to educate some prominent and influential Americans about Soviet reality and to show Soviet officials that for all Americans human rights are a vital policy, not empty piety.

Without discourse, we cannot accomplish this aim; without contact, we can have no hope of influence on Soviet conduct. So long — and only so long — as the American-Soviet arrangement provides a forum for substantive discussions, we should use it to build a model for all American-Soviet exchanges. Instead of dropping out, American lawyers can take the lead in substituting bite and meaning for hollow formalities.

If our efforts prove fruitless, we should not hesitate to terminate the agreement on the three months' notice it provides. But in the meantime, as skilled advocates we should welcome this limited chance to make the case for our society's highest value. Unlike Helsinki accord monitors in the Soviet Union, who have been imprisoned, exiled and intimidated into silence, we can be open and effective monitors of Soviet compliance with the principles of free exchange and the practice of human rights.

In sessions that must be open to the press, we should present our detailed concerns and grievances about Soviet legal procedures. We must insist on full discussions of such issues and weigh the value of further dialogue against the evidence, if any, of Soviet reform. Our questioning and questioners should be expert and tough.

For instance:

- Why are Moscow defense lawyers refused the travel vouchers without which they cannot represent out-of-town clients in political cases?
- Why are courtrooms where such cases are heard closed by subterfuge to Soviet and foreign observers, when the law provides for secrecy only for trials on charges of sex crimes and treasonous offenses?

The A.B.A. acted wisely in rejecting a resolution to end an agreement on relations with its counterpart

- Why can't Jewish refuseniks denied the right to emigrate to Israel be represented by counsel in appealing these arbitrary administrative denials of basic rights?
- Why do Soviet prosecutors treat the study of an ancient, sacred language — Hebrew — as a crime instead of a cultural blessing?
- Why, since Mikhail S. Gorbachev came to office, have more than a dozen additional Jewish activists been imprisoned on false criminal charges, while the level of emigration has dropped to new lows in flagrant violation of the Helsinki accords?

As upholders of the rule of law, we should press such inquiries of Soviet lawyers. By the same token, American musicians, in their contacts with their Soviet counterparts, should question the censoring of recordings made by Rostropovich and Vishnevskaya. American writers should protest the mistreatment of Pasternak, Aksyonov, Solzhenitsyn and others. American physicists, chemists and biologists should use the occasion of scientific exchanges to denounce the savagery heaped on Sakharov, Orlov and Brailovsky. All Americans, in all encounters with Soviet officials and Soviet citizens, should demand full respect for fundamental human rights.

Those are the benefits our country and our country's cause can derive from exchanges with the Soviet Union — but only if we demand them. □

Morris B. Abram, a lawyer, is chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

SOVIET JEWS: NYET AGAIN?

These are hard times for Soviet Jews. But the struggle goes on. And there is cause for hope.

DAVID A. HARRIS

In 1979, more than 4,000 Soviet Jews were permitted to leave the USSR each month; in 1986, that number has dwindled to less than 100. Natan Shcharansky is free, but arrests of Hebrew teachers and other activists have continued, and harassment of those engaged in religious and cultural study has intensified. How are we to understand what is happening? And what can we do about it?

Recent visitors, Western diplomats stationed in the USSR and refuseniks themselves, are agreed that the situation of Soviet Jews has deteriorated since Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power in March 1985. Indeed, some refuseniks now talk of a modern-day version of Konstantin Pobedonostsev's alleged solution to the Jewish question at the turn of this century. Pobedonostsev, the influential procurator of the Holy Synod, formulated the infamous "third-third-third" strategy: one-third will emigrate, one-third will be assimilated, and the last third, rejecting either option, will die.

Today, the Kremlin's approach remains three-pronged, though with somewhat different content and proportions. First, Moscow technically retains the emigration option. Although it keeps the exit door only slightly ajar, it claims that its policy conforms to the applicable international agreements to which it is a signatory. When challenged on the low emigration rate, it explains that few now leave because "the process of family reunification has almost been completed." Moscow concedes that it delays emigration for family reunification from five to ten years "where state secrets are involved." It has also alleged it restricts emigration because so many Soviet Jews have gone to the United States rather than to Israel despite their Israeli visas, according to, among others, former foreign minister Gromyko in September 1981; former Soviet envoy to Canada Yakolev, who is now a key Party secretary; and Victor Louis, the Soviet Journalist.

By carefully manipulating emigration, the Kremlin seeks to enhance its image overseas. The staggered and well-publicized releases of even a few well-known refuseniks, former prisoners of conscience, and other compelling humanitarian cases bring Western media attention. The Kremlin hopes this will deflect attention from the country's true human rights picture. And by issuing exit visas to some refuseniks (e.g. Essas, Gorodetsky, Mesh and the Goldshtein brothers), the Kremlin is attempting to reinforce Gorbachev's assertion that long-standing cases are resolved against a backdrop of rapidly declining demand. Second, Moscow is also eager to accelerate the process of assimilation. By reducing emigration to a trickle, the Kremlin seeks to drive home a point to those who would apply for exit visas, a point made explicit in the offices of OVIR, where such applications are reviewed: "You have no chance to leave, so why not resume 'normal' lives as Soviet citizens. There are jobs and educational opportunities available to you. Housing, pensions, medical care and safety are at a much higher level here than in the West. Just look at the experiences of those former Soviet citizens who were duped into leaving their motherland only to suffer the consequences of living as unwanted, unemployed, unhappy strangers in a decadent, dangerous and often anti-Semitic new world. Here, nationalities live happily together and we value [as Gorbachev himself said in October 1985] the contributions of the talented Jewish minority." The message is strikingly clear: The time of high emigration is over, and there is no realistic alternative to reintegration.

Third, terror continues to be employed against those who refuse assimilation. No one today speaks of the annihilation proposed by Pobedonostsev, nor of the mass deportation of Jews to Siberia that Stalin had been planning on the eve of his death. The current approach is neither that of Stalin's mass terror of the 1930s nor of the massacre of Jewish cultural figures of the early 1950s. Rather, it is a policy of selective terror. The weapons are isolation, harassment, harsh sentences, remote

David A. Harris is Deputy Director, International Relations Department, American Jewish Committee.

camps, rigorous prison conditions, and physical assault from common criminals placed in the same cells.

There is no need to arrest every Jewish troublemaker, the authorities reason. Arrest a few key figures and shock waves will spread throughout the emigration movement. To make life unpredictable for those contemplating the teaching or study of such "subversive" subjects as Hebrew language, Judaism or Jewish history–and unpredictability is key–all that is required is to arrest some who do not even seem deserving of the KGB's attention. That will deter the rest.

When Gorbachev came to power, there were those who thought Soviet policy towards the Jews might be liberalized. After all, here was a "modern" leader, one concerned with image and sensitive to public opinion both at home and abroad. Plainly, such hopes have been disappointed. Yet it is precisely with such a Soviet leader–firmly in control, open to change and likely to be around for years to come–that the chance of striking some kind of deal is enhanced. The prospect of significant change in Soviet policy continues to depend, as it has all these years past, on superpower relations. U.S.-USSR relations chilled in 1979 and remained frigid until the spring of 1983, when a partial thaw set in. A five-year grain agreement was signed, a cultural pact was in the offing, and the United States lifted some restrictions on the export of oil and gas equipment. The thaw, however, was interrupted by the shooting down of the Korean airliner in September 1983. It was not until 1985 that superpower dialogue began in earnest, providing the first serious opportunity since 1979 for consideration of, among other issues, the vexing question of Soviet Jewry. Although bilateral relations remain rocky, there has been a significant change in both their substance and tone in the last year. A structure is now in place for more frequent official contacts and further summits. President Reagan appears to have come a long way from the days of his "evil empire" speech. Now, we are told, he seeks to assure his place in history as a peacemaker. And Gorbachev, faced with the monumental task of energizing the perennially anemic Soviet economy, which is plagued by declining foreign currency earnings due to lower oil prices, burdened by the high cost of the Chernobyl clean-up, and reportedly preoccupied with the staggering challenge posed by America's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"), just might be open to further dialogue with Washington, leading to improved ties. If so, then it is possible–just possible–that the next two years will prove an especially important period in Soviet-American relations. Obviously, the thaw is only partial, and could quickly be interrupted by any number of developments, including unplanned events quite distant from the borders–and intentions–of both powers. Or, perhaps, Reagan's own firmly rooted views or pressure from his right might deter him from moving "too far." Or Gorbachev, who will be closely watching the 1986 and 1988 U.S. elections, might decide that he can get a better deal by waiting until January 1989.

Still, the next two years may be years of uncommon possibility for Soviet Jewry and for its advocates abroad.

And the timing is good. Soviet Jewry once again appears to be an ascending issue in the West. For some time it had languished. After so many years of struggle, fatigue had set in, and frustration as well. How long can even the best-intentioned people be expected to sustain a feverish pitch of commitment on an issue that has persisted for two decades and that, despite spectacular results from 1971 to 1979, now seems immune to Western influence?

Yet a number of national and community-based agencies led by a group of devoted individuals have succeeded in maintaining the visibility of the issue of Soviet Jewry and its priority on the Western agenda. And now, energized no doubt by the release of Natan Shcharansky in February 1986, the plight of Soviet Jewry is gaining increased attention. Almost singlehandedly, Shcharansky has galvanized public opinion, recharged the advocacy movement and unified often disparate groups. The extraordinary reception accorded him in Washington in May, the electricity he generated in the record crowd of 300,000 at New York's Solidarity Sunday demonstration, and the lavish press attention he has received have all served to restore hope, and even optimism, within the movement, and to restore interest in the issue of Soviet Jewry among government leaders and the general public.

It is also worth noting the growing commitment of the major Jewish philanthropic, religious and community-relations agencies to the advocacy movement. As awareness of the stark reality facing Soviet Jews takes root and all hope of a sudden reversal is dashed, a new level of response has emerged: heightened interagency cooperation; increased travel to meet with refuseniks; more appeals to the administration and Congress; greater participation in local and national demonstrations, vigils and petition campaigns; and increased efforts to educate and mobilize constituencies.

The success of the Soviet Jewry movement–and it should be noted that this nonviolent movement has been among the most successful in modern history–has always been dependent on four interconnected factors.

The first is the struggle that Soviet Jews themselves undertook in the mid-1960s to assert their Jewish identity, refuse assimilation and demand–consistent with international covenants and the concept of repatriation as the Soviet government itself defines the term–to be permitted to depart for Israel. Their willingness to risk retribution by writing appeals to Soviet and Western officials, demonstrating, petitioning, fasting, meeting with Western diplomats and correspondents, and engaging in study groups captured the world's imagination and sparked Western efforts on their behalf.

The second is the vital role Israel has played. Not only would there be no legal basis for this emigration if Israel did not exist as a sovereign state (Soviet Jews formally apply for an exit visa based on an affidavit notarized by the Israeli government for family reunification with relatives

resident in Israel), but Israel also provides invaluable information and support for the advocacy movement. The third factor is the actions of Western governments, led by the United States. One can only wonder if any Soviet Jews would have been granted exit visas had the U.S. administration and Congress not shown such concern for their fate. Other countries too have played important, if less publicized, roles. The Netherlands has been quietly representing Israeli diplomatic interests in Moscow since 1967. Belgium was the first country at the Madrid Review Conference of the Helsinki Final Act publicly to express concern over Soviet anti-Semitism. Australia, Canada and Great Britain have sent their Moscow-based diplomats to monitor the trials of some Jewish activists. France's President Mitterrand was the first Western leader to include a Jewish communal leader, Theo Kelin, as an official member of his delegation during a 1984 state visit to the USSR. West Germany helped secure Shcharansky's release. And Austria has maintained open borders to emigrating Soviet Jews, providing transit to hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews and other East European refugees for decades. Finally, the role of voluntary organizations and public opinion has been an important factor. American agencies such as the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, Committee of Concerned Scientists and their counterparts in other Western countries have stimulated public attention, lobbied governments and helped draw Christians and Jews, blacks and whites, scientists and artists, public officials and private citizens into the advocacy ranks. What more needs to be, and can be, done, especially in light of the current gloomy situation?

A key concern is to avoid a situation wherein, notwithstanding the current commitment of the U.S. government to Soviet Jewry's rescue, Soviet Jews become the victims and not the beneficiaries of improving Soviet-American relations. In the last year alone, several bilateral agreements have been signed; Moscow has succeeded in raising more than $600 million in credits from American banks; the National Academy of Sciences, reversing its earlier decision to curtail exchanges because of Soviet treatment of Orlon, Sakharov and other dissident scientists, has resumed ties with the Soviet Academy of Sciences; American cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington are considering sister-city ties with Soviet cities; American travel to the USSR was expected to rise considerably, had it not been for the Chernobyl disaster; the United States, in contrast to the Olympic boycott in 1980, did participate in the 1986 Moscow Goodwill Games; ballet and opera companies, orchestras and art exhibitions are beginning to travel back and forth; and some U.S. corporations are exploring business opportunities in the USSR. Yet all of this has occurred against a backdrop of unrelenting repression of Soviet Jews and, for that matter, of religious, peace, labor, Helsinki and other dissident Soviet groups, of the continued exile of Nobel Laureate Andrei Sakharov, of the brutal occupation of Afghanistan, and of the crushing of Solidarity in Poland.

During this period, what positive behaviors–or even gestures–have the Soviets displayed? A handful of divided family cases resolved, a few refuseniks released (Shcharansky's prominence should not blind us to the fact that he is but one–and one who was "traded," not freed–and the rest of his family, scheduled for freedom at August's end, only five more); a six-month visit to the West for Elena Bonner, Sakharov's wife; and very little else. From Moscow's viewpoint, things have not been going badly. If it can achieve most of its desired aims in other sectors of the bilateral relationship while paying only a minimal price in the areas of Soviet Jewry and human rights, what incentive could it have for increasing emigration?

The Kremlin is seeking to focus attention on arms control, security and trade, as well as on areas that confer international respectability, such as tourism, culture, sports and science. Through a combination of disinformation, counterpropaganda and tiny concessions, Moscow is seeking to mute criticism of its emigration and human rights policies and push forward in other sectors of the bilateral link.

Moscow has sought, as well, albeit so far unsuccessfully, to persuade American Jewish organizations to take a leading role against "Star Wars" and in favor of a return to detente. The bait here has come in the form of vague hints of increased emigration. From its inception, the Soviet Jewry movement has always tried to make clear that its agenda was pro-Soviet Jewry, not anti-Soviet, and that the difference was more than academic. It has also sought, persuasively, to portray its goals as attainable, not as mere fanciful thinking. And it has always underscored the full compatibility between its goals and the objectives of American foreign policy. In recent years, for example, the movement did not seek to block the long-term grain agreement or the new bilateral accords, and has stated that it will not enter into the debate over arms control, even though issues of credibility and trust of the Soviet word do appropriately arise (e.g., if the Soviets cannot be trusted to abide by the Helsinki Accords, how can they be trusted to abide by other agreements, including arms control accords?).

But what if there is no progress on emigration? What if the internal situation facing Soviet Jews remains as it is, or even worsens? It then becomes impossible to defer debate over very difficult questions. Are larger demonstrations alone a sufficient response? Are more nonbinding Congressional condemnations and appeals going to have an impact? Or must the advocacy movement consider proposing to the Administration and Congress–and the American people–shifts in one direction or the other in American policy towards the Soviet Union? Should the movement press for additional nonstrategic carrots or should it propose punitive measures? And would the government even be responsive to such proposals, especially if they were punitive in nature, at a time

There is no room for unilateral gestures until the Soviets show that they are willing to protect those human right to which they gave their pledge at Helsinki.

when bilateral ties are otherwise improving? The focus on strategy becomes more immediate because of the current opportunities and challenges, including, of course, a second summit meeting. Every major Soviet Jewry organization and the World Jewish Congress endorsed in May a statement on the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, the 1974 act that links the granting of most-favored-nation trade status for Communist countries to emigration performance. Written in part for Congress and as a response to business groups' demands for repeal of the act, the statement asserts: "We vigorously reiterate our support for the principles and the policies represented by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and affirm that we would strongly oppose any legislative effort to repeal or modify it. The Soviet Union must be shown that unless and until it has complied with the terms of the Amendment, U.S. policy will remain as it is. There is no room for unilateral gestures until the Soviets show that they are willing to abide by the rule protecting these human rights to which they gave their pledge at Helsinki . . ." The support of the World Jewish Congress, an organization that the Soviets have been in contact with for several years, is especially important. In July 1983, Edgar Bronfman, WJC chairman, wrote an op-ed article in *The New York Times* calling for repeal of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment "as a sign of good will that challenges the Russians to respond in kind." That position was publicly challenged by, among others, Morris Abram, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Leon Dulzin, chairman of the Jewish Agency and head of the International Council of the World Conference on Soviet Jewry. The significance of the WJC's participation in the 1986 statement, therefore, could not have been lost on the Kremlin. Some others have taken different positions with regard to Jackson-Vanik specifically and detente more generally. On the one hand, for example, we have the advertisement of an organization called "The International League for the Repatriation of Russian Jews." The ILRRJ took a quarter-page ad in *The New York Times* in March calling for: waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, thus permitting the USSR to benefit from reduced tariffs on exports to the United States; repeal of the Stevenson Amendment, which limits extension of government credits to the USSR to $300 million in a four-year period and increased nonstrategic trade. The May statement of the Soviet Jewry movement effectively makes clear that the ILRRJ ad does not represent the views of the organized Jewish community. At the same time, by recognizing the president's ability to waive the most-favored-nation restriction in response to increased emigration, the statement implicitly repudiates the position of *The New Republic*, as expressed in a lead editorial in April 1985. A month earlier, four major American Jewish organizations had placed an ad in *The Washington Post*, timed to coincide with the visit to the United States of a Soviet delegation led by Ukrainian party chief and Politburo member Shcherbitsky, which stated: "We believe many people in this country would be responsive to positive changes, especially in your emigration policy. Why should emigration continue to be a barrier to improved trade and investment relations, and to expanded cultural and scientific exchange?" *The New Republic* attacked this approach in a vehement argument: "Well maybe that is good for the Jews of Russia, though maybe not. But what about the Soviet citizens whose rescue is a part of the proposed transaction? What about those left in Russia for whom no one speaks? . . . And just because no one cares for the dozens of endangered ethnic and national groups submerged under Soviet rule–truly captive nations, these, with no diaspora to invoke their destiny in world capitals–this doesn't justify a human rights transaction made exclusively for Jews. What would an expanded cultural exchange look like if it were to be accompanied by a stream of departing Russian Jews and a torrent of Russian bombs over Afghanistan?" The editorial went on to charge the Jewish organizations with moral and political obtuseness, haughtiness, naivete, and single-

The time may yet come when the Soviet Jewry constituency in this country will again have to consider challenging other interest groups concerning their respective agendas with the USSR.

mindedness. In effect, *The New Republic* editorial proposed that until every admittedly despicable feature of Soviet life was corrected, all of us should stand still. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment, to which the *Washington Post* ad had made implicit reference, was not passed by Congress in 1974 to procure the release of every dissatisfied Soviet citizen or to foment revolutionary democratic change, as much as its sponsors may have privately shared these goals. It was prompted by the imposition in 1972 of an onerous education tax on Soviet Jews seeking to leave, and its primary focus, as its legislative history clearly indicates, was directed at the particular plight of Soviet Jews. The Amendment's sponsors also believed that Soviet Jewish emigration was a realistic goal, not fundamentally threatening to the Soviet system.

In sharp contrast to that kind of realism, the *The New Republic* editorial did not offer a single constructive word on how to deal with the current impasse facing Soviet Jews–or Pentecostalists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. (And, as it turned out, a cultural agreement was signed despite "a torrent of Russian bombs over Afghanistan" and with no "stream of departing Russian Jews"–or anyone else, for that matter.)

Thus the May statement articulating a centrist position is welcome because it artfully navigates between the extremes of unilateral repeal of Jackson-Vanik, a repeal that would almost surely leave Soviet emigration at its current near-zero level, and retention of Jackson-Vanik no matter the Soviet effort to satisfy its terms, an equally unproductive stance. Indeed, the statement conveys to the Kremlin the now widespread recognition that in 1979, at the peak of emigration, the American Jewish community was slow to acknowledge the outflow, that it might well have recommended implementation of Jackson-Vanik's waiver provision (notwithstanding disturbing internal repression of Jewish activists), and that its position today is more flexible. This is a very important signal, since the Kremlin almost certainly concluded that its effort to soften U.S. public opinion by permitting record-level emigration had failed to achieve its primary goals in 1979–Senate ratification of the SALT-II treaty and granting of most-favored-nation status. It is reasonable to conclude that Moscow's decision to curtail emigration followed from its perception of this failure.

But is such a statement, however broad the agreement it reflects and however significant its wording, enough? Obviously not. After all, much as the Soviets may desire a waiver of Jackson-Vanik, whether for purposes of trade advantage or of prestige, they have in the meantime learned to live with the Jackson-Vanik restrictions. And though their current economic situation might be improved by reduced tariffs and easier access to U.S. government credits, they are managing without either. Moreover, if private credit with which to finance purchases abroad is made available to them, as seems quite likely, their need for U.S. government credits will diminish.

It would be wise, therefore, for the American Jewish community to avoid single-minded preoccupation with Jackson-Vanik, and to focus as well on the broad range of non-strategic bilateral ties. What is needed is the formulation of a calibrated set of positive and negative responses to changing Soviet conditions vis a vis emigration, which is the principal, though not the only yardstick used in assessing the Soviet Jewry picture. And the time may yet come when the Soviet Jewry constituency in this country will again have to consider challenging other interest groups concerning their respective agendas with the USSR, just as happened with the business community in the early 1970s. At the same time, greater effort should be directed at enlisting broader support from both Western European governments and leading political, intellectual, religious, scientific, human rights and peace figures. Since Moscow has been engaged in a long-term, although thus far rather unsuccessful, effort to wean America's NATO allies from Washington and to capture the high ground in the battle for Western public opinion, such an approach becomes especially important. The 35-nation

Vienna Review Conference of the Helsinki Final Act–the successor to the Belgrade and Madrid Review Conferences–provides a useful immediate target for Western European initiatives. And it is equally true that the U.S. advocacy movement, which has for years relied on the support of indomitable figures like Sister Ann Gillen and Bayard Rustin, desperately needs an infusion of new participants drawn from key segments of American society. Finally, the wild card in any discussion of the future of Soviet Jewry is the state of Israel's relations with the USSR. Admittedly, when Moscow and Tel Aviv maintained diplomatic ties from 1948 to 1967 (with a brief interruption in the early 1950s) there was virtually no Soviet Jewish emigration. Still, were any diplomatic deal between the two to be struck today, it would almost certainly have to contain some provision for emigration. Otherwise, the Israeli government would have great difficulty in selling the arrangement. For its part, the Kremlin, according to a variety of Soviet sources, belatedly recognized its short-sightedness in severing ties with Israel in June 1967. It could have found other diplomatic means short of a complete rupture to express it displeasure with Israel's action in the Six-Day War. By breaking off ties, the Soviets dealt themselves out of half the Arab-Israeli equation and have been relegated to the sidelines during many key events in the last two decades. In the second half of 1985, a flurry of speculation suggested the possible resumption of ties between Jerusalem and Moscow. There was a meeting between the Israeli and Soviet envoys in Paris in July. This was followed by Prime Minister Peres's publicly expressed desire to establish contact, voiced in the fall at the UN General Assembly session, and a statement by Soviet Justice Minister Soukharev in a Geneva press conference in November that the USSR, which "helped in the creation of the Jewish State, was interested in reestablishing diplomatic relations." Word began circulating of possible flights from Moscow, via Warsaw or another East European point, to transport Soviet Jewish emigrants directly to Israel. Then there was a report of a meeting between a representative of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and an unnamed Soviet diplomat attached to the Soviet Embassy in Washington during which the latter reportedly spoke of the prospect of full diplomatic relations between Israel and the USSR in Feburary 1986 and large-scale emigration (*The New York Times*, Dec. 26, 1985). Further, talks between Israel and Polish officials in the fall, leading to the reestablishment of low-level diplomatic ties, the first Israeli diplomatic breakthrough in Eastern Europe since 1967; fueled rumors that Hungary and Bulgaria were likely to follow Warsaw's lead. Since none of this could have happened without Moscow's assent, could ties with the USSR be far behind?

Indeed, the announcement on August 4 that the USSR and Israel would be holding talks on the establishment of consular ties signals a potentially important new dimension in the bilateral relationship. Though both sides have sought to play down the significance, and progress may be slow, the very fact that formal discussions will be held after 19 years without diplomatic links, and given the complex web of Soviet-Arab relations, Soviet domestic policy and East-West ties generally, introduces an intriguing element into the Soviet Jewry picture.

Twenty years ago, only a few visionaries might have foreseen the redemption of the world's third-largest Jewish community; most people had reluctantly written off the possibility of any Jewish future for a community consigned to forced assimilation.

Today, believers can speak proudly of 270,000 Jews enjoying new lives outside the Soviet Union, of the remarkable emergence in the USSR of self-taught Hebrew teachers, of a growing number of mostly young observant Jews, of a spreading national consciousness–all this nearly four generations after the Bolshevik Revolution. Apparently, miracles still can and do happen, aided and abetted by faith, commitment, endurance and very hard work. ✱

There are times when, wrapped up in our own work on behalf of Soviet Jewry, we lose the capacity to assess the significance of the issue to others. In that connection, it is worth noting Lawrence Elliot's article, "Buried Alive: The Plight of Soviet Jews," in the June 1986 issue of *Reader's Digest*. Elliot writes that "Anatoly Shcharansky's walk across Berlin's Blienicke Bridge to freedom on a stinging cold morning last February exhilarated the non-communist world . . . Millions rejoiced; some even hailed his release as proof that freedom was an irrepressible idea. If so, it was an idea whose time had not yet come for the rest of Soviet Jews–and Shcharansky was the first to say so . . . Can we in the West help? . . . Do we have the will? Let your voice be heard. Public opinion can be a vital force–even against the USSR. To make your feelings known about the persecution of Soviet Jews, write to the Soviet Ambassador to the U.S." The full text of the article appeared in a full-page ad in *The New York Times* in June, paid for by *Reader's Digest*, under the banner headline: "Soviet Jews are damned if they do and damned if they don't. You can make a difference."

The circulation of *Reader's Digest* is fifty million.

SOVIET JEWS
Beneficiaries of Improving Soviet-American Relations?

David A. Harris
Deputy Director, International Relations

80th YEAR 1906-1986
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022

This paper is one in a series of American Jewish Committee publications on Soviet Jewry. A listing of other current titles appears on the inside back cover.

It is a widely held view that the fate of Soviet Jewry is, to a considerable degree, linked to the state of Soviet-American bilateral relations. While other factors may play a significant role, specifically Soviet domestic considerations -- ideological, economic, national (ethnic) -- and, to a potentially very important extent, the Kremlin's Middle East policy, it has always been in the realm of the superpower relationship that our greatest hopes for the redemption of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel and to reunite with their families have rested.

If, indeed, Jewish emigration is linked to the ebb and flow of Soviet-American relations, this certainly helps explain the precipitous decline in the average monthly rate of departures from more than 4,000 in 1979 to less than 100 in 1985. Relations plummeted for reasons that are by now well-known: Soviet proxy expansion in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, repression in Poland, and, from the Soviet viewpoint, the Senate refusal to ratify the SALT-II Treaty, the granting of most-favored-nation trade status to China but not to the U.S.S.R., the imposition of sanctions, the anti-Soviet rhetoric of President Reagan, etc. Were Soviet Jews made hostages to that superpower relationship, rendered pawns in a ruthless Soviet geopolitical strategy? A very good case can certainly be made for it.

Does it necessarily follow, however, that in a period of ascending, or improving bilateral ties the condition of Soviet Jewry will ease and the rate of emigration increase? It is a difficult question to answer, but one we can ill afford to ignore.

What was all but missing in the early 80's was a proper framework for regular high-level dialogue between Washington and Moscow. Meetings between the American secretary of state and Soviet foreign minister were held infrequently and against a backdrop of mutual suspicion and distrust. Today, though, one of the critical ingredients in any likely formula for success, namely, a process for regular, high-level meetings, is in place. This will include, of course, at least two additional summits and, of necessity, dozens of other meetings of officials both to plan the summits themselves and to focus on the various regional, economic, bilateral, in addition to ongoing strategic, issues facing our two countries. Such dialogue is a necessary, though insufficient, condition for resolution of the Soviet Jewry problem; it must, at the very least, be seen as a significant step forward, hence an important opportunity for us all.

At the recently concluded Summit in Geneva, President Reagan did address at considerable length Soviet human rights issues, including, specifically, emigration, in his one-on-one meetings with General Secretary Gorbachev, doing so in a low-keyed manner to convey to the Soviets a sense of the seriousness of purpose of the American position. And, Secretary of State Shultz has also lost no opportunity to convey to his Soviet counterpart the depth and breadth of American feeling, across religious, racial and political lines, on the subject of Soviet Jewry. His personal commitment to this issue, is, like President Reagan's, unquestionable. In this respect, there is much to be proud of, for it clearly demonstrates how far we have come in the last 40 years since a time when our government showed considerably less concern for the fate of endangered Jews.

But what now? The dialogue has begun, the statements have been made and the concern expressed, and the Soviets have been told that a significant improvement in "atmospherics" would ensue from a more liberal emigration policy, beginning with the release of Prisoners of Conscience and former POCs and long-term refuseniks. The American Jewish community has hinted rather unambiguously that it would be prepared to endorse flexibility in the interpretation of existing American trade laws were the Soviets to be forthcoming. Moscow has surely not missed these signals, yet has chosen to ignore them, at least for now. Is the Kremlin hoping that, by waiting, it will be able to extract an ever higher price from the U.S.? Is the Gorbachev regime not yet in a position to act decisively on such a difficult, and reportedly controversial, issue among Soviet decision-making factions in the leadership? Does it seriously believe its ludicrous assertions that Soviet Jews are so well off that, by deduction, they could not possibly want to leave?

Whatever the cause of Moscow's intractability on the emigration question, the momentum of improved relations in other areas is beginning to build. A 400-person U.S. business delegation has just visited Moscow, cultural and consular exchange agreements are being finalized, U.S. banks are showing interest in extending loans to a low-risk debtor nation that pays back on time, and, doubtless, this process will continue to grow in the current atmosphere. If the Kremlin understands that it can reach these agreements without being compelled to make a major gesture on Soviet Jewry, why, from its viewpoint, should it? And if the Kremlin believes that, as in the case of the U.S. farm lobby which brought about a lifting of the grain embargo in early 1981 without there being any change in the Afghan situation (the reason for which President Carter first imposed the embargo) and in 1983 led the successful drive for a long-term grain agreement with the U.S.S.R. without any political conditions attached, why should the Soviets not let American interest groups pursue their own self-interest? At the same time, the Kremlin may be counting on the notoriously short memory of the American public to increase domestic pressures here for further trade, commerce and exchanges. Why then yield in any but the smallest concessionary way (i.e., the release of a refusenik every now and then, perhaps) on the

Soviet Jewry issue? In fact, those who hoped that in the weeks prior to the Summit the Kremlin would at least make a gesture or two on Soviet Jewry were sorely disappointed. The few moves made were with respect to the courageous Yelena Bonner, wife of Nobel Laureate Andrei Sakharov, to one-third of the divided bi-national marriage cases group, and to the release of a dissident and her family. In sum, nothing positive on the Soviet Jewry front happened, as important as these other cases are.

Will the Soviet Jewry movement soon be seen as an obstacle to improving relations not just for the Soviets but also for increasing numbers of Americans seeking to engage in trade, investment, academic and cultural exchange, and the like? Does the Soviet Jewry movement simply accept the assurances of even the most sincere political leaders that Soviet Jewry will necessarily be a beneficiary of improved bilateral ties --that once relations are on a firmer footing it will somehow become easier to influence Kremlin thinking on this subject? Does the Soviet Jewry movement content itself with continuing to create optimistic scenarios and ever new target dates -- the 1984 presidential elections, Gorbachev's need to "consolidate" power, the Geneva Summit meeting, the February 1986 Soviet Communist Party Congress, and so on -- on which to pin its hopes for a reversal of the current plight?

These questions have no easy answers but they require our earnest consideration. We may want to avoid confrontation, or a slugging match with other constituencies in the U.S., but we must establish for ourselves a set of appropriate responses both for the possibility of improving and deteriorating conditions for Soviet Jews and act accordingly. Just as we must be prepared to demonstrate flexibility in response to an improvement in the emigration picture, so must we also be willing to consider stepping up the pressure on both Soviet and American authorities if no serious progress occurs in the coming months leading to the next Summit meeting in June, lest the rush of events sweep by us. The precise nature of the various possible responses should be a matter of continuing review by the organized Jewish community and its friends.

If the Soviets feel they can lull us into a stupor -- cause us to tire of the struggle, become frustrated at our inability to change things, exhaust our hitherto endless reserve of creative ideas to respond, or if they believe that they can divorce the issue from the current framework of Soviet-American relations, they must be proven wrong. Too much hangs in the balance.

December 1985

Current papers on Soviet Jewry available from the American Jewish Committee's International Relations Department:

Anatoly Shcharansky and Soviet Jewry in the Wake of the Summit, by David A. Harris

Anti-Jewish Discrimination in Soviet Higher Education, by Allan L. Kagedan

A Basic Guide to Soviet Jewry, by David Geller and David A. Harris

Crisis in Soviet Jewry: A Call to Involvement, by David A. Harris

Gorbachev in Paris: Important Days in the Struggle for Soviet Jews, by Nives Fox

Oral Histories of Recent Soviet Emigres in America, a catalogue by David A. Harris for the William E. Wiener Oral History Library

Soviet Anti-Jewish Publications, 1979-1984, by Allan L. Kagedan

Soviet Jews : An Overview, by David A. Harris

Soviet Jews: Beneficiaries of Improving Soviet-American Relations?, by David A. Harris

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

March 1986

Single Copy, 50¢
Quantity prices on request

THE USSR AND ISRAEL
A New Beginning?

David A. Harris

80th YEAR 1906–1986

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022-2746

David A. Harris is Deputy Director of the International Relations Department of the American Jewish Committee.

This paper is one of a series of American Jewish Committee on publications on Soviet Jewry. A listing of the current titles appears on the inside back cover.

In August, 19 years after the Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Israel, representatives of the two countries met in Helsinki to discuss the reestablishment of consular ties. Although unexpectedly brief, and with no agreement on further talks, the meeting signaled a significant change in Soviet policy. Sharp differences over the issue of Soviet Jewry, in particular, underscore the gap separating the two sides and the difficulty of further negotiations. Still, the very fact of the meeting and the likelihood of additional contacts, whether direct or by proxies, are important developments in a complex and often stormy relationship spanning four decades.

In the fall of 1947, Soviet deputy foreign minister Andrei Gromyko offered the Kremlin's support for the UN's plan to partition British-held Palestine. "The representatives of the Arab states," he told the world body, "claim that the partition of Palestine would be an historic injustice. But this view of the case is unacceptable if only because, after all, the Jewish people has been closely linked with Palestine for a considerable period of history. Indeed, the USSR was the third nation, after the United States and Guatemala, to recognize the fledgling Jewish state and the first to extend full de jure recognition. With Soviet assistance, Czechoslovak arms were sent to the Jews in Palestine even before the establishment of the state in May 1948. In 1949, the Soviet Union joined 36 other members in supporting Israel's admission to the UN (12 were opposed, including nine predominantly Muslim states, and there were nine abstentions).

At the same time, the Kremlin's attitude toward the Soviet Jewish population hardened. The welcome extended by Soviet Jews to Golda Meir when she arrived in Moscow in the fall of 1948 as Israel's first ambassador to the USSR alarmed the Kremlin. After all, Soviet Jews were supposed to have been either assimilated or cowed into silence, yet throngs met Golda Meir when she visited the Choral Synagogue in Moscow's center. The years 1948 to 1953, known as the "black years" of Soviet Jewry, were marked by the execution of leading Jewish cultural figures, the infamous "Doctors' Plot," and Stalin's plan, unrealized due to his death in 1953, to deport the entire Jewish population to Siberia.

On the international level, the Soviet Union's support of Israel as a counterweight to British influence and a potential socialist bulwark in the Middle East quickly gave way to a courting of the Arab nations.

Diplomatic ties did, however, continue until 1967, though with an interruption of several months in 1953 after a bomb was set off at the Soviet embassy in Tel Aviv and despite a growing anti-Israel campaign in the USSR. As a result of the Six Day War, the Kremlin and its East Bloc allies (except Romania) severed diplomatic ties.

Since 1967 there have been periodic contacts between Soviet and Israeli officials in capitals around the world. And delegations, organized by Rakah, the pro-Moscow Israeli Communist Party, have regularly visited the USSR. Participants in these groups have included many non-communist Israelis. Other Israelis have traveled to the USSR for academic and cultural purposes. Soviet citizens, including Russian Orthodox clerics, delegates to Rakah congresses, and observers at ceremonies commemorating the end of the World War II, have visited Israel. From time to time, rumors of an impending resumption of formal ties have surfaced in the press. Israeli officials have on several occasions publicly expressed a desire to renew links, asserting, however, that diplomatic protocol required Moscow, which broke the ties, to take the first step. The pace of the contacts and rumors has notably quickened in the last 15 months.

In May 1985, the Soviet Union's two leading newspapers, Pravda and Izvestia, unexpectedly gave prominent display to messages from Israel, including one from President Herzog, marking the 40th anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat.

In July 1985, the Israeli and Soviet ambassadors to France met secretly in Paris, but news of the session was leaked to Israel Radio. The report, if accurate, was sensational: the Soviet ambassador offered a deal including resumption of diplomatic ties and Soviet Jewish emigration in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, assurances of an end to the "drop-out" phenomenon (whereby many Soviet Jews leaving the USSR with Israeli visas settle in the United States), and Israeli cooperation in toning down anti-Soviet propaganda in the West. The Kremlin, clearly disturbed by the leak, promptly denied any such offer, although it never denied that a meeting had taken place. Viktor Louis, the Moscow-based journalist often used by the Kremlin to pass messages to the West, emphasized, in an interview with Israel Radio, that "there are no grounds for expecting this to herald an immediate restoration of diplomatic relations," though he added that "most likely, it will lead to occasional consultations on Middle East problems in general."

At the same time, other Soviet spokesmen, wary of Arab reaction, rushed to downplay the news. A week after the Paris meeting, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) Domestic Radio Service reported that "an official Soviet spokesman announced today in Kuwait that the reports about the resumption of relations between the USSR and Israel have been fabricated by Western sources for media sensationalism."

The next month, conflicting reports on the Soviet position were

heard. A Soviet Middle East specialist, Robert Davydkov, suggested on the New York Times's op-ed page (August 7) that the USSR "has never questioned whether or not the state of Israel should exist" and "has sought to use its political weight and prestige in the Arab world to convince those circles that their attitude toward Israel is unrealistic and illegitimate." But, he added, "the Israeli occupation of considerable Arab and Palestinian territory is the main cause of tension in the Middle East. It is also the reason that the Soviet Union decided, in June 1967, to sever diplomatic relations with Israel." He artfully skirted the question of restoring ties.

On August 10, 1985, the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot carried a report that a "high-ranking Soviet diplomat has told West German chancellor Helmut Kohl that the new Soviet leadership intends to take steps towards improving relations with Israel." Three days later, however, Leonid Zamyatin wrote in the weekly Moscow News: "While reasons which led to the severance of Soviet-Israeli diplomatic relations in 1967 exist, it is unrealistic to expect changes in the Soviet approach."

In the fall of 1985, a whirlwind of diplomatic activity heightened speculation that progress might be at hand. Israeli prime minister Peres sent a letter to Soviet leader Gorbachev via World Jewish Congress chairman Edgar Bronfman urging improved ties. Ovadia Sofer, Israel's ambassador to France, who had met with Soviet ambassador Vorontsov in July, was invited to a reception in Paris given by French president Mitterrand in honor of the visiting Soviet leader and had occasion to talk with several Gorbachev aides. The Israeli weekly Koteret Rashit reported that Peres had secretly flown to Paris to meet with Gorbachev, a claim quickly denied by Israeli officials.

Attention then turned to the UN, where world leaders had assembled to mark the opening of the General Assembly and the UN's 40th anniversary. Israeli foreign minister Shamir held meetings with counterparts from Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland, the last resulting in an agreement to expand bilateral ties, including, significantly, an accord to establish low-level diplomatic links, the first such reestablishment of ties with a Warsaw Pact country since 1967. Since such a step could not possibly have been taken without the Kremlin's assent, further speculation on a possible Soviet-Israeli rapprochement was fueled. Still, the continued trickle of Jewish emigration from the USSR -- an average of fewer than 100 per month compared with a monthly rate of more than 4,000 in 1979 -- and an intensified campaign against Soviet Jewish activists raised concern in some quarters that Moscow's diplomatic initiatives were simply a shrewd public-relations ploy, timed to coincide with the November Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

Prime Minister Peres, addressing the UN in October, declared his willingness to place Middle East peace talks under international auspices, a long-standing Soviet demand, if Moscow would agree to resume diplomatic ties. At the same time, he reiterated profound concern for

the fate of Soviet Jewry. In Washington, Peres urged President Reagan to raise the issues of diplomatic ties and emigration with Gorbachev in Geneva.

Rumors of a large-scale airlift of Soviet Jews to Israel via Warsaw began to circulate, particularly after Edgar Bronfman's visit to Moscow at the end of September, his subsequent meetings with Polish officials in Warsaw, and President Mitterrand's talks with Polish leaders. On October 30, 1985, Agence France Presse reported that a delegation from El Al, Israel's national airline, had visited Moscow and discussed the logistics of such an airlift. The report speculated about a possible route via Bucharest (which had been a transit point for some exiting Soviet Jews in 1972-73), although other reports spoke of Warsaw.

The Israeli absorption minister heightened speculation when, according to the Jerusalem Post's international edition of November 2, he revealed that he was expecting "thousands of Soviet Jews" to arrive in Israel soon.

Two weeks later, another Israeli paper, Hadashot, reported that "the Soviet Union will soon decide whether to resume its diplomatic relations with Israel. The final decision depends on the success of the summit meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev....This message was delivered to Israel by a senior Soviet diplomat who conferred with a senior Israeli diplomat in New York last week."

Reports from the November summit indicate that President Reagan did, indeed, raise the issue of Jewish emigration in his private meetings with the Soviet leader and that the Middle East, not unexpectedly, figured prominently in their discussion of pressing regional issues.

Despite this flurry of rumors, Prime Minister Peres apparently concluded by mid-December, as he stated at a press conference in Geneva, that no fundamental change in Soviet policy toward either Israel or Soviet Jewry could be discerned. Then, unexpectedly, a front-page New York Times story at the end of December reported a meeting in New York between a Soviet embassy official and an American Jewish representative in which the latter was allegedly told of the prospect of diplomatic ties by February 1986, perhaps in connection with the 27th Soviet Communist Party Congress.

In a further effort to allay the fears of some Arab countries (significantly, neither Egypt nor Jordan protested reports of a possible resumption of Soviet-Israeli diplomatic ties, largely because they believed it might spur progress toward their goal, shared by Moscow, of an international conference on Middle East peace), Moscow International Service broadcast in Arabic on December 27 a message to the Arab world: "They [the Western media] have begun to propagate rumors about preparations to restore diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel and, as is the case now, about Soviet Jews leaving the

country on a larger scale to the promised land of Zionism. The aim of such campaigns is to spread feelings of mistrust and doubt in the friendly Arab countries toward their friend, the Soviet Union, and to convince Arabs that the Soviet Union has agreed, behind their backs, to something that can only arouse their concern....The fabrications of the Western media are just baseless."

Undaunted, Israeli officials continued to hope that changing East-West conditions and a new Kremlin foreign-policy team, including Anatoly Dobrynin, former Soviet ambassador to the United States, might lead to changes in the Soviet posture. In March 1986, during a visit to Israel, the Finnish foreign minister agreed to convey to Moscow Israel's ongoing concern about both diplomatic ties and emigration. (Finland has represented Soviet diplomatic interests in Israel since 1967, while the Netherlands has represented Israel in the USSR.)

The announcement of the Helsinki talks on consular ties in August suggested that the Kremlin, after considerable hesitation, had finally decided to test the waters, and to do so prior to the scheduled October transfer of power in Israel from Shimon Peres to Yitzhak Shamir. In an attempt to minimize the talks' political significance, Soviet spokesmen attributed them to concerns of the Russian Orthodox Church. The church has important real estate and other interests in the Holy Land that would undoubtedly be served by the resumption of low-level diplomatic ties. But this is surely not an adequate explanation for the resumption of diplomatic talks after 19 years. The complex web of Soviet-Arab ties and problems of Soviet-American relations, together with internal factors, including policy toward Jews, strongly suggest that the USSR may have broader objectives.

What could the Kremlin hope to achieve by embarking on a process that might lead to restored diplomatic ties with Israel?

(1) In diplomacy there is seldom a substitute for the role played by diplomats, in situ, charged with representing a country's interests and monitoring local developments. The absence of a permanent Soviet presence in Israel is a serious lack for the Kremlin, one that cannot be adequately filled by iconoclastic Romania, the only Soviet ally that currently maintains an embassy in the Jewish state. In fact, the USSR has only infrequently used diplomatic rupture as a weapon, realizing that it can, at times, prove counterproductive. (A number of State Department figures contend that the United States learned the same lesson when, as a reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Washington canceled a consular exchange agreement with the USSR that would have permitted the opening of an American consulate in Kiev.) In fact, several knowledgeable Soviet officials have privately noted to Westerners that the Kremlin seriously erred in breaking off ties with Israel in 1967 rather than expressing its ire at the time by, say, merely recalling its ambassador.

(2) The USSR is anxious to position itself at the center of Middle

East affairs. For too long it has ceded primacy in the region to Washington, in part because even Moscow's Arab friends have recognized that only the United States is in a position to talk to both sides in the Arab-Israel equation, leaving Moscow to play a marginal (and usually disruptive) role only. Success in brokering a resolution of the Golan Heights issue would demonstrate to Arab states not only the Kremlin's value as a patron (in this case of Syria) but also its ability to influence events in the region.

(3) The Kremlin believes it might well enhance its image in the West, particularly in the United States, if it reestablishes ties with Israel. Were the Helsinki talks timed to soften U.S. public opinion on the eve of a new round of superpower diplomacy? Indeed, when plans for expansion of Polish-Israeli ties were first revealed last year, speculation on the motives focused, in part, on Poland's desire to improve its badly tarnished image in Washington and to strengthen economic ties with the United States.

For Israel, there would be several advantages to the reestablishment of diplomatic ties:

(1) Any agreement on the resumption of diplomatic ties would likely include provision for increased Soviet Jewish emigration. Such a provision is indispensable to Israel. But former prisoner of conscience Anatoly Shcharansky has forcefully urged Jerusalem not to move on the diplomatic front at all until the Kremlin first permits large-scale Jewish emigration.

(2) It might enable the Jewish state to achieve its desire of direct flights from Moscow to Israel, thereby preventing the emigrants' "dropping out." Until now, Vienna has been the transit point for exiting Soviet Jews, and the Austrian government has always insisted on their right to choose their final destination.

(3) It would give Israel the chance to reestablish a physical presence in the USSR. During the 19 years when the two states maintained diplomatic ties, the presence of an Israeli embassy in Moscow had significant symbolic value for the 2 million isolated Soviet Jews.

(4) Resumption of ties with Moscow would reduce the diplomatic isolation imposed on Israel in 1967 by the Warsaw Pact countries. Indeed, it could augur a renewal of links with other countries, in both the East Bloc and the Third World, that severed ties between 1967 and 1973. Since its creation, one of Israel's primary foreign-policy goals has been universal diplomatic acceptance.

Of course, resumption of diplomatic ties would entail serious risks for both sides. For the Kremlin, it could strain relations with such Arab states as Syria, Libya and Algeria unless Moscow could induce Israeli withdrawal from the administered territories and action on the Palestinians. Too, the Kremlin worries about the potential impact on

the Soviet Jewish population of an Israeli embassy and a cadre of Israeli diplomats in the USSR. From Jerusalem's viewpoint, acceptance of a Soviet role in the Arab-Israeli peace process could complicate chances for a settlement. It might also lead to differences with Washington. Finally, if the Israeli government failed to achieve substantial progress on the emigration question, the government would face a serious domestic backlash.

Observers will be closely watching the progress of the diplomatic contacts, as well as the rate of Soviet Jewish emigration, and the development of ties between Israel and Eastern Europe -- especially with Hungary, which is likely be the next country to restore formal relations -- to determine whether a new chapter in Soviet-Israeli relations is truly unfolding.

Papers on Soviet Jewry currently available from the American Jewish Committee's International Relations Department:

* Anatoly Shcharansky and Soviet Jewry in the Wake of the Summit

* Anti-Jewish Discrimination in Soviet Higher Education

* A Basic Guide to Soviet Jewry

* Crisis in Soviet Jewry: A Call to Involvement

* Gorbachev and the Jews

* Gorbachev in Paris: Important Days in the Struggle for Soviet Jews

* The Jackson-Vanik Amendment: Questions and Answers

* Oral Histories of Recent Soviet Emigres in America, (a catalog of the AJC's William E. Wiener Oral History Library)

* Soviet Anti-Jewish Publications, 1979-1984

* Soviet Jewry After Shcharansky: Winds of Change?

* Soviet Jewry: Back to Square One?

* Soviet Jews: An Overview

* Soviet Jews: Beneficiaries of Improving Soviet-American Relations?

* The USSR and Israel: A New Beginning?

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

September 1986

Single copy $ .50
Quantity prices on request

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CONNECTION

SIR MOSHE BARR - NEA
INTERNATIONAL - COORDINATOR
210 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, SUITE 1-E
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10025, U.S.A.
TEL. 212 - 666 - 6232
254- 2166

ADOPT A FAMILY

M E M O R A N D U M

to

The International Council of

The World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Paris, Sept. 10-12, 1986

Presented by

Mr. Jerry Goodman, Executive Director,

National Conference On Soviet Jewry

CC:

Mr. Morris B. Abram	Chairman, Presidents' Conference Chairman, National Conference on Soviet Jewry,
Prof. Severyn Bialer Columbia University	
Mr. Edgar Bronfman	President, World Jewish Congress
Mr. David Bar-Tov	Advisor to the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel
Prof. Yoram Dinstein	Tel Aviv University
Mr. Arie Dulzin	Chairman, World Zionist Organization Chairman, Jewish Agency
Mr. Eliahu Essas	
Mr. Jerry Goodman	Executive Director, National Conference on Soviet Jewry
Prof. Pierre Hassner	
Mr. Theo Klein	President C.R. I. F.
Mr. Natan Shcharansky	
Rabbi Samuel Rene Sirat	Chief Rabbi of France
Mr. Ovadia Sofer	Israeli Ambassador to France

Proposed by Sir Moshe Barr - Nea , New York, September 1, 1986.

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CONNECTIONS

A. Foreword

1. On December 10, 1979, as a volunteer for the Israeli Public Council for Soviet Jewry, I initiated the campaign: "The International Goldstein Connection," also called "Goldsteins for Goldsteins".

2. After I found out, with the help of the Computer Division of the Israeli Internal Ministry, that there were 7663 men, women and children named Goldstein (about 1500 families), I organized a group of high school students to collect their names and addresses from Israeli telephone books. We sent a letter to each family named Goldstein suggesting that they adopt the famous heroic family of activist Dr.Gregory Goldstein, his brother, Dr. Isay Goldstein, his wife, Dr. Elizabeth, and their young son Avi, then about 6 years old, who, for 7 years, were denied permission to emigrate to Israel.

3. Subsequently, with the logistic help of the Israeli Council For Soviet Jewry, A committee was established to exchange letters, Jewish holiday greetings, small gifts, parcels, books, etc. with the Goldsteins in Russia.

4. In time more and more countries joined this action and the Goldsteins received hundreds of letters monthly. This campaign became a significant weapon in their struggle for freedom.

5. After 14 long years of struggle, the Goldsteins were finally released in the spring of 1986. On June 4, 1986, during the convention of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith in New York City, I finally met the brothers Goldstein for the first time.

6. In ensuing talks I suggested that there was an important lesson to be learned from the experience of the "Goldsteins for Goldsteins" campaign and that we had an excellent psychological weapon in the struggle on behalf of other Prisoners of Zion and families refused permission to emigrate to Israel.

7. We decided to establish in Israel, the United States and other countries a family grassroots movement, the International Family Connections, based on full cooperation and coordination with all existing organizations active in the struggle for Soviet Jewry.

8. My meetings with Mr. Jerry Goodman to introduce the International Family Connections project took place, ironically enough, on days in August, 1986, that New York City and other organizations were commemmorating the execution by the Soviet government of 24 Yiddish poets and writers.

B. An International Grassroots Movement

1. As we know, there is an incredible magic in mutual family names. We have to remember that most American-Jewish families are descendants of the same family stock and they bear the same family names as the present Russian Jews.

2. As a result we can expect that the announcement of a campaign to establish grassroot networks of family committees in all the countries of the free world will be met with enthusiasm.

3. This purely volunteer system will be reinforced by a computer clearinghouse system supported by a volunteer network of people-students, retirees, etc. who will organize family committees to adopt refusenik families in Russia with the same name.

4. The assistance of sophisticated computer systems provides a strong vehicle, a time machine, so to speak, to unite those who have been separated by two world wars, cultural differences, distance and generation gaps. We can, in effect, renew ancient roots, the instincts and reflexes of Jewish solidarity which has been our strong shelter and eternal shield.

5. This system can also be a dynamic method of engaging the interests of young Jews everywhere in their family roots and in the rich Jewish heritage.

6. This is also one of the best ways to build a new relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, a new bridge between them.

7. This Time Machine system is also the best answer to the Soviet policy of isolating millions of Jewish people from their relatives and co-religionists.

8. With a little imagination we can understand what a tremendous impact the International Family Connections will have if every despairing Jewish family gets letters from Jewish families from all over the world. The feeling that they are no longer alone will mobilize the moral and spiritual powers of the beleaguered Soviet Jews to continue the fight for freedom.

Dr. Gregory Goldstein

Dr. Isay Goldstein

Elizabeth Goldstein M.A.

אבי גולדשטין
Avi Goldstein

C. IMPLEMENTATION

1. The International Council of the World Conference on Soviet Jewry at its Paris meeting should endorse this new grassroots initiative.

2. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry, as the umbrella organization in the United States encompassing 44 major national organizations and nearly 300 local community councils and federations will establish the International Clearinghouse for Family Connections to match family committees with their counterparts in Russia. The clearinghouse will provide names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Russian families and biographical details, such as: location of relatives, profession, when refused, why, languages, etc.

3. Jewish genealogical societies will undoubtedly be happy to provide whatever records, family histories, etc. are available.

4. Many congregations and organizations, especially senior citizen groups, will enjoy participating in this project.

5. The media will be interested in covering this new grassroots movement that fits both the Jewish tradition and the American democratic way.

6. This program will tap and utilize the great silent power of Jewish families in the struggle to free their brothers and sisters from the Soviet House of Slavery.

Sir Moshe Barr-Nea, Initiator

International Coordinator

210 Riverside Drive , Suite 1-E
New York , N.Y. 10025 U.S.A. Tel. 212-666-6232

cc:

Dr. Elizabeth Goldstein
Dr. Isay Goldstein
Dr. Gregory Goldstein
"Beit - Brodetzky" - Immigrant Center,Ramat-Aviv,Tel-Aviv,ISRAEL.

GOLDSTEINS for GOLDSTEIN

(l-r) Grigory, Isai and Elizaveta Goldstein examine some of the letters received from Western supporters, despite KGB blockage of most of their mail.

Drs. Isai and Grigory Goldstein of Tbilisi (capital of Soviet Georgia) are leading Russian Jewish activists. Under severe KGB pressure, they deserve our strong, swift support.

Grigory was born on October 22, 1931, and Isai on May 24, 1938. Both are physicists. Grigory is credited with six inventions. He is single. Isai is married to Elizaveta, born October 9, 1949, a biophysicist; their son is Avi, born December 29, 1973. The Goldsteins have a surviving mother, Malka. All first applied to emigrate to Israel in 1971. They were refused on the false grounds they had access to "state secrets".

Since becoming refuseniks, the Goldsteins have continued to speak out strongly against Soviet anti-semitism, signing collective petitions, and meeting with foreign diplomats, journalists and tourists. In 1978, Grigory was sentenced to a year in a labor camp near the Arctic Circle for "parasitism", i.e., not working, after being consistently denied employment. In 1980, Isai was threatened with a forced army reserve draft. He refused to go on grounds he was an Israeli citizen.

Although the Goldsteins have often been threatened with reprisal by the secret police, the most serious move against them came in June 1985, when the Tbilisi KGB interrogated and raided the homes of nine members of the unofficial "Phantom Orchestra". The Phantoms are comprised of Jewish activists, such as the Goldsteins, and non-Jewish human rights campaigners. Most of the Phantoms are also members of the only remaining unofficial Helsinki Agreement monitoring group in the USSR. By performing for and with visiting foreigners, the Phantoms draw attention to Kremlin human rights abuses. During the questioning, Isai was threatened with trial for "treason and spying", which carries a potential death penalty. He and Grigory were placed under 24 hour a day surveillance.

Because of their courage and witty, positive personalities, the Goldsteins have acquired many friends in the West. Even if you're not a Goldstein, join the circle of their supporters through the GOLDSTEINS for GOLDSTEIN campaign. Help us achieve their redemption to the land of their dreams, Israel.

Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry

210 West 91st Street • New York, N.Y. 10024
(212) 799-8900

Goldsteins (and non-Goldsteins) for Goldstein start campaign

by Rochelle Lieberstein

Are you a Goldstein or even a non-Goldstein? The campaign to support refuseniks Drs. Isai and Grigory Goldstein of Tbilis, Russia, two Jewish activists denied visas to go to Israel, is sponsored by Soviet Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ). Support involves wearing a pin saying "Goldsteins for Goldstein" if you are a Goldstein, or "Non-Goldsteins for Goldstein" if you are a non-Goldstein.

Well known Jewish activists to the West because of their courage and witty, positive outlook, physicists Isai and Grigory Goldstein have often been threatened with reprisal by the KGB, Soviet secret police, because of their frequent activities against Soviet anti-Semitism. Since becoming refuseniks, the Goldsteins have continued to sign collective petitions, and meet with foreign diplomats, journalists and tourists.

Grigory, credited with six inventions, is single. Isai is married to Elizaveta, a biophysicist and they have a twelve-year-old son Avi. The Goldsteins, along with their surviving mother, Malka, first applied to emigrate to Israel in 1971. They were refused on the false grounds they had access to "state secrets."

In 1978, Grigory was sentenced to a year in a labor camp near the Arctic Circle for "parasitism", i.e,. not working, after being consistently denied employment. In 1980, Isai was threatened with a forced army reserve draft. He refused to go on the grounds he was an Israeli citizen.

The most serious move against the Goldsteins came in June 1985, when the Tbilisi KGB interrogated and raided the homes of nine members of the unofficial "Phantom Orchestra." The phantoms are comprised of Jewish activists, such as the Goldsteins, and non-Jewish human rights campaigners, who perform music from classical to Jewish, underground.

Most of the Phantoms are also members of the only remaining unofficial Helsinki Agreement monitoring group in the USSR. By performing for and with visiting foreigners, the Phantoms draw attention to Kremlin human rights abuses. During the questioning, Isai was threatened with trial for "treason and spying," which carries a potential death penalty. In this June incident, a New York Klezmer band that was playing with the Phantoms were expelled from Russia.

To help the Goldsteins, write, if possible, regularly to them. Their address is Isai, Elizaveta and Avi Goldstein. Octiabraskaya Street, 2nd Microregion, Corpus 2, apt. 124, Tbilisi, Georgian SSR. Grigory and their mother Malka are at the same address, but apt. 63.

To obtain a "Goldsteins for Goldstein" and "Non-Goldsteins for Goldstein" pin, contact SSSJ at 210 West 91st Street, New York, N.Y. 10024. (212) 799-8900. The SSSJ also requests names of Goldsteins they can contact.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
10 East 40th Street, Suite 907
New York, New York 10016

EXTRACT FROM
"RESCUING SOVIET JEWRY: A POSITION PAPER"

- For more than four decades, forced assimilation of Jews has been Soviet policy. Unlike any other Soviet ethnic group, Jews are deprived of public means for promoting and perpetuating their cultural and religious heritage.

- General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's Jewish policy continues the previous regime's cessation of Jewish emigration and maintains an assault on Jewish consciousness through harassment and intimidation of Jews pursuing educational, cultural and religious freedom.

- Jews have been forced to create private groups in individual homes. The regime has responded by stepping up its harassment and intimidation of these groups, especially of Hebrew teachers.

- More than half of the Jewish activists now in labor camps or prisons have been sentenced since Gorbachev's assumption of power.

- Over 370,000 Soviet Jews have made the first step in the emigration process by requesting and receiving from Israel a crucial affidavit (Vyzov).

- More than 11,000 Jews are "refuseniks" having been refused an exit visa at least once, and more likely, several times. Some have waited over 15 years.

- Twenty-five former Prisoners of Conscience have been denied permission to emigrate.

- In April, a Moscow specialist on nationality, acknowledged that 10 - 15 percent of Soviet Jews seek to emigrate. The latest Soviet census lists more than 1.8 million Jews; this implicitly acknowledges 180,000 - 270,000 Soviet Jews wishing to emigrate.

- General Secretary Gorbachev, in a joint statement with President Reagan at their 1985 Geneva summit, pledged to resolve humanitarian cases "in the spirit of cooperation." To French television, he stated that the only exceptions would be for those knowing State secrets. He gave assurance that the security issue would apply only for 5 - 10 years. Actually, hundreds of refuseniks have been denied permission to emigrate for considerably longer periods.

- This year, only 386 Jews were granted exit visas as of June, 1986. It is the lowest average since 1964, and 25 percent lower than for the same period in 1985.

- During a conference under the "Helsinki process" in Bern, Switzerland, in April - May, 1986, the Soviet Union proposed a new alarming policy on Jewish emigration. It sought to limit visas to "participating states" in North America and Europe, acknowledging that they wanted to prevent "reunion of families in Israel."

- The Soviet Union is engaged in a campaign to sever communication between Soviet and Western Jews, through interruption of mail and telephone contact, and intimidation of tourists who visit refuseniks.

- The principle of linkage of security and trade issues with human rights is explicit in the Helsinki Final Act, and is not a new policy.

JG/D4/014

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
10 East 40th Street, Suite 907
New York, New York 10016

RESCUING SOVIET JEWRY: A POSITION PAPER

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The character and direction of Mikhail Gorbachev's Jewish policy, as evidenced by his regime's conduct since he assumed leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, are clear and foreboding. After a year and a half in power as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Gorbachev's policy can be defined as: 1) continuing the shut-down of Jewish emigration; and 2) maintaining an assault upon Jewish consciousness, through the harassment and intimidation of Jewish self-study efforts to sustain culture and religion.

The facts are clear enough.

Over 370,000 Jews in the Soviet Union have taken the first step in the emigration process by requesting and having sent to them an affidavit (vyzov) from relatives in Israel, a crucially important document when formally applying for an exit visa. Within this group, over 11,000 hold the status of a "refusenik," one who has been refused an exit visa at least once and, not infrequently, numerous times. Their names are known and their specific requests for exit visas can be documented.

There are also thousands of others whose applications were rejected, and are, therefore, actually not in the pipeline and whose names are unknown. One reasonable estimate drawn from figures given by Mikhail Gorbachev to a Canadian parliamentary group, when he visited Ottawa in 1983, suggested that there were nearly 10,000 persons in this category.

Soviet leadership, including General Secretary Gorbachev, is certainly well informed as to the actual statistics. In April of this year a top Moscow specialist on nationality questions, lecturing before a principal Soviet propaganda body - the Znaniye Society - acknowledged that 10 to 15 percent of Soviet Jews currently would seek to emigrate. Since the latest official Soviet census numbers the Jewish population at slightly more than 1.8 million, he implicitly acknowledged that between 180,000 and 270,000 Jews could be expected to emigrate. This admission is far closer to Western data than to official pronouncements.

If Gorbachev is aware of the extent of the desire for family reunification and to go to Israel on the part of a significant segment of Soviet Jews, he is also cognizant of Western demands for Soviet compliance with the "humanitarian" provisions of the Helsinki accords' Basket 3, which focus heavily upon the reunion of families. It is not accidental that the Kremlin leader has sought to meet Western criticism with vigorous, but non-specific, public assertions about Soviet commitments to the "humanitarian" aspirations of the Helsinki agreement.

Thus, Gorbachev agreed to participate in a joint statement with President Ronald Reagan at the Geneva Summit in November 1985, which pledged the resolution of "humanitarian cases in the spirit of cooperation." In a similar statement made to French television interviewers two months earlier, Gorbachev responded that in regard to "reunion" with

families in Israel, "we will continue to resolve these questions. . .on the basis of a humanitarian approach." The only "exceptions" to this approach, he stated, would arise "when individuals. . .know state secrets." (The "exceptions," it turns out, are quite sizeable. In a remarkable disclosure at a UN meeting in Geneva in 1984, the Soviet delegate, Dimitri Bykov, revealed that in the previous two years more than 50 percent of Jewish applicants for exit visas were turned down.) But Gorbachev assured his French audience that, after 5 or 10 years, the "security" obstacle would no longer apply.

When the General Secretary addressed the 27th Soviet Communist Party Congress in February, he enumerated several "fundamental principles" which would guide Soviet decision-making in the international arena, including the obligation to handle "in a humane and positive spirit" questions related to the "reunification of families." More recently, on July 7, at a public dinner in Moscow honoring French President Francois Mitterrand, Gorbachev promised that the USSR was prepared for "international cooperation on humanitarian problems, and these are not mere words."

Whether they are anything beyond "mere words" is an open question. Prior to the Geneva summit, and in the months preceding the Party Congress, Soviet officials set in motion a vast international propaganda campaign which suggested that the stepped-up emigration of Jews was imminent. In late December 1985, for example, an official of a prominent American Jewish organization was given assurances by a Soviet diplomatic representative in Washington, D.C. that the early renewal of Jewish emigration could be expected. The report was published on the front page of The New York Times. The disinformation effort, which exploited the hopes of some Jewish personalities, did have the momentary effect of producing uncertainty in the ranks of the advocacy movement in the West.

In striking contrast to the words about "humanitarianism" is the reality of Soviet policy. The number of Jews granted exit visas to Israel during the first six months of this year totalled only 386. This is one of the lowest monthly averages since 1964, nearly a quarter of a century ago, when a limited exodus was allowed. (Only in 1968, the year after the Six-Day War in the Middle East, was the rate lower.) The rate is far below that of 1971, when meaningful Jewish emigration first began and was to grow to significant numbers throughout the seventies.

The low level of emigration is indeed drastic. It is 25 percent lower than the already exceedingly small figures of 1985. In March and May of this year the trickle dipped below 50 persons, the lowest registered in an eight month period. What makes this figure significant is the fact that a special conference under the "Helsinki Process" dealing with "human contacts" and, therefore, with reunion of families, took place in Bern, Switzerland from April 15 to May 27. Moscow had no hesitancy in appearing to abridge the Basket 3 provisions of the Helsinki Final Act just prior to and during the Bern meeting.

Indeed, Bern became the site for the Kremlin to float a new policy line on Jewish emigration. In private meetings with separate Western delegations, Soviet delegates appeared to want to close the book on the matter. They insisted they could not permit the sending of Jews to the "war danger zone" of Israel or to "occupied Palestine." Other Jews who had emigrated to the U.S. or Canada were contemptuously referred to as "illegals."

Especially significant was a determined Soviet maneuver to remove Jewish emigration to Israel from the Helsinki agenda. The Soviets sought to introduce language that would limit the granting of visas for family visits and reunion of families to "participating states," i.e., the 35 signatories to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act from North America and Europe. Pressed as to their motivation, Soviet delegates acknowledged they wanted to prevent "reunion of families" in Israel.

Though the Kremlin initiative was rebuffed, the new posture in Bern was nonetheless made clear. Soviet delegates seemed to consider Basket 3 a finished subject. At previous meetings, Soviet representatives would link progress in Jewish emigration and in other Basket 3 matters to improved detente. Such references were absent in Bern.

As if to underscore the new line, the Soviet delegates exploded at a closed plenary session when U.S. Ambassador Michael Novak distributed a list of Soviet citizens, mainly Jewish refuseniks, who sought to be reunited with kin in Israel. The list was an appendix to a moving address by the U.S. representative on the emigration issue. In a rare burst of public anger, the Soviet delegation called the list "libelous" and charged that it smacked of "McCarthyism" (!).

The absence of "humanitarianism" is particularly poignant when account is taken of former Jewish "prisoners of conscience" and "refuseniks." The first category embraces Jewish activists who have served terms of imprisonment, forced labor or internal exile on the basis of questionable allegations. A total of 25 former prisoners remain in the USSR, despite their deep desire to emigrate.

Notably tormenting is the plight of the "refuseniks." The following are examples of various types of harassment and punishment to which they may be subject: loss of job; impossibility of finding work; impoverishment; threat of arrest for "parasitism"; expulsion from university; conscription; deprivation of academic standing; vilification and social ostracism; interference with correspondence and telephonic communication; surveillance; and physical attack. Arrests and prison sentences are, increasingly, the fate of those active in the promotion of Jewish culture and religion.

The harassment and deprivations confronting the refuseniks stand in stark contrast to obligations under the Helsinki accord. A crucial provision specifies that the rights of applicants for exit visas are not to be modified. Clearly, denigration and penalties for those seeking emigration are forbidden by the Helsinki Final Act.

Frequently, refusals of exit visas are based upon the Soviet allegation that the applicant had access to "security" or classified information. Despite the fact that Soviet officials, including Gorbachev, have said that the "security" period would end after 5 or 10 years, a careful analysis of available data reveals that hundreds of refuseniks have been rejected on security grounds for longer periods. Over 600 Soviet Jewish scientists alone have waited between 5 and 10 years for exit visas; nearly 100 of them have waited for over 10 years.

The particular torment of refusenik scientists merits special attention. Conceivably, they could contribute enormously to the benefit of mankind in a variety of fields. As it is, they are often severed from laboratory, library, or classroom, and from access to foreign scientific publications, international conferences and even contacts with visiting scientists. These gifted scientists, whose potential discoveries might benefit everyone, are not contributing to the USSR, or to others, and are forced to wither. The tragedy, both personal and global, is virtually indefinable.

Running parallel to the emigration shut-down is the assault upon Jewish consciousness. For more than four decades forced assimilation has been a dominant feature of Soviet policy towards Jews. Except for isolated synagogues, all formal Jewish institutional life and, especially schools and classes, were eliminated. Unlike any other ethnic group within the USSR, Jews are deprived of almost every public means for perpetuating their cultural-linguistic-religious heritage.

What has emerged in the past decade to fill the vacuum are self-study groups meeting in the apartments of interested individuals. Here the Hebrew language is studied along with Jewish history and tradition. While the authorities have scarcely been enthusiastic about the private study and teaching of Hebrew and Jewish culture, in recent years they have stepped up a campaign of harassment and intimidation of these groups and, especially, of the teachers.

Most disturbing in this campaign have been the trials of prominent Jewish cultural activists. Over 50 percent of all Jewish activists now in labor camps or prison were sentenced since Gorbachev came to power in March 1985. More than a dozen Hebrew teachers have been convicted on a variety of charges, which appear to be trumped-up, and sent to forced labor camps. Among the charges are "hooliganism", misappropriation of state property, draft evasion, "defamation" of the Soviet state, and possession of drugs.

The last, given the character of these activists, borders on the absurd. Typical is the case of Aleksei Magarik, a 27 year-old cellist and Hebrew teacher, who has been a refusenik since 1984. On March 14, 1986, he was arrested as he was about to board a Moscow - Tbilisi flight. An airport official, searching Magarik's hand luggage, claimed to have found a cigarette package containing four grams of hashish.

While Magarik asserted that he never saw the pack before, and while a medical examination the following morning confirmed that he had not consumed any drugs, he was nonetheless convicted on June 9 for carrying drugs in his luggage. Testimony on his behalf from eye witnesses who watched him pack were discounted. After a trial that lasted less than two days, he was sentenced to a three-year term in a labor camp.

Recently, private Judaic religious study appears to have become a target for the first time since the Stalin era. A 28-year-old educator, Pinchas Polonsky, who is a member of a small synagogue in Moscow's Marina Roshcha area, was warned on May 30 by a city prosecutor that he might be criminally charged for violating a statute ostensibly dealing with the separation of church and state. Despite the fact that for Jews a synagogue is a place of worship and study, among the reported allegations are: studying Talmud after the morning service, wearing a yarmulka in his home, and organizing an unregistered religious group.

In a second case, Ze'ev Dashevsky of Moscow was warned by a government official on June 5 that his efforts in organizing private seminars for the study of religion could be considered as violating Soviet law. He was also warned that he was meeting with foreigners "too often."

Abetting the initiative aimed at atomizing Jewish consciousness is the Soviet effort to sever the connection between Soviet Jews and Western Jewry. Thus postal communication is, at best, uncertain, as documented by the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, and by the U.S. Postal Service in a brochure published last year. Non-delivery of mail, especially when it contains an affidavit (vyzov) from a relative for emigration application purposes, is a common phenomenon. A similar situation often occurs when books of Jewish content, such as Hebrew dictionaries or Jewish history works, are sent. Parcels, too, often do not reach their destination.

Telephonic contact has been hindered. In a growing number of cases, telephones of Jews are simply cut or made inoperable. Hindrances also exist, to some extent, in the area of tourism, especially in the harassment of tourists visiting refuseniks. At the same time, there exists a determined effort to limit religious contacts, even though

the Helsinki accord legitimizes the maintenance of such contacts. Almost totally excluded are family visits from the USSR to Israel and vice-versa.

The Helsinki agreement, especially the provisions of Basket 3 dealing with reunion of families and cultural and religious rights, are grossly violated by the Soviet Union. All signatories are required to "facilitate freer movement" and to "deal in a positive and humanitarian spirit with the application of persons who wish to be reunited with members of their family." In the 1983 Madrid Concluding Document, following a Review Conference in Madrid, the signatories to the Helsinki accord added the word "favorably" before "deal," thus virtually binding the participating states to approve requests for exit visas.

Basket 3 also obligates the signatories to recognize "the contribution that national minorities. . .can make" to culture and "to facilitate this contribution." Further, the signatories are to recognize the "freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience." In the Madrid Concluding Document, the obligation is strengthened by requiring the participating states to "take the action necessary to ensure" religious freedom.

Clearly, it is incumbent upon the Western, neutral, and non-aligned nations to raise vigorously at the forthcoming Vienna Review Conference, in November, the gross violations of Basket 3 by the Soviet Union as they apply to its Jewish community. It is vital that Western strategy at Vienna should take full account of the principle of linkage, which is built into the Helsinki accord. The three baskets, on security, trade, and human rights, stand in delicate balance with one another. Progress in each of the first two baskets requires that progress also be made in Basket 3. The utilization of this principle is at the heart of a consistent and effective Western diplomatic initiative before and during the Vienna Conference.

THE PRIORITY FOR JEWISH ACTIVISTS

While anticipating changes in their status, Jewish activists in the Soviet Union have been careful to articulate what they consider to be basic agreements which would affect their destiny.

There is little doubt that those Jews pursuing informal Jewish study would prefer their activities to be formalized. Hebrew, alone among modern or ancient languages, cannot be taught to or studied by ordinary citizens. It remains under a virtual ban, and those attempting to teach continue to face harassment and imprisonment.

The need to have an acceptable means for studying and passing on Jewish religious and cultural traditions is of significant concern to Jews, especially the young. For many, however, the primary goal remains repatriation to Israel, and reunification with kin. In pursuit of these objectives they have developed a set of guidelines for a possible agreement, which the National Conference endorses, in order to facilitate the process:

(a) immediate exit visas (on signature of an agreement) to those in refusal for ten years or more.

(b) an exit visa (within one calendar year of signature of an agreement) to all those in refusal for five to ten years.

(c) an exit visa (within two calendar years of signature of an agreement) to all those who have received a refusal up to the time of the signing of an agreement.

(d) as a matter of priority, the release of the Prisoners of Conscience, possibly according to an agreed timetable, based on the length and percentage of time already served in prison or labor camp.

(e) immediate exit visas for all former prisoners who have applied to go to Israel, but are still refused permission to leave.

(f) for those refused on security grounds, the granting of exit visas according to an agreed maximum period of 5 years between the end of the security job and the exit visa. A similar maximum period of refusal could apply to those refused on grounds of their military service.

(g) a controlled rate of future exit visas for all applicants, up to an agreed annual limit as part of an institutionalized process which allowed more than 50,000 Jews to exit in 1979. This part of any agreement could also include direct flights from the Soviet Union to Israel.

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

America cannot ignore the treatment of thousands of Soviet Jews, as well as others, who are persecuted for their beliefs and are virtually held hostage in their own country.

While we believe the Administration and the Congress are pursuing a supportive course in the effort to help the Jews in the Soviet Union, in the critical period ahead much more can be done.

1. The Administration and the Congress must continue to demonstrate that this issue is a fundamental stumbling block on the path to improved bilateral relations. One way is to hold firm on the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1975 Trade Reform Act, which links the granting of trade benefits to the USSR and other countries to performance with regard to emigration. When the present harassment of applicants for emigration ends and the early levels climb to a significant number, the judicious use of the amendment will provide the possibility for increased trade to match such improvements.

2. The United States must convey its deep concern over the plight of Soviet Jews at every opportunity -- such as during negotiations over grain and maritime rights, as well as at any summit meeting. Soviet treatment of its Jewish minority must be effectively woven into the fabric of a continuing U.S.-Soviet relationship. An effort should be made to ensure that the issue is raised at all contact points between the U.S. and the USSR, and that it becomes fundamental to the relationship between the two powers. The issue should be organically linked to every agenda item in future dealings with the Soviet Union, rather than attaching it on an ad hoc basis to narrow issues as they arise.

3. This Administration is committed to resolving bilateral problems, regional conflicts, security matters, and human rights issues in encounters with the Soviet Union,

including a summit. We continue to believe that progress in all four areas is essential for a meaningful relationship with the Soviet Union.

4. Secretary of State George P. Shultz has told the National Conference on Soviet Jewry how he has emphasized human rights matters, including those of Soviet Jews, in his meetings with the Soviet Foreign Minister. This is commendable. Our Western allies should be equally vigilant. The leaders of the free world must be involved to speak up on the plight of Soviet Jews at every opportunity. The U.S. should continue all efforts to enlist such support from our allies, as well as from neutral and nonaligned nations.

5. We welcome suggestions for improved atmospherics between the United States and the Soviet Union, such as the proposal to establish a consulate in Kiev, and to increase cultural contacts. After years of stalemate, these and other initiatives might create an environment in which progress would take place in regard to Jewish emigration and other human rights issues, as well as in other critical areas of bilateral and multilateral concern.

In the wake of last year's Geneva summit, we anticipate an expansion in private and official contacts and long term agreements with the Soviet Union. These contacts, however, must provide important opportunities to clarify the American people's support for human rights, especially the right to leave. We urge that all cabinet-level agencies be instructed to place this issue on the agenda of talks with Soviet counterparts, with expectation of performance.

6. The use of the "Helsinki process" as an instrument of foreign policy, and as an international standard, is of great value. We expect that a strong U.S. delegation to the forthcoming Vienna Review Conference will vigorously pursue the right of any Soviet Jew to leave, to live as a Jew, and to maintain human contacts, as provided in the Helsinki Final Act.

7. The content of Voice of America broadcasts to the Soviet Union should be improved, so as to provide a more effective source of information to the Jewish minority. We recommend the creation of a special desk or bureau within the VOA to focus on matters of interest to Jews in the Soviet Union, as one way to achieve that objective. A similar mechanism in Washington should be created within Radio Liberty to achieve similar goals, and to improve the shortcomings within that agencies's oversight system.

8. Our government must press with vigor the appropriate international agencies, especially the International Postal Union, and directly with Soviet authorities, to allow the delivery of mail to Soviet citizens. The effort to obstruct the delivery of mail, and to isolate Jews from friends and family, is a cruel violation of international norms and which should be resisted by the international community.

9. Our government and its allies should use the complaint procedures of international agencies as a means of focusing attention on persecuted individuals. The Soviet policy of enforced assimilation, cultural genocide, artificial restrictions on emigration, and the use of job security to threaten Jews, are among current violations of various international agreements. We believe that increased international debate will help bring about an end to such practices.

10. Congressional advocacy on behalf of Soviet Jews, in the form of letters and resolutions, as well as public statements and action, can make the difference in one person's life. It demonstrates popular support to the Administration and to Soviet officials. If Soviet leaders do not believe that the President is serious, Washington's limited leverage with respect to Soviet Jews will be further curtailed, as it will be in other areas.

11. We must continue to protest anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and the use by the Soviet Union and its allies of the United Nations as a megaphone to broadcast anti-Semitism throughout the world. The Soviet Union remains the only great power, since Hitler's Germany, to allow anti-Semitism to be used as an instrument of official policy.

THE JACKSON-VANIK AMEMDMENT

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which is known as the Freedom of Emigration Amendment to the Trade Reform Act (1974), reflects a special U.S. commitment to the fundamental principle of free emigration, a principle on which this nation was built. The Amendment denies favorable trade status and commercial credit to the Soviet Union and other communist countries which restrict emigration. It provides that its restrictions may be waived, year by year, if the President and Congress find that there is a significant change in these restrictive policies. In sum it remains a clear and effective expression of that commitment as it pertains to the rights of Soviet Jews and others.

The campaign for and passage of the Freedom of Emigration Amendment was instrumental in the release of many tens of thousands of Soviet Jews, and it remains a key lever for future progress on behalf of these human rights.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment imposes no limit on U.S.-Soviet trade. Under the law any financial disadvantages the Soviet Union incurs by reason of less favorable tariffs and lack of guaranteed credits can be suspended by Presidential waiver, now earned annually. Thus, the Amendment would permit U.S. trade benefits to flow, so long as the emigrants flow. It therefore provides the flexibility its opponents have argued can be achieved only through modification or repeal, and ensures a continuing incentive.

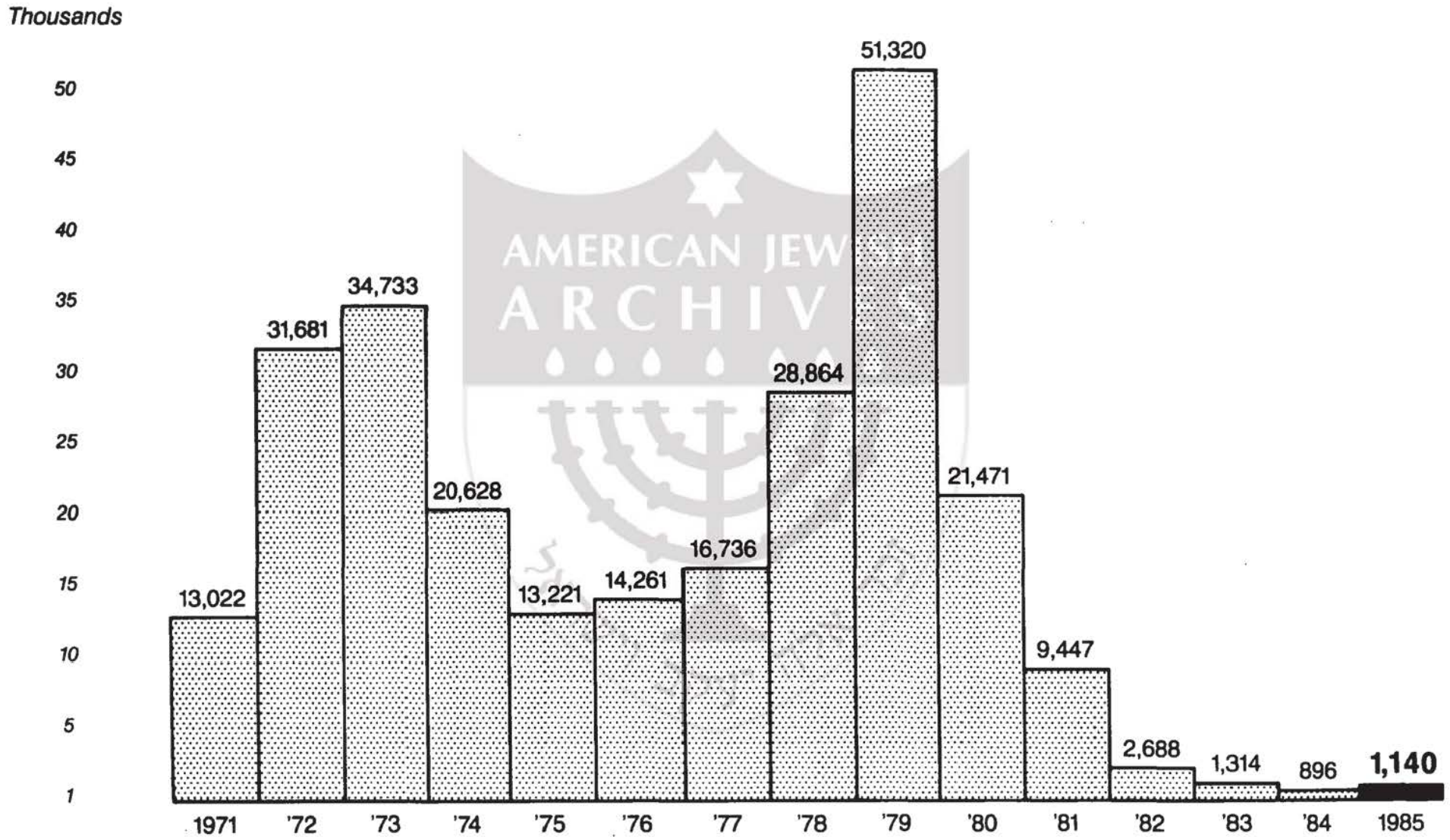
Despite some well-publicized cases affording freedom to a small number of individuals, there has been no sign of any change in the repressive policies of the Soviet Union. In fact, the emigration of Soviet Jews has diminished, while the persecution of Jewish cultural activists and would-be emigrants increased.

We reiterate our support for the principles and the policies represented by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, and affirm our opposition to legislative efforts to repeal it. We urge that U.S. policy remain constant, since the USSR has yet to show that it is willing to abide by the rules protecting those human rights to which it gave its pledge at Helsinki.

We look for significant changes, including major steps to resolve the refusenik and Prisoner of Conscience issues, ending the present harassment of emigration applicants and study group participants and, of course, a very substantial climb in yearly levels of emigration.

In the end we continue to hope that the Soviet Union will allow emigration to increase. This is not just a "Jewish issue" or a "Western issue." It is a fundamental matter of human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

ewish Emigration from the USSR



10 East 40th Street, Suite 907 • New York, N.Y. 10016 • (212) 679-6122

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

WRAP-UP...LEADERSHIP REPORT

SERIES 85/3

RESTRICTIONS ON JEWISH CULTURE

The Soviet Union is a multi-national state, with over 100 recognized nations and nationalities. It is Soviet policy to encourage the development of the various national cultures as stated in its own law. The 1977 Constitution grants equal rights to citizens of different nationalities including, specifically, "cultural life." Moreover, the "Violation of Equality of Rights of Nationalities and Races" is regarded as a special crime.

International obligations the USSR has assumed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also commit it to facilitate the maintenance and development of national cultures. The Covenant specifically requires signatories to ensure that "ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities" shall be permitted "to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their language."

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act reinforces obligations, not only by a general undertaking of the participating States in Principle VII to "fulfill their obligations as set forth in the international declarations and agreements in this field. . ." (an undertaking subsequently incorporated into the USSR Constitution), but also by specific references to national minorities, and by declaring that the participating States "will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere."

The Act also asks participating States to recognize "the contribution that national minorities or regional cultures can make to cooperation among them in various fields of culture, . . .(and). . . when such minorities or cultures exist within the territory, to facilitate this contribution, taking into account the legitimate interest of their members."

The Jews are one of the recognized nationalities in the Soviet Union; in fact, they are a major one, ranking sixteenth in size among more than 100 Soviet nationalities. How far, then, are international obligations implemented in regard to Soviet Jewry? What is the state of the Jewish minority culture in the Soviet Union today?

There are still no Jewish schools in the USSR, not even in the so-called Jewish Autonomous Oblast (Region) of Birobidzhan. There exist only two press organs: The Birobidzhaner Shtern, a Yiddish newspaper of four pages which appears five times a week in Birobidzhan in 1,000 copies; and the monthly Yiddish literary journal Sovetish Heymland, published in Moscow in 7,000 copies, of which apparently half are sent abroad. Not a single one is permitted in the Russian language, spoken by 97.03% of Soviet Jews.

In the years 1977-1979 there was a slight improvement in the publication of Yiddish books. An average of six were published annually as against the annual average of three books during the preceding nine years. But this is still only a minuscule contribution to maintaining Jewish culture. It is worth comparing the average of six books published annually for two million Jews with the corresponding figures (for the year 1978) relating to some other Soviet nationalities: 46 books for 622,000 Maris, 70 for 542,000 Ossetinians and 166 for 1,371,000 Bashkirs.

- over -

10 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016 ° (212) 679-6122

On the other hand, the number of Russian translations of Yiddish books (which would be more important since, according to the 1979 census, 80.41 percent of Soviet Jewry no longer speaks Yiddish) has radically declined: in the years 1959 to 1970 an annual average of 25 translated volumes were published (in no year less than 20); in 1971 to 1975 an annual average of 14; while in the years 1976, 1977 and 1978 their number was 7, 10 and 9 respectively. Similarly, translated items of Jewish literature and literary criticism are also gradually disappearing from non-Jewish Soviet journals; in 1959 to 1968 their annual average was 51, in 1969 to 1975 it was 50, but in the years 1976 to 1978 such items dropped to an average of 14 per annum.

In 1977 there was only one professional Jewish theater, the Moscow Jewish Dramatic Ensemble which, however, is a travelling company without a building of its own. In 1978 permission was given to form a Jewish Chamber Musical Theater. This was undoubtedly a concession to Jewish demands in the USSR and abroad, but approved under peculiar conditions: though the theater could travel within the country, it had to be legally based in remote Birobidzhan, where, according to the 1979 census, only 10,166 Jews (or half-a-percent) of Soviet Jewry live. Birobidzhan is also far from the traditional Jewish population centers of the Western regions in the USSR.

The sporadic performances by both theaters have been enthusiastically welcomed by Jews, but their activities are extremely restricted. For instance, the Moscow Ensemble could not perform in Moscow from the summer of 1974 until December 1978; no Jewish theatre could visit Minsk until 1978; and Leningrad, Kiev and Kharkov are still out-of-bounds.

There still does not exist any other Jewish cultural institution, lecture course, publishing house, artistic establishment, etc., with the sole exception of the Sholem Aleichem Library in Birobidzhan. In 1979, a memorial museum to Sholem Aleichem was established in his birthplace, Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky.

Under these circumstances Soviet Jews, anxious to preserve a national cultural heritage, hope to obtain the necessary tools from abroad. Such efforts are legitimate and encouraged in the Helsinki Final Act, notably in Basket Three, which aims at facilitating "freer and wider dissemination of all kinds"; and in the section on Cooperation and Exchanges in the field of Culture, which seeks "to develop contacts and cooperation among persons active in the field of culture," "to encourage contact and communications among persons engaged in cultural activities," "to promote access by all to respective cultural achievements," etc. Moreover, the contribution of national minority cultures to cooperation in the cultural field is especially emphasized.

In spite of this, attempts to send Soviet Jews books or teaching manuals on subjects like Jewish religion, law or ethics, history, art, literature, the Holocaust, or belles-lettres, children's books, song books, dictionaries and language books for the teaching of Hebrew, have been thwarted by the authorities. Such books are either confiscated or simply disappear. Among the books barred were those of the Nobel laureates Isaac Bashevis Singer and Saul Bellow, the UNESCO publication Social Life and Social Values of the Jewish People, the Holocaust novel Le Dernier des Justes by Andre Schwarz-Bart, and studies on Jewish history by such distinguished historians as Shmuel Ettinger and Cecil Roth. The confiscation of materials and the disappearance of letters indicate interference with the privacy of mail and communication, which is guaranteed under international agreements and in the Soviet Constitution.

The long-range policy of the Soviet Union is, therefore, to throttle the growth or development of Jewish culture. This can only accelerate general assimilationist trends and, simultaneously, intensify the religious and cultural resistance of Jewish activists. Either course will generate new tensions for Soviet Jews.

JG/D1/019/11/85/CULTURE

THE MOSCOW-JERUSALEM-WASHINGTON TRIANGLE: SOVIET-ISRAELI AND SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND THE QUESTION OF SOVIET JEWRY

by
Dr. Robert O. Freedman

It has now been more than a month since the brief, and almost abortive, meeting of Soviet and Israeli diplomats in Helsinki, Finland. It is, therefore, perhaps time to put that meeting into the larger context of Soviet-Israeli relations, and the future of the Soviet Jewry movement. At the time of the Helsinki meeting, there were four major hypotheses offered for Soviet interest in seeking consular talks with Israel. The first -- and least credible -- was the Soviet explanation that Moscow wanted to inventory church property in Israel and aid Soviet citizens living there. The second hypothesis related to the Soviet concern about a growing escalation of Syrian-Israeli tension, which Moscow feared could erupt into war. Third, in the aftermath of the Peres-Hassan summit, Moscow was once again concerned that the Middle East peace process might be on track and Moscow wanted to at least hint at establishing ties with Israel so as to enter that process. Finally, as a result of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and other serious economic problems, Gorbachev wanted a summit with the United States to slow the arms race so as to ease pressure on the Soviet economy. The gesture to Israel, according to this hypothesis, was aimed at softening up American and especially American Jewish public opinion to prepare the way for the summit.

Dr. Freedman is Peggy Meyerhoff Pearlstone Professor of Political Science and Dean of Graduate Studies at the Baltimore Hebrew College. He is the author of Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970 (now in its third edition) and editor of Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade 1971-1980 and Israel in the Begin Era.

In looking at the three latter hypotheses, one should see them not as contradictory but complementary and indeed, in combination, they may have swung the balance in Kremlin discussions toward making the gesture toward Israel. In the first place, Moscow was clearly concerned that a Syrian-Israeli war might erupt. The Syrian-Israeli dogfight in November 1985, Syria's moving of surface-to-air missles in and out of Lebanon, Syria's construction of a series of emplacements for its artillery and tanks near Israel's security zone in South Lebanon, Israel's forcing down of a Libyan plane which contained high-ranking Syrian Ba'ath party officials (instead of the PLO terrorists Israel was seeking), and, perhaps most important, the direct Syrian linkage to terrorist attempts to blow up Israeli airliners in London and Spain, raised tension in the Syrian-Israeli relationship almost to the point of war. Moscow's decision to agree to Israel's demand for public discussions in early August, therefore, may perhaps be seen as a measure by the USSR to raise the possible costs of any Israeli (or Israeli-supported American) attack on Syria; that is, to deter such an attack lest it harm a possible improvement in Soviet-Israeli relations.

A second Middle East development which may have contributed to Moscow's decision to initiate public contacts with Israel was the USSR's efforts to play a role in the Middle East peace process. While following Jordanian King Hussein's split with Arafat in February 1986, it appeared that the American-supported Middle East peace initiative had been derailed, Moscow sought to exploit this opportunity by trying to gain entry into the peace process by orchestrating a pre-conference preparatory committee made up of the U.N. Security Council's five permanent members. Then, when in late July, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Moroccan King Hassan had their surprise meeting in Morocco, Moscow may have become concerned that it would once again be left on the diplomatic sidelines. (The last surprise summit, it will be recalled, was

Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 which led to the Camp David agreements less than a year later.) To avert this possibility, therefore, Moscow may well have made its gesture to Israel.

The third hypothesis, that Moscow's request for consular talks was based on a desire to improve ties with the United States, also has merit. It would not appear accidental that the Soviet announcement of consular talks with Israel on August 4th coincided with the announcement of the scheduling of the September 19th and 20th meeting between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze to prepare for a U.S.-Soviet summit. (An earlier meeting had been postponed by Moscow because of the American bombing of Libya in April.) The nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, the precipitous drop in world oil prices (more than 50% of Soviet hard currency earnings come from oil and nature gas sales), Gorbachev's efforts to restructure the Soviet economy, and the major economic difficulties facing the USSR, combined to convince the Soviet leadership that an arms control agreement that would prevent another expensive spiralling of the arms race would be very much in the Soviet interest. For this reason, Gorbachev sought a second summit with the United States, and, given Moscow's tendency to overestimate Jewish influence in the United States, the new Soviet leader may well have felt that the gesture to Israel would help pave the way for the summit.

Yet, while the coincidence of these three Soviet objectives may have prepared the way for the August 19th Soviet-Israeli meeting in Helsinki, it is what has happened since then that will have an effect on the prospects for Soviet-Israeli relations and the exodus of Soviet Jewry. First and foremost, there appears to have been a major change in the dynamics of decision-making in Israel on ties with the USSR. Up until the release of Anatoly (Natan) Shcharansky in February 1986, the Israeli government could manage its relations

with the USSR with relatively little concern for Israeli public opinion. To be sure, former refuseniks living in Israel and Israeli politicians like Geula Cohen -- a member of the peripheral Tehiyah party -- sought to get the government to pay more attention to the issue of Soviet Jewry in the numerous informal discussions which Israel has held with Moscow. Nonetheless, it was only after Shcharansky's arrival in Israel, and his tactical political alignment with such major figures in the Likud party as Moshe Arens, that a domestic lobby group of major importance was created which limited the freedom of Israeli governments to deal with the USSR. While a good case might have been made for the reestablishment of Soviet-Israeli relations without a direct quid-pro-quo on Soviet Jewry (Israel's strategic concerns and a desire to move out of a position of partial political isolation in the world are but two reasons), the activities of Shcharansky and his lobby make such a decision very difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, in future Israeli policy-making toward the USSR, the issue of Soviet Jewry will of necessity loom large and this is something that Moscow, as well as Israel's National Unity government, must take into consideration.

While the internal debate in Israel over Soviet Jewry heated up, the overall situation in the Middle East cooled off somewhat. Despite the Hassan-Peres summit and the subsequent summit between Peres and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the Middle East peace process remained stalled. At the same time, tension between Israel and Syria appeared to ease and the danger of war receded. Under the circumstances, with Moscow's Middle Eastern fears lessened, two of the three concerns that seem to have prompted the Soviet gesture to Israel in August were eased, at least in part. Nonetheless, the third reason for the Soviet gesture, its hope to convene a Soviet-American summit during which an arms control agreement could be signed, seemed on its way to being realized. The path to the summit was highlighted by progress in limiting

nuclear arms at the intermediate and strategic levels, but at the same time, summit preparations were hampered by the arrest of U.S. News & World Report journalist Nicholas Daniloff. Whether the Daniloff affair will prevent a summit remains to be seen. It would appear probable, however, that should there be no summit, the prospects -- at least in the short run -- for an improvement in Soviet-Israeli relations and for an increase in the exodus of Soviet Jews, would be dim.

An equally important question, however, if the summit is held is how high up on the summit agenda the issue of Human Rights in general and Soviet Jewry in particular will be placed. The previous summit, it will be recalled, which also took place after a brief Soviet flirtation with Israel, led neither to an increase in the number of Soviet Jews being allowed to leave the USSR (indeed, there was a decrease) nor to a resumption of Soviet-Israeli relations, although arrangements were made for consular relations between Israel and Moscow's ally Poland. Given the increased domestic pressure on the Israeli government to accept nothing less than an increase in the exodus of Soviet Jews, and the increased activity of American Jews in preparation for the summit, including planning for a massive demonstration in Washington, there is no question but that there will be pressure on Moscow to release Soviet Jews. The amount of effective pressure will be determined, however, both by the emphasis placed by Reagan on the Soviet Jewry issue at the summit, and whether Reagan will make the concessions Gorbachev wants on nuclear arms and other issues Moscow deems important.

In sum, therefore, the questions of Soviet-Israeli relations and Soviet Jewry are closely intertwined with developments in both Middle East politics and Soviet-American relations. Should the international climate be proper therefore, and should Moscow expect gains either to its Middle East position or

in its relations with the United States, or possibly in both areas, then one might expect an improvement in Soviet-Israeli relations and in the prospects for an increase in the exodus of Soviet Jews.

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY

September 28-29, 1986

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Morris B. Abram
Member of US Delegation to Vienna
for Helsinki Review Conference
President of National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Hon. Yishayahu Barzel
Consul of Israel, New York

Phil Baum
Associate Executive Director
American Jewish Congress

Abraham Bayer
Director, International Relations
National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council

Richard Berkman
Member, National AJC Task Force on Soviet Jewry

Jacob Birnbaum
National Director
Students Struggle for Soviet Jewry

Dr. Stephen Blank
Professor of Political Science
Air Force University/Montgomery

Hyman Bookbinder
AJC Washington Representative, Emeritus

Dr. Yoram Dinstein
Visiting Professor at New York University
Pro-Rector Tel Aviv University & former
Dean of Faculty of Law

Theodore Ellenoff
President, American Jewish Committee

Mr. Leonard Fein
Editor, MOMENT Magazine

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY - 9/28-29, 1986

List of Participants (cont'd)

Abraham Foxman
Associate National Director
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

Dr. Maurice Friedberg
Chairman, Department of Slavic Languages & Literature
University of Illinois

Prof. Robert Friedman
Dean, Graduate Studies
Baltimore Hebrew College

Toby Gati
Vice President for Policy Studies
UN Association of the USA

David Geller (Conference Coordinator)
Director, European Affairs
International Relations Department, AJC

Dr. Zvi Gitelman
Professor of Political Science
University of Michican

Dr. Marshall I. Goldman
Assistant Director, Russian Research Center
Harvard University

Mr. Jerry Goodman
Executive Director
National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Eric I. Greenberg
Director, Political & Legal Affairs
Coalition to Free Soviet Jews

David A. Harris
Deputy Director
International Relations Department, AJC

Rita E. Hauser
Member of US Delegation to Vienna for
Helsinki Review Conference
Vice President, American Jewish Committee

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY - 9/28-29, 1986

List of Participants (cont'd)

Malcolm Hoenlein
Executive Director
Conference of Presidents of Major
Jewish Organizations

✓ Miles Jaffe
Chairman
Commission on International Relations, AJC

Kenneth Jacobson
Director, Middle Eastern Affairs Department
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

✓ Dr. Allan S. Kagedan
Policy Analyst
International Relations Department, AJC

William Keyserling
Director, National Conference on Soviet Jewry
Washington, D.C.

Dr. William Korey
Director, International Policy Research,
B'nai B'rith
Ford Foundation Fellow

✓ Kathleen Lang
Office of Soviet Union Affairs
U.S. Department of State

✓ Ilya I. Levkov
Publisher
Liberty Publishing House

Sidney Liskofsky
Director, International Organizations &
Jacob Blaustein Institute for Advancement of Human Rights, AJC

✓ Dr. Susanne S. Lotarski
Director, Office of East European & Soviet Affairs
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

✓ Dr. David Luft
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Services
U.S. Department of Commerce

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY - 9/28-29, 1986

List of Participants (cont'd)

Richard Maass
Chairman, National AJC Task Force on Soviet Jewry
Honorary President, AJC

Leo Nevas
Chairman, AJC Board of Governors

Spencer Oliver, Esq.
General Counsel
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives

Alan Pesky
President
Coalition to Free Soviet Jews

Norman Podhoretz
Editor, COMMENTARY Magazine

Hon. Yehoshua Pratt
Minister-Counselor
Embassy of Israel

Dr. Uri Ra-anan
Professor of International Politics
Director, International Security Studies Program
Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy
Tufts University

Frank Reiss
Director, European Affairs Department
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

M. J. Rosenberg
Washington Representative, AJC

Ambassador Richard Schifter
Assistant Secretary of State for Human
Rights & Humanitarian Affairs

Ruth Septee
Member, National AJC Task Force on Soviet Jewry

Zeesy Schnur
Director, Coalition to Free Soviet Jews

CONSULTATION ON SOVIET JEWRY - 9/28-29, 1986

List of Participants (cont'd)

Myrna Shinbaum
Associate Director
National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Thomas W. Simons, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director
International Relations Department, AJC

Janet (Mrs. Joseph) Willen
Member, National AJC Task Force on Soviet Jewry

Maynard I. Wishner
Honorary President, American Jewish Committee

8085 (IRD-8)
9/23/86: og

Open Anti-Semitism

by

Allan Kagedan

Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the term "openness" has entered the Soviet lexicon. It is supposed to connote corrective self-criticism. Unfortunately, on the subject of Jews and "Zionists", openness in the Soviet media has translated into open anti-Semitism.

Consider an article that appeared last August in a foreign affairs journal, New Times, published in eight languages and distributed around the world. The piece, apparently drawing on Tsarist anti-Semitic lore, claims that "Jewish moneybags" and "Jewish bankers" manipulated modern European economic structures. These evil-doers also "controlled dozens of publishing houses and a sizable portion of the press" in pre-Revolutionary Russia; and their "Zionist" descendants were responsible for Soviet troubles in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1981.

Another piece appearing in a Soviet army journal in September asserts that the "big Jewish bourgeoisie" controls "The New York Times, the Washington Post, Time, Newsweek" and all three major U.S. television networks. Soviet publicists have also, since Gorbachev's rise to power, re-invoked allegations about invidious associations between Jews and

Masons - a theme originated by opponents of the French Revolution - and have referred to Jews as "cosmopolitan", a term connoting supposed rootlessness and disloyalty, recalling the largely anti-Semitic "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign of Stalin's last years.

What is striking about these statements is not their novelty: they have been made with some regularity in the Soviet press since the early 1970s. What is puzzling is why the current Kremlin leadership permits the dissemination of anti-Jewish slander even as they try to project themselves as responsible partners in an East-West dialogue.

The November summit between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan did little to stem the tide of anti-Jewish diatribe. In March the Communist Party Central Committee daily Socialist Industry ran a three-part pot-boiler ostensibly detailing Israeli efforts to acquire a nuclear capability. Reaching for an anti-nuclear audience, the author pins the death of American activist Karen Silkwood on "the Israeli special service Mossad."

Imputing to Nazi aims to the "Zionists", the article claims that the "Zionists wanted a nuclear capability to solve the Arab question conclusively." It refers to "Zionists" as "antihuman" "gangsters" who

represent "God's Chosen People." Perversely, it depicts a "Zionist agent," as a man prone to breaking out in a "sensual smile" in "the instant of his greatest delight -- the moment of murder."

What has been the official Soviet reaction to anti-Semitism in the media? There are hints that disseminating anti-Jewish notions bothers certain officials. A leader of the officially-approved Soviet anti-Zionist Committee, for instance, has referred to one anti-Jewish text as an "improper exposition," and in 1981 Leonid Brezhnev formally condemned anti-Semitism -- along with "Zionism," leaving the door open to future abuses. But deeds speak louder than words. In ~~September~~ 1983, in an open letter to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Russian Orthodox historian Ivan Martynov protested the publication of anti-Semitic statements in prominent Soviet journals. Since then, Martynov has been incarcerated twice in psychiatric hospitals and has spent several months in a labor camp.

The Kremlin's response to Western criticism of the anti-Semitism in its media has been to publicize incidents of anti-Jewish speech and vandalism in the West. Of course the U.S.S.R. does not enjoy a monopoly on anti-Semitic speech. But the anti-Jewish views expressed in the West are, in many cases, protected by the concept of free speech, whose benefits to democracy far outweigh its liabilities. The Soviets can not credibly choose to have selective freedom of speech, permitting anti-

Semites to spout their poison, while harassing and persecuting their critics. As for such acts as the overturning of gravestones in Jewish cemetaries, these are prosecuted by western courts, and they can not, in any fashion, be compared with the effect of anti-Jewish propaganda spread by the Soviet mass circulation, government-approved, media.

* * * *

* Dr. Allan Kagedan is a policy analyst with the International Relations Department of the American Jewish Committee.

9095-IRD-8
5/22/86 /el

The American Jewish Committee

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022
212 751 4000

March 13, 1986

His Excellency Anatoly F. Dobrynin
Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
1125 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ambassador Dobrynin:

In behalf of the American Jewish Committee, permit us to extend to you our congratulations and best wishes on your new position in the Soviet Government.

As you have undoubtedly heard from Messrs. Isakov and Rogov, a delegation from the American Jewish Committee established contact with Dr. Rogov in January and has met with him individually on two occasions in Washington. Most recently on March 7th, we met with both gentlemen. It is important that we state at the outset that we initiated this contact in the belief that the evolving nature of Soviet-American relations rendered this a particularly auspicious time for such communication. We also believe that only through such communication, in a spirit of purposefulness and candor, can issues of mutual concern be aired and addressed in a constructive manner.

We feel that an atmosphere of mutual respect and frank discussion has prevailed in these three meetings. Accordingly, we look forward to continuing this exchange of views with representatives of your Government. To this end, we have proposed to Messrs. Isakov and Rogov that a delegation of the top officers of the American Jewish Committee visit the Soviet Union to engage in dialogue with appropriate Soviet officials and other personalities on the following issues: a) arms control and security, b) Soviet-American bilateral relations, c) Jews in the Soviet Union, d) the Arab-Israeli conflict, and e) the United Nations as an instrument for peace and cooperation.

The American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906 and is this nation's oldest human relations agency. Our membership is located in all fifty states and represents a cross-section of leading American Jews who share a deep commitment to the larger concerns of American and international life and the particular matters affecting Jews in this country and overseas. Our members participate actively in both major political parties, as well as in the economic, cultural and social spheres. It is in this spirit, for example, that Jacob Blaustein and Joseph Proskauer,

two former presidents, took active part in the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945. Further, an AJC leadership delegation headed by the late Senator Herbert Lehman was the first American Jewish group to meet with First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan during his U.S. visit in January 1959. In that tradition, we today meet with leading officials from both Eastern and Western countries, as well as with Latin American, Asian and African representatives, on a wide range of current issues. Thus, it is this broad-based view of the role of the Jewish community in society that distinguishes our agency and explains the agenda items we have herewith enumerated.

We recognize that the complex area of arms control and security constitutes the overriding issues of our time and requires every citizen's attention and understanding. It is important for us to seek a better understanding of the viewpoints of both major nuclear powers in the vital search for an end to the spiraling weapons race. In addition, we are deeply concerned with the direction of Soviet-American bilateral relations in non-strategic areas, including economic, cultural and other ties, and strategies for reducing tension and increasing understanding of the respective interests of each of our societies. In this regard, we are, of course, particularly interested in the position of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union and anxious to engage in three areas of discussion: i) family reunification, ii) religious issues, and iii) cultural affairs.

The fragility of the Middle East situation and the elusive search for peace in the decades-long conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbors is a matter of worldwide concern. We have a deep and abiding concern for events in the region and are eager to discuss perspectives on strategies to foster greater peace and harmony between the nations and peoples of this vital area. And, finally, as noted earlier, we have been involved in the United Nations since its very founding and, while we make no secret of our disappointment with some of the directions the world body has taken, we retain an intrinsic faith in the potential utility of such an instrumentality for reducing world tension.

We recognize that as a non-governmental agency we represent but one among many organizations which seek to affect governmental action and public opinion in our country. Still, we sincerely believe that the pursuit of discussions between the American Jewish Committee and officials of the Soviet Government and other Soviet institutions, if conducted in the constructive and discreet manner which characterized our three above-cited meetings, can contribute, in a modest way, to a clarification of our particular positions on several key issues and ideally lead to an atmosphere of greater dialogue and less confrontation.

To be specific, we propose that a small group of American Jewish Committee members travel to Moscow at the earliest mutually convenient time to engage in discussions with representatives of the International Department of the Central Committee, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs,

Religious Affairs and Culture, the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, and other appropriate official and non-governmental groups designated by your experts. The purpose of the mission would be to establish preliminary contact and lay the groundwork for a future delegation of our leading officers to travel to Moscow to engage in fuller discussions.

We look forward to your consideration of the views set forth in this letter.

With best wishes.

Respectfully yours,

Leo Nevas, Chairman
International Relations Commission

Howard I. Friedman
President

LN/HIF/ar

East-West Relations & Soviet Jewry

Jane Abrams

Richard Berkman

Margrit Bernstein

Joan Bram

Stanton Brody

Sheldon Cohen

Sue Gardner

Leonard & Renee Goldstein

Dorothy Gordon

Ira Katz

Rik & Nancy Kohn

Rabbi Robert L. Kravitz

Eleanor Lazarus

Harriet Lazarus

Richard Maass

Mark & Liz Mirkin

Richard Rice

Judy Richman

Martha S. Ringel

Marjorie Rosenfeld

Ada Schawartz

Ellen Scholle

Edith Schur

Herb Schwartz

Cookie Shapiro

East-West Relations & Soviet Jewry (Cont'd)

Mary Shapiro

Mark & Liz Slavin

Robert & Vivian Weiss

Maynard Wishner

9117-(LCSD-2) ar
5/12/86

SOVIET JEWRY AND THE TRADE COMPONENT

With the fate of more than 2 million Soviet Jews in the balance, many aspects of a growing US-USSR relationship hold lifeline potential for Jewish emigration activists. Possible trade links between the two countries, among other ties, may offer special hope to those struggling to be repatriated to Israel, and to rejoin their families. In our view any future efforts to enlarge trading activity between the US and the Soviet Union must reflect an understanding of the reciprocal obligations involved, including the protection of human rights.

The basic objective of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, officially known as the Freedom of Emigration Amendment to the Trade Reform Act (1974), as a tangible legislative expression of support for human rights, has widespread appeal. It still has value, since the potential leverage of US trade benefits remains -- as long as the USSR desires US credits to purchase American technology, or seeks to expand exports to this country.

We strongly support the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which recognizes human rights violations and imposes restraints on East-West trade, until the states affected ("non-market economies") cease their grievous violations of human rights standards established in principles to which they had publicly subscribed.

As long as the Soviet Union persecutes Jewish life and culture and clamps down on emigration, we oppose either a repeal of the trade legislation in place or executive waivers as provided in the statute. Under the appropriate circumstances, however, we could favor a modification of US trade restrictions in non-strategic items. This could be step by step with Soviet action, to restore a process which existed in 1979, when more than 51,000 Jews were permitted to leave. At the same time we acknowledge that there would be a need to respond quickly to significant increases in emigration, which might be permitted by Soviet authorities.

We will not attempt to make our concern a condition of arms control or other efforts to insure peace or protect American vital interests. In that sense, there cannot and should not be a formal linkage or precondition of negotiations at the peace and security level linked or tied to human rights. Still, our presidents must be mindful of American opinion as they negotiate, particularly for arms control. American support of arms control, even with on-site inspections, will depend on faith in Soviet pledges.

If the present harassment of applicants for emigration is ended, the yearly levels climb to a very significant number, and positive steps are taken to resolve the refusenik and Prisoner of Conscience issues, we would support the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment which provide for flexibility, on an annual basis, linking trade to emigration.

A significant increase in emigration would help establish the basis on which the President could make the required report, enabling him to waive the restrictions of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. At the end of the prescribed time there would be an assessment by the Congress and the Administration to determine continued compliance and eligibility for a further extension, as provided by law.

In light of continuing arrests and trials of emigration activists, and manifestations of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, the danger of further oppressive acts remains an acute concern. Any flexibility on trade matters will not diminish our resolve to resist such actions.

May 1986

JG/D3/005

USRD JUN 1986/Edit Well I [ab] 48 pages MF AG
page 65 Apr-10-86 FINAL PAGES STORY 44 Dsply

Reader's Digest

65TH YEAR JUNE 1986

An article a day of enduring significance, in condensed permanent booklet form

BURIED ALIVE:
The Plight of Soviet Jews

To be a Jew in Russia today is to face a living death: prospects for a normal life—an education, a job, a future—have never been bleaker; yet even to ask to emigrate is to risk persecution or prison. Can't we in the West help? Do we have the will?

BY LAWRENCE ELLIOTT

ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY'S walk across Berlin's Glienicke Bridge to freedom on a stinging cold morning last February exhilarated the non-communist world. Shcharansky had been the animating spirit of the beleaguered human-rights movement in the Soviet Union. Nervy, iron-hearted, he spoke for the thousands of Jews refused permission to emigrate, then braved the Kremlin's wrath and the KGB's inexorable retribution: a crudely fabricated charge of spying, a sentence of 13 years in prisons and a labor camp.

Now, having served nine years—including 403 days in a frigid punishment cell where he was fed only every second day—here he came walking into West Berlin, unbroken, uncompromising, mocking his tormenters to the end. At the East Berlin airport they had ordered

Anatoly Shcharansky's walk across the Glienicke Bridge to freedom...

him to march straight ahead to a car that would take him to the crossing point. Said Shcharansky, "I agree to nothing proposed by the KGB"—and strode off to freedom, zigzagging the whole way.

Millions rejoiced; some even hailed his release as proof that freedom was an irrepressible idea. If so, it was an idea whose time had not yet come for the rest of the Soviet Jews—and Shcharansky was the first to say so. He vowed not to forget "those whom I left in the camps and prisons, who are still in exile, or struggling for their right to emigrate." Their true numbers are unknown, these people who live in limbo, and for them the only changes have been for the worse.

For Jews in the U.S.S.R. today, life on the always precarious razor's edge has turned critical. Jew-hating is in full fashion, with anti-Semitism rampant in the press, and on radio and television. A Jew's prospects for an education and a decent job are bleaker than at any time since the Revolution. Every expression of Jewish faith and tradition is under attack.

Yet never has it been harder for Jews to leave. Emigration, which exceeded 51,000 in 1979, was below 1200 last year.

Still they keep trying. There is reason to believe that nearly half the Jewish population of two million would ask for visas if they thought they could get them. At least 30,000 have been turned down—some again and again. "Refuseniks" are official pariahs, defamed, routinely dismissed from their jobs, then prosecuted for "parasitism." All they can do is wait, watching helplessly as their creative years slip away in the day-in, day-out struggle to survive.

YOUR NAME IS Nadezhda Fradkova, and in 1978 you live and work as a linguist in Leningrad. You have been made to feel that being a Jew conflicts with being a loyal Soviet citizen. You apply for a visa to immigrate to Israel.

They tell you your father will not give his permission. You cannot believe your ears. Your father divorced your mother before you were born. You are 31 years old, and you have never even met him. You protest. And, as often as possible, you reapply for a visa. To no avail.

You lose your job and support yourself as a cleaning woman and by giving private language lessons. Years pass. In March 1983 you start a hunger strike. The KGB drags you off to a

ILLUSTRATIONS: BOHDAN D. OSYCZKA

hospital where you are drugged and force-fed.

In May the KGB releases you, but soon you are on another hunger strike, and they come for you again. This time, with a friend's help, you smuggle an appeal to the outside world. Your captors let you go—for the moment.

On May 2, 1984, you are arrested and taken to a psychiatric hospital where you are registered as mentally disturbed. In July, you are kept in total isolation. In September, you are judged fit to stand trial.

Never in the history of Soviet jurisprudence has the defendant in a political trial been acquitted. You are sentenced to two years' imprisonment. In September 1985, in a labor camp in the Arctic north, you are put in a punishment cell for starting another hunger strike. When you finally complete your sentence, you will apply again for an exit visa. They cannot take away your hope.

ANTI-SEMITISM was banned by law after the Revolution. But under Stalin, Bolsheviks began terrorizing those who clung to a Jewish religious or community life. Unlike every one of the other 100-odd nationalities in the Soviet Union, Jews were expressly denied their own schools, as well as Hebrew newspapers and books. Synagogues were shut down and rabbis persecuted. Even the teaching of Hebrew was made a crime.

The new Israeli nation handed Stalin—and every one of his successors—a fresh pretext for anti-Semitism. When the Kremlin reviled Israel and its "Zionist warmongers," the threat to Jews in the U.S.S.R. was painfully clear.

But something remarkable happened: instead of being cowed by this abuse of Israel, many Jews found that their feelings of Jewishness intensified, and this served to rekindle Jewish thought and tradition. Israel gave them hope. Putting their fears behind them, Jews began demanding the right to emigrate. Though the Kremlin responded with intimidation by the secret police, raids and arrests, the impulse to go swelled. In 1970, after only 1000 exit visas were granted, the bravest of the thousands who had been refused defied authorities; they staged sit-ins, wrote open letters to the United Nations, even renounced their citizenship. "Each

those whom I left in the camps and prisons . . . "

person has his quota of fear," said one. "We have used up ours."

YOU ARE Vladimir Slepak. Your father is an old Bolshevik whose faith in the Revolution remained unshaken even during Stalin's purges and anti-Semitic spasms, even though he nearly lost his life. When you refuse to join the Communist Party, your father is appalled. Later, when you and your wife, Mariya, put in for visas to Israel, you hear that he goes to the KGB and demands that you be denied permission to leave.

You lose your job as head of a television-research laboratory. Your visa application is turned down repeatedly. You and Mariya make common cause with other refuseniks in Moscow. You teach yourself Hebrew and attend classes on Jewish culture and history. You are the rock of the Jewish community. Anatoly Shcharansky is in your apartment when the KGB comes to arrest him.

The KGB watches you. Your apartment is ransacked; you are endlessly questioned, fired from one job after another, twice put in "preventive detention." A KGB officer says you cannot leave the Soviet Union—you know state secrets.

"What secrets?" you ask. "In our lab we were fourteen years behind the West."

He smiles. "That's the secret."

The years pass. Your elder son miraculously gets an exit visa. One day in 1978, you and Mariya hang a banner from your window, "Let us out to our son in Israel." For this you are arrested and sentenced to five years of internal exile. Mariya is given a suspended sentence.

They send you to a place near the Mongolian border where the winter wind cuts like a knife. Here Mariya joins you and you serve out your sentence in a one-room flat without water. When you return to Moscow, you apply again for a visa. You have no illusions. But if the visa comes you could be packed in an hour. You have already waited 16 years.

IN THE MID-1960s, some 4500 Jewish families who had applied to emigrate years before were suddenly given exit visas. This was unprecedented. But even more remarkable was the rising tide of Jewish emigration that followed—nearly 230,000 let go over the next ten years.

What happened? Compassion

had nothing to do with it. On the contrary, Moscow, aware that the Jewish emigration movement had attracted the sympathy of the civilized world, coldly decided to make it pay. In the judgment of William Korey, director of international policy research for B'nai B'rith, the Jews became hostages: " 'You want Jews allowed out?' the Soviets were saying. 'Well, we want your wheat and technology; we want credits and tariff preference.' The more hope they had for increased trade, the more exit visas became available."

The question is why, in 1980, they began closing the tap, until today it is a heartbreaking trickle. Had inherent Russian anti-Semitism reasserted itself? Were they losing too many productive professionals? Was emigration ending along with détente?

There is truth in all of this, but the truest explanation lies in a time bomb Moscow cannot defuse: the shrinking percentage of Russians in the Soviet empire (an inflated 52 percent in the most recent census), and the growing size and restiveness of other national groups. If Jews were allowed to leave, how long before disaffected Ukrainians or Lithuanians began asking to be reunited with their families in Sweden, Canada and the United States? What if Estonians, Uzbeks or Georgians began demanding more cultural rights, more autonomy? The men in the Kremlin simply quit while they were ahead.

Will the gates reopen? Listen to what Mikhail Gorbachev said in a French-television interview last October: "There is no country where Jews have as many rights as in the U.S.S.R. If there is a problem of reunions among family members, we accept that. When do we prevent the resolution of such problems? When the applicant knows state secrets. Then we give him the possibility of waiting." In other words, nothing is wrong; therefore, nothing will change.

ONE DAY in 1978 you apply for an emigration visa. You, too, are turned down. You lose your Moscow residence permit. To avoid being expelled, you must hide from the KGB and give up your job as an English teacher. You are Yuli Edelshtein, age 20, and in the days ahead you face the worst the Soviet state has to offer.

You feel you are marking time; the visa will come. Waiting, you teach Hebrew to young people, as do your friends Aleksander Kholmiansky and Dan Shapiro.

The teaching of Hebrew is no longer illegal in the U.S.S.R., but all the unofficial teachers in Moscow, perhaps 50, have been visited by the police and warned to quit. Few do. In the summer of 1984, several Hebrew teachers are beaten and jailed. Aleksander Kholmiansky is arrested, accused of stepping on flowers in a public park. He spends ten days in jail. Released, he is immediately arrested again for "hooliganism." The rest of you walk a narrow line. "Don't even cross the street against a

red light," you warn your students.

It doesn't help. After your house is searched by the KGB, you are arrested on September 4 on false drug charges. Your students are interrogated; Dan Shapiro's home is searched. He is arrested for refusing to identify himself and for attacking a policeman.

At your trial in December a parade of paid witnesses stumble through false accusations until even the judge is embarrassed. Nonetheless, you are sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Six weeks later, Aleksander Kholmiansky gets a year and a half.

In the summer of 1985 your wife, Tanya, is allowed to visit. She brings news of Dan Shapiro. In June he appeared on Soviet television in a carefully rehearsed presentation, and condemned the Jewish activist movement as slanderous and anti-Soviet. In return, he was given a suspended sentence. You tell Tanya that Dan must not be blamed; the KGB has so many ways to break a man.

Tanya complains to the camp commander that you have been mistreated. He replies that they mean to beat the religion out of you one way or another. In March you suffer a bad "accident," with broken bones and subsequent infection.

CAN WE in the West help Yuli Edelshtein? Can we help Nadezhda Fradkova, Vladimir Slepak and all the other Soviet Jews imprisoned in the Gulag, or buried alive in a land they want to leave? Do we have the right?

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights assures anyone the right to leave any country; the U.S.S.R. signed it in 1973. The Helsinki accord obligates the signatory powers to provide exit visas for those seeking reunion with their families; the Soviets ratified it in 1975. So we have the right.

Do we have the means? History tells us the Soviets respond neither to threats nor out of moral or humanitarian considerations; they respond when it is in their own interest to do so. Our job is to persuade them that there can be no agreements or concessions in areas of their interest—no arms-control treaty, no expanded trade under most-favored-nation status, no computer technology—until there is a change in the Soviet policy on human rights and emigration. So we have the means.

Which brings us to the final question: Do we have the will?

Let Your Voice Be Heard

PUBLIC OPINION can be a vital force—even against the U.S.S.R. To make your feelings known about the persecution of Soviet Jews, write to: Soviet Ambassador to the United States
The Soviet Embassy
1125 16th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Roy

Silverworker - USSR - SJ "good business"
KGB raise price & try to sell us
- 5 yrs - no meeting with family/see mother - sell every meeting
[Jewish people united around Israel]
- don't understand USSR
U.S. - state exists for individual/USSR - ind. part of big system
nothing more/law used
to maintain system/self-respect only from system -
mid independence seen as dangerous
- anti-S. - Czarist/state/but Jews emigrate under Czars
- never open until losses so great, can't afford
- not agree to cancel Jackson-Vanik until
400,000 J leave USSR
- KGB - press, until see you won't give up
- until they think they can deceive - not stop efforts
- USSR - have no illusions - never sacrifice

- Chernobyl - does not undermine system
disappoints, but no danger to govt.
- J. universal justice for other nations.
- my desire to leave, not change system.
- mother, brother. USSR not give permission - don't connect
these 2 questions - say it & be definite
- movement stop spreading, harm much bigger
- Emigres to Israel - or USA - I want Jews go to Israel, even
Jews of America/naive - desire to leave USSR, is desire
- Religious freedom - suffer for feeling Hebrew, real here.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Date: 5/7

To: Marc Tanenbaum

From: Harold Applebaum

___/___For your information

____For approval

____Please handle

____Please talk to me about this

____Read and return

____Returned as requested

____Your comments, please

____Per your request

REMARKS:

CRISIS IN SOVIET JEWRY: A CALL TO INVOLVEMENT

By David A. Harris
Deputy Director
International Relations Department

The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, NY 10022

CRISIS IN SOVIET JEWRY: A CALL TO INVOLVEMENT

by

David A. Harris, Deputy Director
Department of International Relations
American Jewish Committee

Introduction

Emigration from the Soviet Union has all but ceased. Arrests, trials and imprisonment of Jewish religious and Hebrew-language activists have increased markedly in the last year. Media attacks on Jews, Judaism and Zionism grow. And the net effect is that we who live in the West are today witnesses to a deliberate Soviet policy to bring about the gradual disappearance of 15% of world Jewry, or some two million Jews. Yet our response has not been commensurate to the catastrophic dimension of the problem. How could this be in a post-Holocaust period in which we explore, analyze and study the lessons of that tragedy on an almost daily basis, agonize over our own inability to influence the course of events in those dark years, and pledge to "never again" let history repeat itself?

One need not attempt to draw parallels between Soviet Jewry today and European Jewry in the 1930's to underscore the depth of the crisis in the U.S.S.R. The situations are, indeed, different, but, in the end, the results may be the same...the extinguishment of a major part of world Jewry, in the first case through physical genocide, in the second case through religious and cultural genocide and selective terror.

It is the primary purpose of this paper to examine some of the reasons for the current lack of widespread response in the American Jewish community and to offer a very personal view of the significance of the Soviet Jewry issue in the hope of stimulating greater involvement in the issue, but not to attempt in this format a detailed proposal for program direction in the public advocacy movement.

The Decline In Interest

When Soviet Jewry emerged on the world scene as an issue in the late 1960's and early 1970's, it captured the imagination and galvanized into action a substantial segment of the American Jewish community. A genuine miracle had occurred and we were privileged witnesses to it. Fifty years after the establishment of Soviet power, cut off from the rest of world Jewry, deprived of the means to learn, transmit and develop a religion and culture, subjected to inordinate pressure to assimilate and to deny one's identity, victimized over decades, the voices of Soviet Jews could be heard. Some whispered, others shouted, but the message was clear: "We are Jews; we are alive if not well; we

want to live as Jews and we want to do so in our historic homeland, Israel. Help us for we cannot do it alone." And an extraordinary chapter in history unfolded. A small group of modern-day Maccabees, employing nothing more than the age-old strength of their beliefs and the knowledge that theirs is a just cause, yet adhering to the letter of Soviet law, challenged the most powerful totalitarian state on earth. And we in the West demonstrated, petitioned, fasted, adopted Soviet Jewish families, sent holiday messages, contacted our public officials, and involved academic, religious, labor, scientific and civil rights colleagues, and the results were there for all to see. Large-scale emigration began in 1971 and thousands of Soviet Jews seized the opportunity. And we, despite the tragedy of the prisoner and refusenik cases and the unrelenting Soviet anti-Semitism, felt that we had become successful participants in history; that, to some extent at least, it was within our power to help shape the direction of history.

Today, however, our mood seems different. Only 29 people left in October 1984, less than 900 left during that year, compared to 51,000 just five years ago, yet where is the deafening outcry, where is the flood of appeals to our public officials, where are the massive public demonstrations, where are the letters and phone calls and holiday messages to an increasingly isolated and fearful Soviet Jewish community? The National Conference on Soviet Jewry, which is the coordinating agency of the organized Jewish community, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, local Soviet Jewry committees and councils, and thousands of concerned individuals labor tirelessly in the advocacy campaign, but in many parts of our community the bad news is met with apathy and indifference. Why? What has happened over the years to explain the decline in our enthusiasm and involvement? I would suggest a number of possible explanations:

1) Soviet Jewry has now been a major agenda item for fifteen years and promises to continue to be so for years to come. Remarkably, an extraordinary group of American Jewish communal activists have persisted in the struggle, some since the founding of the American Conference on Soviet Jewry in 1964 and even before. Yet, to many, the issue is seen as one-dimensional, requiring an almost obsessive single-mindedness of purpose. How else does one grapple with the inherent frustration of the issue? And even among the best-intentioned, "compassion fatigue" may begin to set in.

2) The issue today is regarded by some as beyond the ability of the Jewish community to influence. Whereas in the early 1970's the conventional wisdom was that the Soviet Union was mindful of its public image and thus sensitive to world public opinion, today the prevailing view is that the Soviet Union is indifferent to the pleas of the West on human rights questions, at least to the public at large if not to governments. What purpose is thus served in writing to Soviet officials and demonstrating in front of Soviet embassies and consulates? Further, there are many who view the issue as inextricably linked to the ebb and flow of Soviet-American relations, a pawn in a cynical and ruthless Soviet geopolitical strategy, beyond, therefore, the reach of the individual in our community. The only alternative, in this view, is to seek to influence American bilateral political behavior towards the

Soviet Union, in the belief that a return to detente, or at least a movement in the direction of improved relations, is in the interests of Soviet Jewry. But to do so is to risk positioning the American Jewish community in a dangerous domestic political situation, for, if we are seen to put the interests of Soviet Jewry ahead of our country's, we pursue a potentially dangerous strategy. Thus, the irreducible conclusion for many is to leave the issue to our Government in the belief that only at that level can any success be achieved today.

3) Our community has become anesthetized to descriptions of the Soviet Jewry condition as "critical," "the worst in years," "facing impending disaster," etc. With each arrest, each decline in emigration, each appearance of an anti-Semitic book or article, the call for immediate action has gone out, to the point, perhaps, where people are no longer able to distinguish a minor crisis from a major crisis, a drop in emigration from a precipitous decline, the appearance of an anti-Semitic article from a new wave of anti-Semitism.

4) Whereas the issue seized the hearts and minds of national agencies, community leadership and the rabbinate in the early days of the struggle, the response recently has been more sporadic. Of course, there are countless individual exceptions, but, to some degree at least, these principal players in our community have been dealing with Soviet Jewry in fits and starts, not in a sustained manner as a high priority item over the years. They have not, therefore, had the impact on their constituencies they might have. And more of our leadership must travel to the Soviet Union - to inspire and to be inspired - and return a second and third time.

5) The drop-out issue has seriously and negatively affected attitudes towards Soviet Jews among many American Jews who regard the increasing rate of non-Israel-bound emigration, reaching as high as 80% in recent years, as having undermined a very premise of this movement, namely, repatriation to the historic Jewish homeland.

6) Many American Jews are disappointed with the Soviet Jews they have met in this country. Expecting genuine refugees thirsty for a Jewish life (even in an American Diaspora), politically motivated arrivals, likenesses of our forefathers who came from Russia at the turn of the century, American Jews were unprepared and surprised at the profile and behavior of arriving Soviet Jews. Many newcomers did not act like refugees fleeing a clear and present danger, did not immediately seek to establish Jewish roots here, were not necessarily politically well-versed, and did not, in most cases, fit the image of the courageous and beleaguered Jewish activists who, it seems, are the only ones portrayed at our Soviet Jewry rallies. The gap created by false expectations on both sides (Soviet Jews, too, have their mistaken views of the United States and the Jewish community) has had an adverse impact on attempts to motivate American Jewry in the struggle in behalf of Soviet Jewry. And the problems associated with absorption, resettlement and integration of those arriving have created further negative feeling in some circles.

7) The almost total absence of Soviet Jewish participation in the advocacy movement in the United States has also created an impression among some that "if Soviet Jews don't care about those left behind, why should we?" Of course, this issue needs to be understood within the context that many Soviet Jews still fear participating in public demonstrations and worry about the possible repercussions to family in the U.S.S.R. of such involvement. Also, in many American communities, no active effort has been made to invite Soviet Jewish participation, either because of the divisiveness of the "drop-out" question or to avoid the appearance of creating an emigre organization which would not be as effective in the public arena (or towards the Soviet Union) as an American Jewish movement.

8) Our movement relied for too long on a number of loyal and active non-Jewish friends in the academic, scientific, civil rights, labor and other sectors. The many years of this struggle have taken their toll on some of these friends, and their numbers have not been easily replaced or augmented. Our relations with some of the non-governmental groups have also become politically more complicated in recent years; consequently, it has proved more difficult to enlist them to our cause.

The Importance of Soviet Jewry

Let me speak on a personal level. I have worked over the last ten years on virtually every phase of Soviet Jewry - in Rome, Vienna, Washington and New York, with several visits to the Soviet Union and Israel. I have worked with thousands of Soviet Jews from every part of the U.S.S.R. and am familiar with the resettlement experience here. I believe in the Soviet Jewish movement as fervently as I did when I first became involved, indeed more so, and I say so mindful of the difficulties we have experienced. I say so, first, because the positive experiences have been so many and so rich and deep that they dominate my memory, and my trips to the Soviet Union and meetings with refuseniks were among the most inspirational and memorable experiences of my life. I believe we are not just witnesses to but participants in history, in one of the most extraordinary and significant chapters in modern times.

Emil Fackenheim, a Judaic scholar from Toronto, drafted a 614th commandment: "After Auschwitz, thou shalt not give Hitler posthumous victory." It is, unquestionably, our sacred duty to remember the Holocaust and to memorialize its victims, and to learn the painful lessons of that unspeakable tragedy and to transmit them to our children, but our responsibilities go much further. Among them, we must rescue the living and insure their safety wherever Jews are threatened. And today they are threatened as never before in the Soviet Union.

Survivors of the Holocaust with whom I have spoken recall two enduring fears during their years in the camps: their first fear was that the world was unaware of what was happening to them, but they also had a second and far greater fear -- that the world <u>was</u> aware of what was happening to them but was not sufficiently moved to react. Soviet Jews know that we care, indeed that is a lifeline that sustains and assures them, but, they ask, are we doing all we can?

I also know whence come I. I was blessed with an American birth certificate and an insulated and protected life. But I am also aware that I am here because of a quirk of fate, an accident of history. Had not my grandparents, in 1929, taken their two small children and left the Soviet Union, an act of extraordinary courage for all who made such a step, I might well be living in the U.S.S.R. and be confronted with the difficult problems faced by two million Soviet Jews: to assert or hide my Jewish identity, to find ways to protect my family from the scourge of anti-Semitism, to stay or to leave, to risk refusenik status, to remain passive or become an activist with all the attendant risks. Truly, "There but for the grace of God go you and I."

And I recognize the significance of the steps taken by Scharansky, Begun, Nudel, Lerner, Slepak, Kosharovsky, Prestin, Abramovich, Essas, Taratuta, Mesh, Edelstein, Levin, Maryasin and the countless other Jewish heroes who seek to establish new lives in Israel. These people, who have made their choices and fought tenaciously as people and as symbols in behalf of all of us for their right to live as Jews, deserve our steadfast support. Are all Soviet Jews like the activists? No, of course not, nor are all soldiers war heroes, but all Soviet Jews who seek to remain Jews in the U.S.S.R. have taken a courageous step in a hostile atmosphere and cannot survive alone.

When I visited the homes of refuseniks in Moscow and Leningrad, I listened to the parents but looked at the children. In the eyes of my own children I see choices -- choices as free human beings, choices as Jews. In the eyes of Soviet Jewish children, however, I see no choices -- neither as free human beings nor as Jews. Even if the parents managed a good education and found work in their professions, perhaps not at the level they merit but still in a professionally challenging atmosphere, what future is there for Soviet Jewish children in a country where anti-Semitic taunts begin in kindergarten and continue for a lifetime; where educational opportunities at university level are increasingly limited for Jews; where professional advancement for young Jews entering the job market is ever more restricted; where opportunities to study one's heritage, culture and religion are virtually non-existent; and where Zionists are portrayed as collaborators with the Nazis?

What is our appropriate response? Are the Soviets testing our staying power, hoping that if we encounter no success in our advocacy efforts that the press of other issues will draw us away from attention to Soviet Jewry? Do the Soviets, perhaps, believe that as chess is their national pastime, requiring extraordinary concentration, strategic thinking and patience, they will prevail in this confrontation because we in the West are regarded as lacking in these qualities? If so, we must continue to show that they have seriously misread our resolve.

Our demonstrations, petitions, and fasts; letters to Soviet officials; contacts with the Administration and Congress; correspondence and phone calls with refusenik families; bar and bat mitzvah twinnings; runs for Soviet Jewry; travel and repeat travel to the U.S.S.R.; letters to the editor and op ed pieces; outreach to religious, civil rights, ethnic, academic, scientific and labor leaders and to the press; education of our youth; and the myriad other efforts undertaken by local and national agencies, synagogues, schools and universities must be continued, broadened and intensified, just as we must press

the search for new strategies and tactics. And what better way to consider new approaches in our public campaign, if indeed there are any, than to draw enthusiastic newcomers to interact with experienced activities in reviewing existing programming and proposing ideas and suggestions. The goals of these efforts should be, as they have always been: 1) increased contact with otherwise isolated Soviet Jews, 2) vigorous protest to Soviet officials, 3) requests for stepped-up action from our political leaders in the bilateral and multilateral spheres, as well as frequent acknowledgement to them of their activity and support, and 4) heightened public awareness in the U.S. of the rapidly deteriorating situation of the Soviet Jewish community.

Does our involvement make any difference? I believe it does. It cannot be measured in easily quantifiable ways and it is often not readily apparent, but the fact remains that the Soviet Union is not totally insensitive to world public opinion, particularly if it is thunderous, continuous and reflecting the views of both Jews and non-Jews in this country and abroad. And if it strengthens the resolve of Soviet Jews to remain Jews, keeps Scharansky alive, reduces the term of a prison sentence, keeps others out of prison or results in an exit visa, then it has had a significant impact.

As difficult as the situation is today, it could only have been more difficult in 1964 when but a few visionaries believed, against all the odds, that Soviet Jewry would one day reawaken and raise its voice. The subsequent emigration of 265,000 Jews was demonstrable proof of the importance of the efforts undertaken by the world Jewish community. Without our voices, who would there have been in the West to speak for two million Soviet Jews? Who would have written and lobbied the Administration and Congress? Who would have approached other Western governments? Who would have enlisted the support of the Black, Christian, scientific, labor and other key communities? Who would have contacted Soviet Jews, breaking the barrier of isolation, and offering hope and support? Indeed, without our support in the West, one can only speculate whether there would have been <u>any</u> emigration at all and what further tragedies might have befallen Soviet Jews.

We must attempt to forge greater unity in our advocacy effort and put aside our differences over such issues as the "drop-out" question, especially at a time when virtually no one is even arriving in Vienna. If widely diverging political parties in Israel can form a National Unity Government, can we do any less? And if Soviet Jews are sometimes demanding and difficult to resettle, it is worth reviewing the archives of the resettlement experience of East European Jews at the turn of the century. It was not an easy process then either. And if many Soviet Jews are cut off from Judaism, let us understand whence come they and design outreach programs specifically targeted to address their psychology, utilizing the successful programming that has been developed here and abroad; and let us remember that twenty years from today Jews in the U.S.S.R. will be still more cut off from their roots. So ours is a race against the clock. Let us remember that we have no moral right to apply any kind of "Jewish standard" to other Jews as a determinant for whether or not we become advocates for them. And let us remember that more than 160,000 Soviet Jews have resettled in Israel and have had a beneficial impact on every aspect of Israeli life.

Conclusion

At this time of genuine crisis affecting Jews in the Soviet Union, the American Jewish community, together with other Diaspora Jewish communities and Israel, with non-Jewish partners, with the United States and friendly foreign governments, must recognize the dimension of the Soviet Jewish problem, its significance for us all...and its potentially calamitous results. We must respond accordingly, work collaboratively, and believe in ourselves and our ability to influence the course of events. To do otherwise would represent an abdication of our responsibility towards our brothers and sisters.

March 1985

L015
/sm/gn/smm-3/6/85

85-550-24

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

ajc THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Feb. 20...The outlook for Jews in Uruguay continues to improve as news comes from Montevideo that the Confraternity of Jewish-Christian Relations has been reestablished after a 12-year suspension of activities, according to Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of International Relations of the American Jewish Committee.

Earlier this month, Jacobo Kovadloff, director of AJC's Office on South American Affairs, reported that Vice President-elect Dr. Enrique Tarigo, president of the Uruguayan Committee on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, had issued a strongly worded statement critical of the Soviet Union's policies against Jews in the USSR, which the AJC said was a "heartening signal of the Uruguayan Government's future attitude" toward Jews both in the USSR and Uruguay. Approximately 30,000 Jews live in Uruguay today.

The Confraternidad Judeo Cristiana del Uruguay held a press conference in late December announcing its reconstitution as "marking a new phase in the life of our country."

Spokesmen at that news conference declared that the goals of the group remained the same as when it was first established in 1958: "To consolidate and strengthen bilateral relations between Christians and Jews and to encourage study and activities related to problems and matters of mutual concern." It added that "the body will try to bring about a closer relationship between the respective religions in an interfaith spirit of mutual respect. Judaism and Christianity must join forces to further the moral and spiritual values, which, through their profound calling in the service of humanity, both have maintained throughout the centuries."

The Uruguayan Jewish Federation has said that a major impetus for reestablishing the Confraternity came about as a result of a visit to Montevideo last August by Rabbi Tanenbaum and Mr. Kovadloff. The two addressed key leaders of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities.

Rabbi Tanenbaum, who served 25 years as the agency's director of Interreligious Affairs, told the religious leaders that "humanity's massive problems of refugees, world hunger and the arms race made improved cooperation and communication between Christians and Jews an urgent necessity, not a luxury."

In response, a steering committee was set up for developing an ongoing program for improving relations between Christians and Jews in Uruguay. During the fall, Mr. Kovadloff made available studies, textbook-analyses, and interreligious documents to the Confraternity steering committee, which are now being used as a basis for future programs.

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

A, EJP, HP, Z
85-960-40
gn-J018-Uruguay

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

ajc THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Feb. 8...On a brief visit to the United States last week, during which he met with President Reagan and other U.S. government officials, Tancredo Neves, recently elected President of Brazil, conveyed his "friendly greetings to the American Jewish community."

He made his remark to Jacobo Kovadloff, director of South American Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, in response to a congratulatory message from the Committee's top leadership cabled to him after his election.

Mr. Kovadloff noted that "President Neves had made a very positive impression on all who met him during his stay in the United States."

"His election received a warm welcome," Mr. Kovadloff said, "not only in the Western world in general, but also among the dynamic Jewish community of Brazil, which numbers about 150,000 Jews, the Jewish communities throughout Latin America, and in the State of Israel."

When Tancredo Neves served as Prime Minister under President Getulio Vargas, Mr. Kovadloff recalled "he was instrumental in allowing a sizable number of Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution in Europe to come to Brazil."

Last December, Tancredo Neves voiced strong disapproval of Brazil's vote in support of the 1975 UN resolution equating Zionism with Racism, Mr. Kovadloff stated. Tancredo Neves recently announced that there would be no such anti-Zionist vote approved by Brazil in the future.

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of people here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

EJP, HP

85-960-24

PERMANENT MISSION OF BRAZIL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

Nº 06.

February 20 1985

Mr. President,

The President-Elect of Brazil, Mr. Tancredo de Almeida Neves, has requested me to transmit to you the following message:

"Mr. President,

I express my heartfelt thanks for the generous congratulations that you, on behalf of the American Jewish Committee, have extended to me on the occasion of my election to the Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil. I am deeply honoured by your references to the significance of this stage of Brazil's political life and to the role I am to fulfill in this process. Best regards.

TANCREDO DE ALMEIDA NEVES
President-Elect
of the Federative Republic of Brazil"

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew the protests of my esteem and consideration.

(George A.Maciel)
Permanent Representative of Brazil
to the United Nations

Mr. Howard Friedman,
President
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, NY 10022

more.../

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY THE STATE OF ISRAEL OPPOSING RACISM, APARTHEID AND ARMS SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA

"...Obviously, we cannot be anything but critical of a policy which, irrespective of historical and sociological reasons, tends to cause humiliation to others because of their race or color. In fact, we would be unfaithful to our Hebrew heritage if we would not be critical of such a policy...we abhor any form of racial discrimination and humiliation, and I believe that the South African government and enlightened public opinion in South Africa respect the candor with which we express our opinion..."

---- Ambassador I.D. Unna, then Israel's Ambassador to South Africa, September 3, 1978.

"Israel will comply with Security Council Resolution 418 (1977)[1] and, accordingly, Israel will not provide South Africa with arms or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment."

---- Note verbale from Israel to the UN Security Council, September 4, 1979. Israel's position of opposition to the provision of arms to South Africa has been repeatedly reaffirmed at the United Nations.

"...it is no wonder that almost 80 years ago, Theodor Herzl, the founding father of modern Zionism, compared the oppression of Blacks in Africa to that which the Jews themselves had suffered, and he vowed that when he had witnessed the redemption of his own people, Israel, he would work for freedom in Africa..."

---- Ambassador Yehuda Blum, Israel's UN Representative, before the General Assembly, November 8, 1979.

"As a multiracial people of all colors and backgrounds, we cannot be anything but critical of a policy which causes humiliation to others on account of their race or color. In fact, we would be unfaithful to our Jewish heritage if we were to leave the slightest doubt in anybody's mind that we abhor any form of racism, racial discrimination or humiliation."

---- Ambassador Yehuda Blum, before the UN General Assembly on Policies of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa, November 12, 1980.

"...The State of Israel rose as a response to injustice and sufferings. It remains committed to social and racial equality. [The Israelis are] a people coming from the four corners of the earth. Many of them are of different origins and hues. All passionately reject racism. As recently as last December an international congress against racism was held in Tel Aviv. Representatives of teacher unions from different countries joined to study how to educate the young generation to tolerance and mutual understanding between peoples and races, how to alert it to the dangers of racism. In this spirit a call to the teachers of the world has been issued."

---- Ambassador of Israel before the UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, February 16, 1981.

---

[1] The Security Council voted unanimously on November 4, 1977 to impose a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

"We have never missed an opportunity to publicly denounce apartheid and to associate ourselves with United Nations condemnations of apartheid. I express once again our total opposition to apartheid and to racism in any form."

---- Prime Minister Menachem Begin, interview with Afrique a la Une, June 1982.

"...nothing unites the people of Africa and the people of Israel more than a hatred of racism. Our people have suffered more than anyone else from racism, have fought and still fight, more than anyone else against this most horrible disease that still persists among mankind.

"Israel and its Government have consistently condemned publicly the policy of Apartheid, and I take this opportunity to express once more our abhorrence of Apartheid and of any form of racism wherever it may occur."

---- From remarks by President Chaim Herzog during the visit to Israel of Liberian President Dr. Samuel K. Doe, August 23, 1983.

"Israel is not a simple observer which merely sympathizes with the victims of racism and oppression. Our views have been shaped by bitter historical and emotional experience spanning centuries. Moreover, to no less an extent, our abhorrence of racism is rooted in the social norms which comprise an integral part of Judaism's teachings."

"Israel's position concerning apartheid and other manifestations of racial discrimination is clear: we oppose bigotry completely and unreservedly wherever and whenever it emerges. We have made this position known to the Government of South Africa on numerous occasions. By this direct approach, rather than through acrimonious rhetoric, we believe that the cause of eliminating racial discrimination is better served."

---- Ambassador Yehuda Blum, before the UN General Assembly, November 17, 1983.

"...Israel categorically condemns racism in all its forms, including Apartheid. We are a people who have suffered more from racism, murderous racism, than any other. This is why the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, wrote that after liberating the Jews from the evil of racism he would strive to liberate the oppressed blacks. And this is why the state that was founded in his vision, Israel, has repeatedly expressed its revulsion of and opposition to Apartheid, both in world forums and directly to the Government of South Africa...direct communication is the most effective means to bring about a change in South African racial policies."

---- Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's UN Representative, before the General Assembly, November 21, 1984.

(Prepared by the Israel and Middle East Affairs Division of the International Relations Department).

85-580-4
I079-Statement on Apartheid
/gn/ar-2/28/85