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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOVIET JEWRY- Speech

The state of Soviet Jewry is indeed perilous. You in this audience know these facts well and I will not repeat them here. I came to underscore to you that this administration knows these facts also and is prepared, within its powers, to act on them.

— Only last week in Helsinki Secretary Schultz raised the treatment of Soviet Jewry with Foreign Minister Gromyko. It was at the top of his agenda - not a boiler plate item appended to the supplementary papers prepared for this meeting.

I want to underscore that point. For the Russians are masters of protocol. They want to believe that groups such as yours can pressure American governments to raise the issue of Soviet jews with them formally and for the record. By now, however, they must realize that the persistence and prominence given to these matters reflect on the part of this Administration personal conviction not merely political convenience.

— Some weeks ago the State Department determined what many of you know first hand - that the problems of anti-semitism in Russia is not simply a matter of folk custom but rather reflects official state policy.

The anti-semitic writings of so-called scholars such as Lev Korneyev who describes Adolf Eichman as a "victim of Zionist terrorists" could not be sustained without official government approval. His ravings - and indeed I can only call them that - have been favorably reviewed in the Soviet official press. Those of us who know and understand the history of the Doctors Plot and the Shtansky Trials know too well the implications of last April's creation of an Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public. For Soviet Jewry - a crackdown has begun - its results are evident to us all.

— This Administration wants better relations with the Soviet Union and will earnestly seek to secure such better relations. However, it will not do so by ignoring the fate of Soviet Jewry. The President's references to Soviet Jewry in his speech last week on Soviet-U.S. relations tell us that - and more important tell the Kremlin that. It is this analysis of recent events that I wish you most earnestly to understand.

I want to further add a personal note. The Rabbis have always regarded the task of Pidyon SheVuyim - ransoming of the captives - to be of especial importance. Indeed the Rambam tells us that the duty to ransom captives supersedes the duty of charity to the poor. (Mattenat Aniyyim 8:10). For the purpose of ransoming captives you can take money set aside for building a synagogue - so important is this mitzvah  commandment.

Your work for Soviet Jewry is a direct modern analogue of the holy activities of Jewish communities throughout Europe to redeem fellow jews kept in slavery - I commend you for it.

In that regard I want to make one small historical reference - a reference which is important for us to appreciate - at a time when braver men certainly than myself can accept prison terms 12 years or more for the crime of studying Hebrew. In the Kuzari Yehuda Helevi, the greatest medieval jewish poet and theologian, notes that the fact that the jews maintained their religious observance while in captivity made them inconvenient servants for their (in this case Central Asian) captors. Thus, the captors were prepared to sell them back. He states "For the gentiles would have apportioned you among them as their slaves were it not for those dates that you keep with such strict observance" By analogy we can only hope

that the strength of people like Anatol Scharansky and Yosef Begun in maintaining their links to jewish culture and identify, will lead the Kremlin to conclude that convenience might dictate greater freedom for Soviet Jewry, that they too are inconvenient servants.

Thus they - and in an attenuated sense - you - have made of obduracy and stubbornness not a vice but a virtue.

Thank you for allowing me to be with you today.



National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Chairman
Morris B. Abram
Executive Director
Jerry Goodman

3 2

June 27, 1984

Mr. Marshall J. Breger
Special Assistant to the President
Old Executive Office Building
17th and Pennsylvania, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Marshall:

I appreciate the interest you showed concerning the Voice of America. I was pleased that since we spoke, the VOA decided to double its broadcast time for Jews in the Soviet Union from 15 to 30 minutes. As you know, these are repeated, permitting even more broadcast time. This is a very positive development.

Many thanks.

Best wishes.

(Rabbi) David Hill
Vice Chairman

DH:rk

cc: Morris B. Abram
Billy Keyserling

A coalition of forty major national organizations and over two hundred local community councils and federations

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

Chairman

Morris B. Abram

Executive Director

Jerry Goodman

October 31, 1984

Dr. Marshall Breger
Assistant to the President
Old Executive Office Building
Suite 134
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Marshall:

We were sorry that you were out of town and not able to join us for our leadership assembly last week. Secretary Shultz gave a great speech and got a very good reception from the two-hundred people who heard him.

I thought you might appreciate the enclosed which was published by our affiliate in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

William Keyserling
Director
Washington Office

Enclosure

I enjoyed your presentation cable today!
B

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file

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Chairman

Morris D. Abram

Executive Director

Jerry Goodman

January 8, 1985

Mr. Marshall Breger
Assistant to the President
Old Executive Office Building
Suite 134
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Marshall:

I am enclosing a copy of the letter we just sent to Vice President Bush requesting that he participate in our Emergency Action for Soviet Jews scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, 1985.

Any help you may be able to provide would most certainly be appreciated.

Sincerely,

William Keyserling
Director
Washington Office

Enclosure

cc: Morris Abram
Jerry Goodman

*National Conference on
Soviet Jewry*

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*Call them - I will
apologize to be in
San Francisco*

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

January 10, 1985

Mr. Marshall Breger
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Public Liaison
Old Executive Office Building
17th & Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Regret Jan 17

Dear Mr. Breger:

As I am sure you know, the situation for the more than two-million Jews trapped in the Soviet Union has deteriorated dramatically. 896 Jews were permitted to emigrate in 1984, contrasted to 51,320 in 1979. During the last several months, teachers of Hebrew and Jewish culture have faced accelerated harassment, arrests on erroneous charges and physical attacks by Soviet authorities.

In response to this crisis, the NCSJ has called major Jewish leaders, from across the country, to an Emergency Action in Washington on Wednesday, January 30. Enclosed is a schedule of the day's events. The day will culminate when these top Jewish leaders meet with major governmental and private industry heads to discuss the crisis situation in the Soviet Union.

I am writing, specifically, to ask you to take a few minutes from your busy schedule in order to meet with some of our leaders on Wednesday, January 30th, at 3:30 p.m.

you'll be in S.F.

Robin Wright, of our Washington office, has been in touch with your staff to provide more information and check on your availability to meet with us during this critical period.

I hope you will be able to reply favorably to this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Morris

Morris B. Abram
Chairman, NCSJ

cc: Kenneth Bialkin, Chairman, Conference of Presidents of
Major Jewish Organizations
Howard Friedman, President, American Jewish Committee

encs.

A coalition of forty major national organizations and over two hundred local community councils and federations



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

EMERGENCY ACTION ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1985

Washington D.C.

Tentative Schedule

9:30 a.m.	Registration	Russell Caucus Room, Russell S.O.B.
10:00 - 12:00 Noon	Solidarity Speeches with representation from the Administration, labor education, science and from the Interreligious and Black communities	
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Congressional Convocation-Russell Rotunda (TENTATIVE)	
12:30 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch co-sponsored by the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews and the Congressional Wives for Soviet Jews	Russell Caucus Room
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Team briefings	Russell Caucus Room
2:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Action Teams meet with government & non-governmental agencies	
5:00 p.m.	Team Leaders Debriefings -	B'nai B'rith Int'l 1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W. 8th Floor



National Conference on Soviet Jewry

DATE: January 23, 1986

TO: Board of Governors, Member Agencies,
Federations and Interested Parties

FROM: Morris B. Abram, Chairman
Jerry Goodman, Executive Director

SUBJECT: The Campaign "To Summit II"

Our Executive Committee met on January 21 and approved a comprehensive plan to focus on General Secretary Gorbachev's visit to the United States. We recommend that this unique event be the focal point for the Soviet Jewry campaign in the United States, during the next six months.

While we don't know what the situation will be for Jews in the Soviet Union when the Soviet leader comes to Washington, we cannot wait. We must begin now the critical task of strengthening our movement to prepare for the visit.

Should the Soviet Union change existing policies and permit a significant number of Jews to leave, and ease up on the current harassment and arrests of Jewish activists, before the General Secretary comes, the Jewish community will certainly react favorably. Should the situation not change, however, we must respond loudly and publicly with our concern and outrage.

The process of building towards a culminating event - centered around the visit - is as critical as the specific events created for the day the Soviet leader arrives:

- (1) It will establish a solid foundation of opinion on human rights before the media narrows public attention to such issues as expectations on arms control;
- (2) It will demonstrate to Soviet authorities that the needs of Soviet Jewry must be answered before relations between the two superpowers truly normalize;
- (3) It will demonstrate full support for U.S. human rights initiatives as set forth by the President during the 1985 Geneva summit;
- (4) It will permit us to continue directing the focus of Congressional activities on behalf of Jews in the USSR; and
- (5) It will ensure that we are adequately prepared for the largest Soviet Jewry demonstration ever in the nation's capital.

Any aggressive action plan needs every individual's direct participation, as well as that of the total Jewish community. By coordinating the resources of national and local

- over -

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agencies, we hope to build up momentum, as well as educate and sustain interest, culminating in a mass mobilization in Washington. A Special Task Force is being developed, with subgroups to deal with specific proposals. A rabbinic/synagogue mobilization group is already planning a program. Other groups are in formation, and details will be sent as plans unfold. Billy Keyserling, Director of our Washington Office, will have overall staff responsibility; Myrna Shinbaum, Associate National Director, will act as liaison in the New York headquarters office.

What can you do now?

National agencies and local federations and CRC's should establish a Summit Task Force, involving the Jewish community in its broadest base, as well as other interested groups. To match the groups in our National Task Force, such local subcommittees as finance, communications, synagogue support, and the June mobilization should be developed.

Begin to set priorities for the upcoming summit in your overall programming, and have your own process in place as materials and guidelines are sent in the weeks and months ahead.

THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO, AND THROUGH, THE GORBACHEV VISIT WILL PROVIDE AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY TO MOBILIZE ITS RESOURCES BEGINNING AT THE GRASS ROOTS. IT IS AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY WE MUST NOT LOSE.

JG/D1/007

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

THE CAMPAIGN "TO SUMMIT II"

TASK FORCE

In order to maximize our effectiveness and our inclusiveness for the Summit II program, the NCSJ will create a special task force to coordinate the Campaign to Summit II.

Composed of lay leaders and Jewish professionals with specialized backgrounds and skills, the proposed task force, and the "groups" within it, will be a working committee with specific programming objectives.

The following outlines the subcommittees (groups) which parallel the specific areas of both local and national programming.

I. Regional Development Group

TASK: To ensure that all NCSJ summit II programming is integrated into local and national efforts and to raise the funds required to execute the programming.

II. Communications Group

TASK: To develop free and paid media strategy and to support the professional staff in developing materials and implementing the aggressive, substantive public education campaign through the public media.

III. State and Local Officials Group

TASK: To develop a nationwide program expanding the existing network of State and Local officials to utilize their positions to gain further exposure of the plight of Soviet Jews and to demonstrate to Soviet officials that American concern for human rights and Jewish emigration is fundamental to all Americans.

IV. Satellite Seder Group

TASK: To conceptualize, plan and organize a symbolic seder in the nation's capital and to coordinate Federation/CRC participation in a satellite hookup in local Jewish communities in the U.S. and possibly overseas.

V. International Parliamentarians Group

TASK: To organize an international conference of parliamentarians in Washington, D.C. to demonstrate to our government, to our allies and to the Soviet Union, that human rights is an international concern.

VI. Synagogue Mobilization Group

TASK: To inspire and support rabbinic and synagogue leadership, to ensure that our broadest grass roots potential is maximized in supporting both local and national programming.

VII. (June) Mobilization

TASK: To develop the program for a special event, and to mobilize scores of thousands from across the U.S. to come to Washington for a major demonstration, upon the arrival of Secretary Gorbachev.

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

MORRIS B. ABRAM

February 13, 1986

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

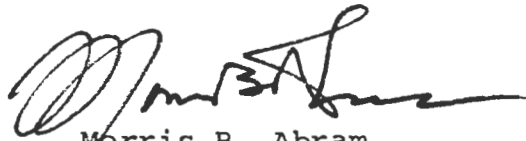
On behalf of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry -- the American Jewish Community's chosen instrument for dealing with the problems of Jews of the Soviet Union -- we wish to thank you profoundly for your efforts on behalf of Anatoly Shchransky, his family, and his fellow victims of Soviet oppression.

You and your Administration have been dedicated, persistent and skillful in your use of American moral authority and prestige in behalf of those who are denied both the right to live as Jews within or leave the Soviet Union.

We know that you see in the release of Shchransky and other refuseniks, only an example of what a decent respect for the opinion of mankind and Soviet international obligations demand for the tens of thousands of others remaining in the U.S.S.R.

The team involved in the execution of the exchange handled this delicate operation with exceptional skill.

Respectfully yours,



Morris B. Abram
Chairman



Jerry Goodman
Executive Director

pmf

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN
MORRIS B. ABRAM

February 13, 1986

Honorable George P. Shultz
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

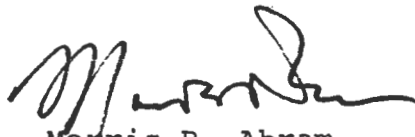
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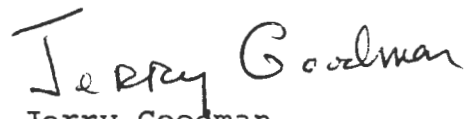
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Respectfully yours,


Morris B. Abram
Chairman

pmf


Jerry Goodman
Executive Director

SUMMIT WATCH

NOVEMBER 1986

NCSJ LEADERSHIP DELEGATION IN ICELAND ON EVE OF US-USSR MEETINGS

Reykjavik, October 10 - An eight-member leadership delegation, headed by Morris B. Abram, Chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), flew to Iceland on the eve of meetings between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.



The delegation included (L-R) Michael Pelavin, Chairman, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC); Albert D. Chernin, Executive Vice Chairman, NJCRAC; Seymour D. Reich, President, B'nai B'rith International; Mr. Abram, Ruth Popkin, President, Hadassah; Theodore R. Mann, President, American Jewish Congress, and immediate past Chairman, NCSJ; Jerry Goodman, Executive Director, NCSJ and Alan Pesky, Chairman, Coalition to Free Soviet Jews.

ANATOMY OF THE JEWISH PRESENCE

- Sept. 30 - President Reagan announced US-USSR meetings in Reykjavik October 11-12.
- Secretary of State Shultz announced release of dissident Yuri Orlov. None of the Jewish refuseniks or prisoners of conscience previously mentioned for possible "summit release" were included in the arrangement.

- October 1 - NCSJ convened an emergency meeting to plan organized Jewish community response to Reagan/Shultz announcements.
- Possibility of flying relays of Jewish leaders to Iceland in chartered private planes was discussed.
- October 2 - Jerry Strober, a public relations consultant to the Campaign to Summit II, was sent to Iceland to explore the feasibility of the organized Jewish presence during US-USSR meetings.
- October 6 - Steingrímur Hermannsson, Prime Minister of Iceland, was quoted in Reuters dispatch as saying "...frankly, I hope those Jewish people will just stay at home because I want to avoid any demonstrations."
- Public reaction caused Prime Minister to reverse himself, citing misunderstanding.
- October 7 - NCSJ proposal, that a leadership delegation arrive in Iceland prior to the weekend meetings, hold a press briefing and depart the same day, was accepted by the Iceland Government. Minister for Foreign Affairs Matthias Mathiesen issued statement that "there is full agreement on their coming to Iceland."
- Morris B. Abram, Chairman, NCSJ and Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Jerry Goodman, Executive Director, NCSJ and Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman, Conference of Presidents, were part of a small group meeting with President Reagan and Yuri Orlov. Afterward, they met privately with National Security Advisor, Admiral John Poindexter and his staff. It was agreed to submit for their use the list of 11,000 refuseniks. Data were also provided on the emigration process for Jews and on the more than 370,000 unprocessed emigration affidavits.

GORBACHEV IS COMING TO WASHINGTON... ARE YOU?

SUMMIT II TASK FORCE c/o NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
10 EAST 40th STREET, SUITE 907, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016 • (212) 679-6122
2027 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 • (202) 265-8114



- October 8 - Myrna Shinbaum, Associate Director, NCSJ, and Deborah Hart Strober, a public relations consultant to the Campaign to Summit II, arrived in Iceland to facilitate the presence of relatives of refuseniks, and the NCSJ delegation.
- October 10 - Leadership delegation arrived in Iceland at 9:00 A.M.
- NCSJ press briefing, attended by more than 100 members of international print and broadcast media, was held at Iceland Media Center.
- USSR hastily convened 11:00 A.M. briefing on "human rights" at nearby headquarters in Saga Hotel.
- At NCSJ briefing, Morris B. Abram pledged that Jewish groups "...are prepared to go anywhere, at any time, and for as long as necessary, until the Soviet Union lives up to its human rights obligations..." He also expressed "appreciation to the people and the Government of Iceland for the reception of our delegation."
- NCSJ hosted luncheon attended by Israel Knesset members Nava Arad and Uzi Landau, several members of the Israel-based Mothers for Freedom, a group whose children remain trapped in the Soviet Union, and the sons of refuseniks David Goldfarb and Vladimir Slepak.
- Leadership delegation departed for US at 4:00 P.M.
- In aftermath of the Iceland presence, David Goldfarb and his wife were released from Soviet Union and were reunited with their son Aleksandr, who has received support from the NCSJ; and Michael Shirman's sister and her family will be allowed to go to Israel, so that she may provide her critically ill brother with a desperately needed bone marrow transplant.
- In address to National Press Club in Washington, Secretary of State George P. Shultz stated there was "...sustained discussion" on human rights issues in Iceland. He said that the National Conference on Soviet Jewry "...helped us to make a powerful presentation."

- While release of Goldfarbs and Shirman's family was heartening, there was consensus among Jewish leadership that there can be no relaxation of apprehension concerning the plight of Soviet Jewry until long standing cases of thousands of others are resolved.

CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II NEWS BRIEFS

Jerusalem - September 16 - Leonid Scharansky and Mark Nashpitz signed a Petition, which was circulated by the American Jewish Congress during its 1986 National Convention in Jerusalem.

Washington - September 17 - Campaign to Summit II was officially launched with Petition signing on Capitol steps and State Department meeting with Secretary George P. Shultz. The Secretary was given NCSJ position paper outlining the grim situation of Soviet Jewry by leadership delegation.



(L-R) Rep. Gilman, Sen. Lautenberg, Rep. Smith and Morris B. Abram.

Participants in Capitol Petition signing included Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS), Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-WV), House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-TX), Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and John Heinz (R-PA) and Representatives Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) and Larry Smith (D-FL).

Miami/Fort Lauderdale - September 17-18 - Ceremonial Petition signing by members of Congress.

New York - September 18 - More than 600 attended Leadership Assembly to Free Soviet Jews, in the presence of Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel, sponsored by the NCSJ, the

SUMMIT WATCH

- 3 -

THE CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II

Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, NJCRAC and the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews.



Prime Minister Peres and Morris B. Abram, Chairman, NCSJ, at Leadership Assembly.

Baltimore - September 25-28 - ZOA National Convention. September 25: Showing of video, Natan Scharansky meeting with ZOA Leaders. September 27: 90 minute plenary session devoted to Soviet Jewry before the Summit. Address by Morris B. Abram.

Harrisburg - Late September - Week long Vigil for Soviet Jewry - On steps of State Capitol.

New York - September 28-29 - Consultation on Soviet Jewry - Sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, with noted experts, public figures and communal leaders.

Participants in United Jewish Appeal's Celebration '87 and other major missions signed Petition.

UJA held regular briefings for national and regional staff on status of CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II. It placed special features on CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II in Newsbrief, Hotline and other publications.

Cleveland - October 1 - Special MEDIA BRIEFING ON SOVIET JEWRY - with David Harris, American Jewish Committee, and others.

Washington - October 8 - Emergency Leadership Assembly at State Department, sponsored by NCSJ. Nearly 500 leaders were briefed by Secretary George P. Shultz. Special Capitol

Hill session followed, chaired by Robert Loup, NCSJ Vice Chairman, and Treasurer, United Jewish Appeal. Participating were nearly 50 members of Congress, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, Leonid Slepak, Ruth Daniloff, Rabbis Haskel Lookstein, Gilbert Klaperman and Mark Staitman, Michael Pelavin, NJCRAC Chairman, and Jacqueline Levine, Chairperson for the projected Washington Mobilization.

Washington - October 16 - SUMMIT II TASK FORCE MEETING.

Cherry Hill, NJ - October 26 - RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY - Speakers included Congressman James J. Florio (D-NJ) and community leaders who have recently visited with refuseniks in the Soviet Union. Sponsored by the JCRC of Southern New Jersey.

AUDIO VISUAL

Video, featuring refuseniks, including IDA NUDEL. Produced by the United Jewish Appeal.

CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II IDEA EXCHANGE

Greater Philadelphia - Soviet Jewry Council, JCRC - 2 inch button - BE THE LIGHT TO FREEDOM - ATTEND SUMMIT II.

San Diego - JCRC - TICKET TO FREEDOM, 5½ x 8½ return postcard stating that "ticketed passenger" will be in Washington to greet Gorbachev during Summit II.

THE CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II CONTINUES

- VIENNA THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT will open November 4, and will recess on December 18. Send communications urging forceful US raising of issues of Jewish emigration and rights, and individual cases, during human rights discussions to: Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, c/o U.S. Embassy - Vienna, Boltzmanngasse 16, A-1091, Vienna, Austria.
- New York - November 6 - NCSJ, Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, and NJCRAC host a meeting with Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel on his recent trip to the Soviet Union. In the USSR Wiesel, the Honorary Chairman of the National Task Force on the Campaign to Summit II, was told of the concern in Moscow's ruling circles about a Washington event.

- The PETITION CAMPAIGN will end on November 10, culminating in a dramatic presentation to President Reagan.
- Chicago - November 13 - CJF General Assembly - RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY - Grant Park - Speakers include Morris B. Abram, Chairman, NCSJ.
- Reykjavik FLY INS: Leaders who were in Iceland and other national figures will visit communities to report, and to discuss future programming. In some communities, the FLY IN will be associated with the annual WOMEN'S PLEA events, scheduled on or near Human Rights Day on December 10.
- WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP ACTION CONFERENCE: Communal leaders, including local Summit II Chairpersons, will meet in Washington early in February. Program will include briefing for new members of Congress and visits to congressional offices, as the 100th Congress convenes.
- SUMMIT WATCH will publish news as we continue to plan for a projected summit meeting in this country. Please send items to: SUMMIT WATCH, c/o National Conference on Soviet Jewry, 10 East 40th Street, Suite 907, New York, N.Y. 10016.

The New York Times

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1986

Reykjavik Talks Hold Out Hope on Emigration of Soviet Jews

To the Editor:

The cause of Soviet Jewish emigration, an Oct. 13 article from Reykjavik, Iceland, suggested, received a setback because of the failure of the United States and Soviet Union to reach an arms-control agreement.

While we share President Reagan's disappointment that no final accord on arms was reached that would have also permitted issuance of a statement on human rights and Jewish emigration, one thing is clear: There can never be another summit at which human rights issues, including Jewish emigration, are not central.

More, we are encouraged that, as a result of the Reagan Administration's determination to raise the issue in Reykjavik, progress in human rights and Jewish emigration was made. According to Secretary of State George P. Shultz, the subject was explicitly referred to in "what might have been a statement coming out of the meeting dealing with this issue."

When a delegation from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry flew to Iceland, we understood that the meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail S.

Gorbachev was expected to be a "presummit" encounter, with little likelihood of any formal agreements.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union did accept the Administration's proposal to discuss the easing of certain emigration restrictions. A basic hurdle was overcome when it was agreed to create a working group at Reykjavik to deal with humanitarian issues, including emigration and the reunion of families. Thus, Moscow has acknowledged that the issues are discussable, representing a shift from previous policy, which had insisted they were not a matter for bilateral discourse. The Soviet Union has now recognized that there is proper jurisdiction at summit meetings, as well as in other bilateral encounters, to deal with human rights.

For this achievement, we express our gratitude to President Reagan

and Secretary Shultz. They fulfilled their public pledge that human rights would be one of four major agenda items to be dealt with in Reykjavik and apparently were on their way toward reaching an understanding with the Russians. That measure of success heartens us in the belief that, with the continued commitment of this Administration, and the continued support of the American people, we shall overcome against what the President called the "violation of human rights on the part of the Soviets" and their "refusal to let people emigrate from Russia so they can practice their religion without being persecuted."

MORRIS B. ABRAM

JERRY GOODMAN

New York, Oct. 15, 1986

The writers are, respectively, chairman and executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.



National Conference on Soviet Jewry

OFFICERS

Chairman

Morris B. Abram

Vice-Chairpersons

Gerold Kraft

Robert Loup

Richard Ravitch

Edward B. Robin

Edward Sanders

Constance Smukier

Howard Squadron

Treasurer

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Secretary

Rabbi David Hill

Executive Committee

Denis C. Braham

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Sunny Kaplan

Deverly Minkoff

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Richard J. Rice

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Executive Director

Jerry Goodman

December 5, 1986

Matt Zachery
Office of Public Liaison
Old Executive Office Building
Room 196
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Matt:

Alla Aberson, a former Soviet Jewish refusenik, will be touring the United States over the next two weeks and plans to be in Washington on Tuesday, December 9 and Wednesday, December 10.

She is coming to this country to talk about the plight of Joseph Berenshtein, a Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience. (Please see attached profile.) Alla has requested our assistance in seeking a meeting for her with Mrs. Bush. Apparently, when Mrs. Bush was in Israel this summer, she and the Vice-President visited the Mevasseret Absorption Center in Jerusalem, where they were given a painting by a former refusenik, Edward Bark. Alla, after hearing about their visit to the center, wrote Mrs. Bush asking her to become involved in the Berenshtein case. Alla received a reply from Susan Porter Rose, which is enclosed.

If a meeting can be arranged, Alla would like to present Mrs. Bush with another Edward Bark painting.

Any help you can provide in arranging a meeting for Alla Aberson will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Levin
NCSJ, Washington Office

*P.S. If Mr. Bush is unavailable I'm sure Alla
would like to meet with Susan Porter Rose.*



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

August 11, 1986

Dear Alla Aberson,

Your thoughtful letter to Mrs. Bush bringing to her attention the situation of Yosef Berenshtein is greatly appreciated. Although this is not a matter in which Mrs. Bush is able to become involved, she has asked us to forward your letter to the Vice President's office for further consideration. Mrs. Bush hopes the problem is resolved quickly and sends her very best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Porter Rose".

Susan Porter Rose
Chief of Staff
to Mrs. Bush

Alla Aberson
Mevasseret, Zion 9
Merkaz, Klita
Abzorbition Center
Jerusalem, Israel

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

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

IOSIF BERENSHTEIN

BORN:	1937
FROM:	Kiev
MARITAL STATUS:	Married
OCCUPATION:	Engineer
ARRESTED:	November 12, 1984
TRIED:	December 10, 1984
CHARGE:	"Resisting Arrest"
SENTENCE:	Four Years Imprisonment (to 11/88)
PRISON ADDRESS:	Unknown
WIFE'S ADDRESS:	Faina Berenshtein Entuziastov 35-140 Kiev Ukr.SSR, USSR

OVER

The Berenshteins' application for exit visas, filed in 1979, was rejected on the grounds that their invitation from Iosif's sister-in-law in Israel was not from a "sufficiently close relative."

Since then, Iosif, his wife, Faina, their daughter, Yana, and their son, Aleksandr, have faced repeated harassment and persecution. When they first submitted their application, they were assured by the OVIR official that they would receive the desired permits "very shortly." In preparation for their departure, the Berenshteins sold all of their belongings.

When they received a refusal instead of the hoped-for visas, Iosif protested by joining a three-day fast staged by a group of refuseniks prior to the Madrid Conference. He was arrested, charged with alleged "malicious hooliganism" and sentenced to 15 days detention.

In November 1980, KGB officials threatened the Berenshteins with charges of "parasitism" if they continued their efforts to emigrate to Israel. They also "warned" that their daughter might face assault, rape and disfigurement by "criminal elements."

In November 1984, Iosif was arrested while in Novograd Vilinsky to answer criminal allegations against his aunt, who was accused of "speculating in tombstones" after she purchased a stone for the grave of Iosif's mother. (The charges against her were dropped after Iosif's arrest.)

Upon arriving at the detention cell, Iosif was badly beaten with a broken bottle by others in his cell. His vision is now acutely impaired from injuries to his eyes, and it is feared he may be permanently blinded.

On December 10, 1984, Iosif was tried and convicted of allegedly "resisting arrest," despite the testimony of someone who was with him at the time of the arrest and claimed he offered no resistance. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment -- a sentence which was retained at the administrative appeal.

On January 24, 1985, Iosif was hospitalized at the L'vov Central Prison, where he underwent surgery to his right eye. Medical officials at the prison, who maintain that Iosif's injuries are self-inflicted, notified Faina that he arrived at the prison with inflamed and infected eyes, and noted that his left eye may also require surgery. Although Faina and her daughter were to meet with Iosif, officials cancelled the visit, claiming Iosif's eyes must be shielded from light. After appealing on her husband's behalf, Faina was told by an Interior Department official that Iosif will be released on medical grounds "only if he loses his eyesight completely."

Joseph Berenstein

Residence: Kiev, Ukrainian S.S.R.

Born: 1937

Occ.: mechanical engineer, Jewish cultural activist

First refused: January 1980

Reason for refusal: insufficient kinship abroad

Family: USSR - Fanya (wife); Yana (daughter)

Israel - Rivka Einbinder (sister)

Current status: four year prison sentence for "resisting the authorities," Art. 188-1 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code

Berenshtein applied to emigrate to Israel with his wife and daughter in 1978. All three were prevented from working in their professions ever since. In 1980 Berenshtein was arrested twice and detained for fifteen days each, in connection with his involvement in Jewish studies. Between these two arrests, two KGB men threatened Yana with rape and disfiguration.

The persecution culminated in Nov. 1984 with Berenshtein's arrest. Berenshtein had traveled to a small village outside Kiev where his aunt had been accuse of black market dealings. He was arrested at the bus depot while waiting to leave. Berenshtein was charged with "resisting the authorities." The hasty arrest, preceding the arrest warrant, violated the Soviet procedural process. Further, although Berenshtein is a diabetic, he did not receive the special food sent to him while in jail.

Berenshtein was tried and sentenced on Dec. 11, 1984, but two days later two other prisoners beat him to the point where his wife and daughter could not recognize him. His eyes were so badly damaged that he lost most of his vision. Officials denied Berenshtein treatment, claiming the wounds were self-inflicted.

In June 1985, Berenshtein was refused hospitalization and his appeal failed. In Feb. 1985, his eyes were operated on, but his vision worsened. Despite his poor health, Fanya was told by the Supreme Soviet that he has no chance of amnesty. Doctors found him "healthy enough to remain in prison." Officials meanwhile threatened Fanya with prison for "parasitism."

Berenshtein's worsening vision prompted his receiving treatment in a Leningrad hospital. Although he was nearly blind, officials still did not consider him as disabled (his only chance for amnesty) and returned him to prison.

In Dec. 1985, officials tried to illicit a confession and a denunciation of religious belief by forbidding Berenshtein from giving written permission for his daughter to apply for a visa.

In early 1986, Berenshtein's situation grew worse. His diabetes is worsened, and a family visit was canceled. Further, Berenshtein's transfer in April to a different type of prison has had negative implications for his already precarious health. The strain on his eyes is deteriorating his sight and he is not be able to fulfill his work quotas.



National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Chairman

Morris D. Abram

Executive Director

Jerry Goodman

Washington Representative

William D. Keyserling

November 20, 1986

Mr. Max Green
Office of Public Liaison
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Max:

Per our conversation, enclosed please find a copy of the petition that was distributed across the country. I have also included a copy of the ad that appeared in The Washington Post before the Iceland meeting.

I hope we will be able to work something out to have the President accept the petitions in person.

If you need any further information, please call me.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Levin
Associate Director
NCSJ, Washington Office

A coalition of forty four major national organizations and nearly three hundred local community councils and federations

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





NEWS RELEASE

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

CONTACT: Deborah/Jerry Strober
(212) 679-6122

UNPRECEDENTED NCSJ CAMPAIGN TO SUMMIT II
LAUNCHED AT CAPITOL WITH PETITION DRIVE AND
STATE DEPARTMENT MEETING WITH SECRETARY SHULTZ

NEW YORK, September 18. . .An unprecedented American Jewish effort to place human rights for Soviet Jews on the agenda of the anticipated US-USSR summit meeting was launched yesterday on the Capitol steps by a Petition Drive, with the participation of Congressional leadership, including Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS), Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-WV) and House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-TX).

Morris B. Abram, Chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), who launched the Petition Drive in the company of Martin Stein, National Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, Jerome Dick, Council of Jewish Federations board member and Jerry Goodman, Executive Director of the NCSJ, stated: "We hope to collect at least one million signatures, starting with members of Congress." To date, Mr. Abram noted, 82 senators and more than half of the members of the House of Representatives, have signed the petition.

Mr. Abram added that the petition thanks President Reagan for his support of the rights of Soviet Jews to emigrate, to join families and repatriate to Israel, or to live as Jews in the USSR and "urges him to continue his course of action." Also joining Mr. Abram and the Congressional leadership, who all signed a symbolic petition displayed on the Capitol steps, were Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Senator John Heinz (R-PA) and Rep. Larry Smith (D-FL) who organized the congressional participation in the petition drive.

- MORE -

A coalition of over forty major national organizations and over two hundred local community councils and federations

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



Mr. Abram had announced the launching of a broad "Campaign to Summit II" earlier in the morning in a press briefing at the Capitol. Describing the Campaign, which he said includes public education and the mobilization of the nation, Mr. Abram stated that "the American people are determined that the Soviet Union live up to its obligations on human rights." He noted that while "everyone was extremely hopeful when Gorbachev assumed power, that his views on Soviet Jewish rights would change, conditions today are very much worse."

Mr. Abram also noted that the Soviet Union is attempting a new strategy to suppress Jewish emigration. For the first time, at a recent East-West conference in Bern, Switzerland, Moscow sought to claim that "the Helsinki Accords do not protect Jews, as Israel is not signatory to the pact. It's very clear what the Soviet purpose is -- to prevent Jews from going to Israel if they wish to do so." The Accord was signed in 1975 by 35 European nations, the United States and Canada. It was designed, however, to encompass other nations, including those in the Mediterranean basin.

Following the launching of the petition campaign, Mr. Abram and a leadership delegation met for forty five minutes at the State Department with Secretary George Shultz and other State Department officials. The meeting was held two days before Mr. Shultz's sessions with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, beginning this Friday in Washington.

In addition to Mr. Abram, the delegation included Kenneth Bialkin, former Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Michael Palavin, Chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Seymour Reich, President of B'nai B'rith International, Jerry Goodman, Executive Director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

According to Mr. Abram, Secretary Shultz expressed "surprise" at learning that half the Soviet Jewish Prisoners of Conscience have been incarcerated since General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power eighteen months ago. "Gorbachev is a new face, but presents a very old policy," Mr. Abram observed. This followed the submission of an NCSJ policy position paper to the Secretary, assessing developments in the USSR.

Mr. Abram said that he and the other members of the delegation expressed "deep appreciation to the Secretary of State for making the issue of human rights an item of negotiation at the summit." He added that the NCSJ is "extremely satisfied" with the administration's actions on behalf of rights and freedom to emigrate for Soviet Jewry. According to Abram Mr. Shultz "understood that these issues of Jewish rights and freedom to emigrate will not be dropped or treated as throw away items" at the anticipated US-USSR summit meeting later this year.

The launching of the Campaign to Summit II was climaxed Thursday evening in New York when Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel expressed unqualified support for the efforts of the American Jewish Community to insure the inclusion of the protection of the Soviet Jews' rights on the agenda of the anticipated summit meeting, in an address to 500 Jewish leaders attending an Assembly to Free Soviet Jews.

Telephone

A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. President:

We thank you and your Administration for your continued efforts to rescue the Jews in the Soviet Union—the world's third largest Jewish community.

As you plan your forthcoming meetings with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, we urge you to continue to insist that human rights remain a key issue of East-West relations.

You can count on our support as you press for Jewish emigration and the protection of cultural and religious rights in the Soviet Union.

Senators

Abdnor, James (R-SD)
Armstrong, William (R-ND)
Baucus, Max S. (D-MT)
Bentsen, Lloyd M. (D-TX)
Biden Jr., Joseph R. (D-DE)
Bingaman, Jeff (D-NM)
Boren, David L. (D-OK)
Boschwitz, Rudy (R-MN)
Bradley, Bill (D-NJ)
Broyhill, James T. (R-NC)
Bumpers, Dale (D-AR)
Burdick, Quentin N. (D-ND)
Byrd, Robert C. (D-WV)
Chaffee, John H. (R-RI)
Chiles Jr., Lawton M. (D-FL)
Cohen, William S. (R-ME)
Cranston, Alan (D-CA)
D'Amato, Alfonse M. (R-NY)
Danforth, John C. (R-MO)
DeConcini, Dennis (D-AZ)
Denton, Jeremiah (R-AL)
Dixon, Alan J. (D-IL)
Dodd, Christopher J. (D-CT)
Dole, Robert (R-KS)
Durenberger, David F. (R-MN)
Eagleton, Thomas F. (D-MO)
Exon, James J. (D-NE)
Ford, Wendell H. (D-KY)
Garn, E. J. (R-UT)
Glenn, John (D-OH)
Gore Jr., Albert (D-TN)
Gorton, Slade (R-WA)
Grassley, Charles E. (R-IA)
Harkin, Tom (D-IA)
Hart, Gary (D-CO)
Hatch, Orrin G. (R-UT)
Hawkins, Paula (R-FL)
Hecht, Chic (R-NV)
Heflin, Howell (D-AL)
Heinz, H. John (R-PA)
Hollings, Ernest F. (D-SC)
Humphrey, Gordon J. (R-NH)
Inouye, Daniel K. (D-HI)
Johnston, J. Bennett (D-LA)
Kasten, Robert W. (R-WI)
Kennedy, Edward M. (D-MA)
Kerry, John F. (D-MA)
Lautenberg, Frank (D-NJ)
Laxalt, Paul (R-NV)
Leahy, Patrick J. (D-VT)
Levin, Carl (D-MI)
Long, Russell B. (D-LA)
Lugar, Richard G. (R-IN)
McClure, James A. (R-ID)
McConnell Jr., Mitch (R-KY)
Mathias, Charles McC. (R-MD)
Matsunaga, Spark M. (D-HI)
Mattingly, Mack (R-GA)
Melcher, John (D-MT)
Metzenbaum, Howard (D-OH)
Mitchell, George J. (D-ME)
Moynihan, Daniel P. (D-NY)
Murkowski, Frank H. (R-AK)
Nickles, Don (R-OK)
Nunn, Sam (D-GA)
Packwood, Bob (R-OR)
Pell, Claiborne (D-RI)
Pressler, Larry (R-SD)
Proxmire, William (D-WI)
Pryor, David (D-AR)
Quayle, Dan (R-IN)
Riegle, Donald W. (D-MI)
Rockefeller IV, John D. (D-WV)
Roth, William V. (R-DE)
Sarbanes, Paul S. (D-MD)
Sasser, Jim (D-TN)
Simon, Paul (D-IL)
Simpson, Alan K. (R-WY)
Specter, Arlen (R-PA)
Stafford, Robert T. (R-VT)
Stennis, John C. (D-MS)

Representatives

Symms, Steven D. (R-ID)
Trible, Paul (R-VA)
Wallop, Malcolm (R-WY)
Warner, John W. (R-VA)
Weicker, Lowell P. (R-CT)
Wilson, Pete (R-CA)
Zorinsky, Edward (D-NE)
Ackerman, Gary (D-NY)
Akaka, Daniel K. (D-HI)
Andrews, Michael (D-TX)
Annunzio, Frank (D-IL)
Anthony Jr., Beryl (D-AR)
Atkins, Chester G. (D-MA)
Aucoin, Les (D-OR)
Barnes, Michael D. (D-MD)
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Bentley, Helen Delich (R-MD)
Berman, Howard L. (D-CA)
Bevill, Tom (D-AL)
Biaggi, Mario (D-NY)
Bilirakis, Michael (R-FL)
Boland, Edward P. (D-MA)
Bonior, David E. (D-MI)
Borski, Robert A. (D-PA)
Bosco, Douglas H. (D-CA)
Boucher, Fredrick (D-VA)
Boxer, Barbara (D-CA)
Brooks, Jack (D-TX)
Brown Jr., George E. (D-CA)
Bruce, Terry L. (D-IL)
Bryant, John (D-TX)
Burton, Dan (R-IN)
Burton, Sala (D-CA)
Bustamante, Albert G. (D-TX)
Callahan, H.L. "Sonny" (R-AL)
Carney, William (R-NY)
Carper, Thomas R. (D-DE)
Carr, Bob (D-MI)
Chandler, Rod (R-WA)
Chappell Jr., Bill (D-FL)
Cheney, Dick (R-WY)
Clay, William (D-MO)
Cobey Jr., William W. (R-NC)
Coelho, Tony (D-CA)
Coleman, Ronald (D-TX)
Conte, Silvio (R-MA)
Conyers Jr., John (D-MI)
Cooper, Jim (D-TN)
Coughlin, Lawrence (R-PA)
Courter, A. James (R-NJ)
Coyne, William J. (D-PA)
Darden, George W. (D-GA)
De La Garza, E. (Kika) (D-TX)
Dellums, Ronald V. (D-CA)
Dicks, Norman D. (D-WA)
Dingell, John D. (D-MI)
DiGuardio, Joseph J. (R-NY)
Donnelly, Brian (D-MA)
Dorgan, Byron L. (D-ND)
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Hutto, Earl (D-FL)
Johnson, Nancy L. (R-CT)
Jones, James R. (D-OK)
Kanjorski, Paul E. (D-PA)
Kaptur, Marcy (D-OH)
Kemp, Jack (R-NY)
Kennelly, Barbara B. (D-CT)
Kildee, Dale E. (D-MI)
Kindness, Thomas H. (R-OH)
Kiecicka, Gerald D. (D-WI)
Kolbe, Jim (R-AZ)
Kolter, Joseph P. (D-PA)
Kostmayer, Peter H. (D-PA)
Kramer, Ken (R-CO)
La Falce, John J. (D-NY)
Lagomarsino, Robert J. (R-CA)
Lantos, Tom (D-CA)
Leach, Jim (R-IA)
Leath, Marvin (D-TX)
Lehman, Richard (D-CA)
Lehman, William (D-FL)
Leland, Mickey (D-TX)
Lent, Norman F. (R-NY)
Levin, Sander (D-MI)
Levine, Mel (D-CA)
Lewis, Tom (R-FL)
Lloyd, Marilyn (D-TN)
Low, Trent (R-MS)
Lowery, Bill (R-CA)
Lqwry, Michael E. (D-WA)
Luken, Thomas A. (D-OH)
Lungren, Dan (R-CA)
McCain, John (R-AZ)
McCloskey, Frank (D-IN)
McCollum, Bill (R-FL)
McCurdy, Dave (D-OK)
McDade, Joseph M. (R-PA)
McGrath, Raymond J. (R-NY)
McHugh, Matthew F. (D-NY)
McMillan, J. Alex (R-NC)
Mack, Connie (R-FL)
Mackay, Buddy (D-FL)
Manton, Thomas J. (D-NY)
Markey, Edward J. (D-MA)
Martin, Lynn (R-IL)
Matsui, Robert T. (D-CA)
Mavroules, Nicholas (D-MA)
Mazzoli, Romano L. (D-KY)
Mica, Dan (D-FL)
Michel, Robert H. (R-IL)
Mikulski, Barbara A. (D-MD)
Miller, George (D-CA)
Miller, John R. (R-WA)
Mitchell, Parren J. (D-MD)
Molinari, Guy V. (R-NY)

Moody, Jim (D-WI)
Moore, Henson W. (R-LA)
Morrison, Bruce A. (D-CT)
Mrzek, Robert J. (D-NY)
Murtha, John P. (D-PA)
Neal, Stephen L. (D-NC)
Nelson, Bill (D-FL)
Nowak, Henry J. (D-NY)
Oakar, Mary Rose (D-OH)
Oberstar, James L. (D-MN)
Obey, David R. (D-WI)
O'Neill Jr., Thomas P. (D-MA)
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Owens, Major (D-NY)
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Penny, Timothy J. (D-MN)
Pepper, Claude (D-FL)
Porter, John E. (R-IL)
Rahall, Nick Joe (D-WV)
Rangel, Charles B. (D-NY)
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Ritter, Don (R-PA)
Robinson, Tommy F. (D-AR)
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Rose, Charles (D-NC)
Rowland, J. Roy (D-GA)
Russo, Marty A. (D-IL)
Sabo, Martin O. (D-MN)
Saxton, James H. (Jim) (R-NJ)
Scheuer, James H. (D-NY)
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Schumer, Charles (D-NY)
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Sharp, Philip R. (D-IN)
Shaw, Jr., Olay E. (R-FL)
Shelby, Richard C. (D-AL)
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Siljander, Mark D. (R-MI)
Sisisky, Norman (D-VA)
Skeen, Joe (R-NM)
Slattery, Jim (D-KS)
Smith, Christopher H. (R-NJ)
Smith, Lawrence J. (D-FL)
Smith, Robert C. (R-NH)
Solaz, Stephen (D-NY)
Solomon, Gerald B. (R-NY)
Spratt Jr., John M. (D-SC)
Stokes, Louis (D-OH)
Strang, Michael L. (R-CO)
Sundquist, Don (R-TN)
Swift, Al (D-WA)
Swindall, Patrick L. (R-GA)
Synar, Michael L. (D-OK)
Tallon, Robin (D-SC)
Tausin, W.J. (Billy) (D-LA)
Thomas, Robert Lindsay (D-GA)
Torricelli, Robert G. (D-NJ)
Traficant Jr., James A. (D-OH)
Udall, Morris K. (D-AZ)
Volkmer, Harold L. (D-MO)
Walgren, Doug (D-PA)
Waxman, Henry A. (D-CA)
Weber, Vin (R-MN)
Weiss, Ted (D-NY)
Whet, Alan (D-MO)
Whitley, Charles (D-NC)
Whittaker, Robert (R-KS)
Wirth, Timothy E. (D-CO)
Wise, Robert E. (D-WV)
Wolf, Frank R. (R-VA)
Wolpe, Howard (D-MI)
Wortley, George (R-NY)
Wright Jr., Jim C. (D-TX)
Wyden, Ron (D-OR)
Yates, Sidney R. (D-IL)
Yatron, Gus (D-PA)
Young, C.W. Bill (R-FL)
Young, Robert A. (D-MO)
Delegates
Fauntroy, Walter E. (Wash., D.C.)

Above petition circulated by Sen. John Heinz (R-PA), Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Rep. Ben Gilman (R-NY), and Rep. Larry Smith (D-FL) for the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews.

Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews*

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*A project of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, 10 East 40th St., New York, New York 10016
8027 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20086



National Conference on Soviet Jewry

SUMMARY

THE ILLUSION OF "GLASNOST":

A Survey on the Status of Soviet Jewry in 1986

For nearly two million Jews in the Soviet Union, 1986 was a year of dramatic, but largely disappointing, developments. Despite a policy of "glasnost" (openness) which dominated Western perception of the Soviet Union, the character and direction of Mikhail Gorbachev's Jewish policy belie this perception.

- Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union totaled only 914 in 1986, a 20 percent drop from 1,140 in 1985.
- Despite Soviet gestures in a few high visibility cases, such as those of Natan Scharansky and David Goldfarb, (or non-Jewish dissidents, such as Yuri Orlov and Andrei Sakharov), nearly 380,000 Jews await being processed for emigration, among them 11,000 refuseniks, and Prisoners of Conscience (POC's) who have been harassed, attacked, arrested and imprisoned because they wish to emigrate, or teach Hebrew.
- The persistent harassment and intimidation of Jewish self-study efforts to sustain culture and religion continues.
- Despite a discernible shift in tactics since General Secretary Gorbachev assumed leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the results of the shift, such as a new emigration decree, proved to be merely tactical and cosmetic for Soviet Jews.
- A new Codification of Emigration Decree fixed in law the narrowly defined family as including only parents, children and siblings, condemning hundreds of thousands of Jews from ever applying for, much less receiving, permission to emigrate.
- While Gorbachev is aware of the desire of many Soviet Jews to emigrate, and of Western demands for Soviet compliance with the humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki Accords, the reality of Soviet policy on Jewish emigration proves his many public statements on the issue to be "mere words."
- The Soviet Union has attempted, most notably at the Bern Conference last spring, to "close the book" on Soviet Jewish emigration, insisting that they could not permit the sending of Jews to the "war danger zone" of Israel.
- The October 11-12 meeting between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavik saw the issue of Soviet Jewish rights become an important future summit agenda item.

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A coalition of over forty major national organizations and over two hundred local community councils and federations

National Office: 10 East 40th Street, Suite 907, New York, N.Y. 10016 • (212) 679-6122/Cable Address: AMCONSOV, N.Y. • Telex: 237311 NCSJ

- The United States government is well informed concerning the Soviet record on Jewish emigration. Both President Reagan and Secretary of State George P. Shultz pledged to do everything in their power to help the Soviet Jews achieve human rights, including emigration based on repatriation to Israel and family reunification.
- Jewish activists in the Soviet Union have articulated what they considered to be basic principles in securing their rights. Their primary goal remained repatriation to Israel and reunification with kin. They articulated guidelines, endorsed by the NCSJ, including the granting of immediate exit visas to those in refusal for ten years or more.
- The Jackson-Vanik Amendment linking trade to emigration remains a clear and effective expression of United States commitment as it pertains to the rights of Soviet Jews and others.
- The NCSJ has suggested flexibility to the Administration and told Soviet officials, both privately and publicly, that "goodwill can be achieved, but concrete results must be forthcoming."
- The NCSJ challenged the Soviet Union to issue emigration visas to the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews who have initiated the emigration procedure by requesting and receiving invitations from their relatives in Israel.

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WRAP-UP

LEADERSHIP

REPORT



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THE ILLUSION OF "GLASNOST": A Survey on the Status of Soviet Jewry in 1986

For nearly two million Jews in the Soviet Union, 1986 was a year of dramatic, but largely disappointing, developments. While a policy of "glasnost" (openness) dominated the Western perception of the Soviet Union, the character and direction of Mikhail Gorbachev's Jewish policy belie this perception. Unquestionably, there has been a discernable shift since Gorbachev assumed leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For Jews in the Soviet Union, however, the results of the shift, such as a new emigration decree, proved to be merely tactical and cosmetic. In fact, there is a continuing shutdown of Jewish emigration, as well as a persistent harassment and intimidation of Jewish self-study efforts to sustain culture and religion.

In the aftermath of the US-USSR Geneva summit in November 1985, the first such meeting between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, an official of a major American Jewish organization was assured by a Soviet diplomat in Washington that early renewal of Jewish emigration could be expected. This assurance was published on the front pages of leading American newspapers. In the months which followed, it became apparent that performance would not follow promise, as emigration dropped to its lowest point in over a decade. Yet, for several weeks, the Soviet effort to manipulate opinion did create confusion among some sectors of the Jewish community, and among press analysts, members of Congress and Administration officials.

EMIGRATION STAGNATES

The emigration of Jews remained stagnant and, despite occasional promises of hope, only 914 Jews were permitted to leave in 1986, compared with 1,140 in 1985 and 896 the previous year.

The year began on a low note when, in January, only 79 Jews left the Soviet Union. Encouragement was generated in early February when Natan (Anatoly) Scharansky was suddenly released from Chistopol prison. In a dramatic walk over the Glienecke Bridge, from East to West Berlin, he was released at nearly the same moment as convicted Soviet-bloc spies, who were sent eastward. Even at the last moment, the Soviet Union tried to maintain its stubborn insistence on a "spy" charge against Scharansky, one of the most publicized of the Jewish Prisoners of Conscience (POC), who had been serving a combined term of 13 years in prison and labor camp.

While there was great rejoicing at Scharansky's release, there was immediate and justified apprehension concerning the situation of thousands of other Soviet Jews. Among them were the other Jewish POC's, as well as over two dozen former POC's who had served their sentences but were still denied permission to go to Israel.

Nearly 380,000 Jews in the Soviet Union are estimated to have taken the first step in the emigration process by requesting and having sent to them an affidavit (vyzov) from Israel, a crucially important document

when formally applying for an exit visa. Within this group, the NCSJ identified over 11,000 who held the status of "refusenik," one who has been refused an exit visa at least once and, not infrequently, numerous times. These refuseniks, whose cases are well known and were repeatedly raised with Soviet officials, continued to be refused permission to be reunited with family and repatriated to Israel. Many have been waiting for more than fifteen years. There are also thousands of others whose applications were not processed and are, therefore, not yet in the pipeline.

In April, 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 about 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, which continued to surface throughout the year, of "a few thousand" waiting to be processed.

The emigration figures offered proof that an announced and continuing "humanitarianism campaign" was hollow. In February, the month of Scharansky's release, 84 Jews emigrated, but the following month this number plummeted to 47. The highest monthly figure was 125, in September, when the Soviet Union was preparing for an anticipated second summit. In October, even while a US-Soviet summit meeting was organized in Reykjavik, the figure dropped to 104, then to 102 in November, and in December, only 77.

The good news was that several prominent former POC's and long-term refuseniks were allowed to emigrate, including Benjamin Bogomolny, Eliahu Essas, David Goldfarb, Isai and Grigori Goldshtein, Yakov Gorodetsky, Iosif Irlin, Isaac Kogan, and Yaakov Mesh. In addition, after a major public campaign, Mikhail Shirman's sister, Inessa Fleurova, was belatedly allowed to go to Israel to provide her critically ill brother with a desperately needed bone marrow transplant. In the case of Goldfarb, as well as Shirman, Soviet concern for these individuals was delivered with a cynical twist.

Shirman's request for permission to go to Israel had been made in the spring. The need for the transplant was urgent then, but it was only in the weeks which followed the Reykjavik meeting that Ms. Fleurova was granted permission. According to Israeli medical specialists, her release may have come too late to save her brother's life.

In the case of the 68-year-old David Goldfarb, a Soviet "information effort" was also evident. His son, Alex, with NCSJ assistance, had lobbied for years for his family's right to emigrate. Less than one week after the conclusion of the Reykjavik meeting, David Goldfarb and his wife were finally allowed to leave, aboard the private plane of Occidental Petroleum Chairman, Dr. Armand Hammer. Shortly after Goldfarb's arrival in the United States, he was found to be suffering from lung cancer, offering tragic proof that he had not received adequate medical attention in the Soviet Union.

There were also repeated refusals, often of long-suffering individuals, as in the case of Professor Naum Meiman and his wife, Inna, who is critically ill with cancer. The 74-year-old scientist was a member of the Helsinki Monitoring Group and has been repeatedly denied his wish to be reunited with his daughter. In addition, Inna Meiman has sought specialized medical treatment for her condition. In mid-December, following a visit to Moscow by Senator Gary D. Hart, Inna Meiman was told that she alone would be given a travel permit, but only to seek necessary medical treatment, after which she must return.

There seemed to be no end to acts of individual harassment and arrests. In some cases, there were convictions on trumped-up charges and imprisonment under harsh conditions. In January, Soviet militiamen and plainclothes police raided an apartment in Razliv,

near Leningrad, on a Friday evening, compelling Jews celebrating the Sabbath to stand for hours outside in the cold, under the pretext of holding a religious ceremony in "unauthorized premises." A few weeks later, in the same city, two women were arrested and released after having telephoned friends in Israel.

In March, the telephone of Professor Meiman was disconnected. The authorities made no allowance for either his age or his wife's terminal illness. Virtually at the same time, Aleksei Magarik, a 27-year-old cellist and Hebrew teacher, and a refusenik since 1984, was arrested on false drug possession charges as he was about to board a plane for Tbilisi. He was subsequently tried, convicted and sentenced to three years in prison, where he has been housed with dangerous criminals and beaten repeatedly. Appeals on his behalf remained unheard, and he joined the other Jewish Prisoners of Conscience, nearly half of whom have been sentenced since Gorbachev came to power. In the last eight months, alarming news continued to reach the West of the physical abuse of several Jewish prisoners, especially Magarik, Yuli Edelshtein, Iosif Begun and Vladimir Lifshitz.

RELIGIOUS VISE TIGHTENED

Holiday periods were especially difficult for Soviet Jews. During Passover, there was a shortage of matzoh (unleavened bread) in most areas with a large Jewish population. Only 130 tons were baked in Moscow, as opposed to 170 tons in 1978 and 150 tons in both 1979 and 1980.

The Purim holiday was marred in Kishinev by KGB raids on private homes where parties were being held. In Moscow and Leningrad, authorities merely issued warnings cautioning prospective hosts against attempting to celebrate.

Private Judaic religious study became a prime target of official pressure. 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 dealing with the separation of church and state, since "education is the province of the state." Despite the fact that for Jews a synagogue is a place of worship and study, among the reported allegations were studying Talmud after the morning service and organizing an unregistered religious group.

One month later, Ze'ev Dashevsky of Moscow was warned by a government official 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," a sign that authorities might attempt to further isolate refuseniks.

Holding Sabbath services and holiday parties, attending religious study groups or synagogue services, organizing private study groups and meeting with foreigners, plus making telephone calls to other countries, are basic rights as defined in the Helsinki Accords in 1975 and reemphasized in the final document of the 1983 Madrid follow-up conference. Nevertheless, Soviet authorities seemed to imply that only narrowly defined religious prayer services in synagogue would be acceptable.

There was a report on September 9 of the destruction of a Moscow mikvah (ritual bath). During a visit to the United States in October, under the auspices of the New York-based Appeal to Conscience Foundation, Konstantin Karchev, Chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs in the USSR, told a press conference that since the mikvah had been constructed in "violation of the building code," it was temporarily closed and would be opened as soon as possible. In any event, he insisted that it had not been destroyed. Independent verification by the NCSJ in December indicated that the mikvah was, in fact, sealed. Karchev also denounced Westerners who, he alleged, had spread lies provided by Soviet citizens concerning the destruction of the mikvah, and other Soviet Jewry issues.

SOVIET TACTICAL SHIFTS

In public and private discussions with corporate executives and government officials from the West, it was clear that Gorbachev is aware of the extent of the desire for family reunification and emigration 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 Basket 3 of the Helsinki Accords, which focuses heavily upon the reunion of families. The Kremlin leader sought to meet Western criticism with vigorous, but nonspecific, public assertions about Soviet commitments to the "humanitarian" aspirations of the Helsinki agreement.

Gorbachev had agreed to participate in a joint statement with President Ronald Reagan at the Geneva Summit in November 1985, which, inter alia, pledged the resolution of "humanitarian cases in the spirit of cooperation." He had made a similar statement on French television two months earlier, when he noted 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." (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 five or ten 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 guide Soviet decision-making in the international arena, including the handling "in a humane and positive spirit" of questions related to the "reunification of families." In July, at a Moscow dinner honoring French President Francois Mitterrand, Gorbachev promised that the USSR was prepared for "international cooperation on humanitarian problems, and these were not mere words."

It seemed that, for Jews, these remained "mere words," as illustrated by the reality of Soviet policy. For example, as measured by arrivals in Vienna, the number of Jews granted exit visas to Israel had dipped drastically to one of the lowest monthly averages since 1964, 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 over 13,000 Jews left, marking the year when meaningful Jewish emigration began. It grew to significant numbers throughout the seventies, and reached a high point in 1979, when over 51,000 permits were granted.

What makes this recent development significant is that an experts' meeting under the "Helsinki Process" dealing with "human contacts" and reunion of families took place in Bern, Switzerland, in April and May. Moscow had no hesitancy in abridging the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act dealing with "human contacts," just prior to and during the meeting. It also attempted, in effect, to "close the book" on Jewish emigration.

At Bern the Kremlin attempted to promote several new policy lines. In private meetings with Western delegations, Soviet delegates 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 US or Canada were contemptuously referred to as "illegals."

Especially significant was a Soviet maneuver to remove Jewish emigration to Israel entirely from the agenda. The Soviet delegation sought to limit the granting of visas for family visits and reunion of families to "participating states," i.e., the 35 North American and European signatories to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, acknowledging they wanted to prevent "reunion of families" in Israel.

The new posture had ominous, broader overtones. The Soviet Union seemed to be pressing to consider Basket 3 a "finished subject." At previous meetings, Soviet representatives linked progress in Jewish emigration to improved bilateral and multilateral relations. Such references were absent in Bern.

After the Soviet initiative was rebuffed, the Soviet delegate exploded at a closed session when US Ambassador Michael Novak distributed a list of Soviet citizens, mostly Jewish refuseniks, seeking reunification with relatives in Israel. In a rare burst of public anger, the Soviet delegate used the tactical reversal evident in media appearances and public encounters, calling the list "libelous" and charging that it smacked of "McCarthyism."

Other Soviet maneuvering in discussions on human rights included charging the West with a variety of rights violations, and the recitation of social ills, including racial discrimination. This newest round seemed designed to obscure mounting accusations that Moscow was avoiding fulfillment of its own human rights obligations under the Helsinki Accords.

In July, the Soviet Union engaged in another attempt to defuse criticism by opening a Department of Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs in the Foreign Ministry. This was soon followed by the establishment of a Human Rights Commission, to be composed of intellectuals, workers and journalists, ostensibly to correct Western "distorted opinion" concerning human rights in the Soviet Union, and to be used in future Helsinki Accords follow-up meetings and summits. In part, this may have been an effort to create a counterforce to the highly vocal and effective US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

REYKJAVIK SUMMIT MEETING

Midyear saw the gearing-up of the organized American Jewish community for an anticipated second summit between the US and the USSR, which was tentatively scheduled for late 1986. The NCSJ set in motion the community-wide "Campaign to Summit II," with Congressional leadership joining in the Washington launching of a Petition Campaign, while Secretary of State George P. Shultz received a position paper from the NCSJ, entitled Rescuing Soviet Jewry. To facilitate activities, Summit Watch, a periodic newsletter, was launched.

Even as preparations went ahead for the anticipated summit, the case of Nicholas Daniloff, the Moscow correspondent of U.S. News and World Report, exploded. Daniloff was charged with "possession of state secrets," and was arrested in Moscow. Speculation became rife as to whether there would in fact be a summit. To the surprise of many, on September 30 President Reagan announced that he and General Secretary Gorbachev would meet in what was initially viewed as a pre-summit meeting, in Iceland on October 11-12. Seemingly, to help smooth the path to Reykjavik, Daniloff was released and Secretary of State Shultz announced that Moscow had also freed the noted dissident Yuri Orlov. Symptomatically, none of the Jewish refuseniks or Prisoners of Conscience previously mentioned for possible "summit release" were included in the arrangement, promoting great apprehension in the Jewish community about Soviet intentions.

Following NCSJ negotiations with the Iceland government, a Jewish leadership delegation traveled to Reykjavik on October 10 to hold a press conference and to depart the same day. It was held at the official venue of the Iceland Media Center and attended by more than 100 members of the international media. Participants also included former refuseniks and relatives of Jews still in the Soviet Union, whose presence in Iceland was facilitated by the NCSJ.

The Soviet Union countered the event by holding a "human rights" press briefing at the same hour, at their nearby headquarters in the Saga Hotel. The briefing was but one element in a well-orchestrated public information campaign. There were other briefings at which they even accepted, but declined to answer, questions from former refuseniks concerning both general human rights issues and personal requests, preferring instead to schedule private meetings.

Thus, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov and Samuil Zivs, Deputy Chairman of the "Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public," listened "patiently" while former refuseniks told of the plight of their relatives and friends seeking to emigrate. Other Soviet officials strolled through the lobby of the hotel, which housed many American journalists, offering friendly greetings and pausing to answer questions.

When Alex Goldfarb and Aleksandr Slepak, son of Vladimir and Maria Slepak, encountered Soviet Ambassador to the United States Yuri Dubinin on a flight returning to the US from Reykjavik, they were invited to talk about their cases at the Soviet embassy in Washington. Ambassador Dubinin's invitation proved to be another gesture lacking substance, as the young men were shunted to minor functionaries. Vladimir Slepak still awaits permission to emigrate, and David Goldfarb's release seemed more the result of intervention by Dr. Armand Hammer, a frequent visitor to the USSR. Goldfarb flew to the United States on Dr. Hammer's personal plane, when the industrialist returned from a series of meetings with Soviet officials.

Although the exploitation of the anxieties of former refuseniks, and their own "media accessibility" were, on the surface, effective tools in the Soviet public information campaign, the Jewish presence in Reykjavik accomplished its own goals. The overall assessment was that Soviet Jewish rights had become a major issue at Reykjavik and could not be avoided as a summit agenda item in the future. "The status of Soviet Jews has emerged in advance as a central topic at the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting here this weekend," began a page one story in the October 11 New York Times. This was clearly a major shift away from previous positions at summit meetings when human rights, if discussed at all, were dealt with in a relatively unpublicized way. Also mentioned was the fact that "A special delegation from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, headed by its chairman, Morris B. Abram, flew in from New York . . . carrying a two foot package of information on the 11,000 (Refuseniks in the Soviet Union)."

Two days later, Secretary of State Shultz spoke on the subject of human rights issues in Reykjavik and declared that "The issue of human rights was brought up on a number of occasions and some very significant material (furnished by the NCSJ) was passed to the Soviet Union, which they accepted, that stated not only our views, but, in detail, things about Jewish emigration, the numbers of people who have signified their desire to leave, lists of people, things of that kind." Afterward, at the National Press Club in Washington, the Secretary reiterated the NCSJ's help, "which enabled us to make a powerful presentation" (at the Iceland meeting).

HELSINKI PROCESS FOLLOW-UP MEETING

Reykjavik was followed by the convening in Vienna of the Third Review Meeting, under the so-called "Helsinki Process," of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The session, which opened on November 4, was scheduled to last until July 1987.

In the first six weeks it was apparent that the United States, Britain and other Western delegations were continuing their policy of engaging the Soviet Union on human rights issues. In debates, speeches, papers and confrontations with Soviet delegates, US

delegation head Ambassador Warren Zimmerman and his colleagues pressed the Soviet Union concerning Prisoners of Conscience, long-term refuseniks and the campaign of harassment, arrest, imprisonment and abuse of Jews in the USSR.

The Soviet Union countered with citations of Western human rights "violations" and again assumed an aggressive, active role when it called for the convening of a "Conference on Development of Humanitarian Cooperation" in Moscow. The Soviet Union also released details of a new Codification of Emigration Decree, which it described as "liberalizing" procedures. In fact, the timing may have been designed to obscure complaints about the reality of Soviet emigration practices, when Moscow faced public criticism for human rights violations at the Review Conference. Rumors continued to circulate among the hopeful that Moscow would actually use the decree, when it became operational on January 1, 1987, to loosen up some of the backlog in Jewish emigration.

In a paper prepared for the meeting, NCSJ Chairman Morris B. Abram, who served as a public member of the US delegation, wrote that "Whereas the Soviet Union disputes the fact that it has violated any arms agreements, there is no question that it has flagrantly violated the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords. Why is the Soviet Union so scared of simple men and women, who just want to leave and go somewhere else? Why is the Soviet Union so frightened by the thought of a Hebrew teacher or a housewife wanting to leave, that it feels the need to crush them, and all those like them, unrelentingly, remorselessly? What sort of inner demon are they fighting? What sort of insecurity are they suppressing, that the Soviet Union can't just let them go?"

Commenting on the new Soviet approach, Ambassador Samuel G. Wise of the United States delegation described the Soviet attitude at the Vienna meeting: "As someone who has seen something of the CSCE process, I have witnessed a gradual change in Soviet official attitudes toward the human rights debate. From the sullen stonewall of the Belgrade Conference, characterized by the bogus claims of intervention in internal affairs, we have now reached the point where the East appears to be enthusiastically engaging in a human rights debate, and some Eastern countries, but not always the Soviet Union, are actually offering some minimal response to Western concerns. In the realm of real-life implementation, although the Soviet gestures have been largely superficial and incidental, the fairly steady stream of high-profile case resolutions has been clearly aimed at satisfying worldwide concerns over Soviet human rights violations."

NEW DECREE CODIFIES EMIGRATION

The Codification of Emigration Decree was issued by the Supreme Soviet on November 6, 1986. Purportedly progressive, it was soon viewed by Jewish activists in the Soviet Union, and by many outside analysts, as potentially thwarting Jewish efforts at family reunification and repatriation to Israel. There had been some hope of a positive shift in policy when some refuseniks noted that the decree, which updated a 1970 statute, had by implication recognized that departure was not a "criminal act," and that under certain conditions "ordinary citizens" could depart from the USSR.

A close reading of the text suggested that the formal rules actually offered little hope for hundreds of thousands, mostly Jews, seeking the right to leave. That included the refuseniks who have applied for and have been refused permission to go to Israel. The decree codified what had been restrictive practices operational since 1980, which allowed Jews to leave only on the basis of family reunification, rather than as a fundamental right. Seemingly humanitarian, it now fixed in law the narrow definition of family as including parents, children and siblings, condemning hundreds of thousands of people from ever applying for, much less receiving, permission to leave.

The new decree left Soviet authorities with absolute power to reject applications for emigration. It ignored many of the human rights provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the more recent Helsinki Accords, to which the Soviet Union is signatory. This cast doubt on the full adherence by the Soviet Union, in the future, to other international covenants or accords.

The decree continued the practice of withholding permission from those who have "knowledge of state secrets." While a state may have legitimate security concerns, the decree does not define the term, nor does it contain a ceiling on time. This vagueness is consonant with the Soviet practice of arbitrarily denying the right to repatriate to Israel to thousands of families.

Forgotten was Mikhail Gorbachev's promise that such cases would be resolved within five years or, at a maximum, ten 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 were identified as waiting between five and ten years for exit visas; nearly 100 of them have waited for over ten years.

November also saw the death of ailing refusenik Haim Elbert, only two days after learning of his latest denial of permission to emigrate, based on false charges against his son. In December, Efraim Rozenshtein, the 17-year-old son of prominent Orthodox refuseniks Grigory and Natalia Rozenshtein, who first applied to emigrate and were refused in 1974, was threatened with military conscription, thus dimming the family's hope to emigrate. Efraim was only five years old at the time of the family's first application and refusal. After twelve years, the young man was being threatened with the charge of "draft evasion," a favorite ploy concerning refuseniks.

The Elbert and Rozenshtein cases underscored the absolute, and often cruel, power vested in Soviet authorities to prohibit emigration.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The United States government was well informed, at the highest level, concerning the Soviet record on Jewish emigration. After receiving a NCSJ Position Paper in September, Secretary of State Shultz concluded that the situation of Soviet Jewry is "bleak and deteriorating."

On December 3, State Department spokesman Charles Redman was quoted as saying that Soviet compliance with human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords remained "seriously flawed." Two days later, President Reagan, responding to an earlier letter from NCSJ Chairman Morris B. Abram, expressing appreciation for United States efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry at the Reykjavik meeting, wrote that, "The plight of Soviet Jewry is a matter of deep personal concern to me and to the other members of the United States government."

In his letter, the president noted that "Our thorough preparation for Reykjavik was also due in great part to information provided by private American Jewish organizations. In this connection," the president continued, "let me thank you for the materials on Soviet Jewish emigration that you gave Secretary Shultz. . . . We were able to make good use of them both in Reykjavik and Moscow."

The president concluded, "Please accept my assurances that the tragic circumstances of Soviet Jews will continue to be an issue of the highest priority in all our dealings with the Soviet Union. We will not forget how much they suffer because of their desire to live in freedom and practice their religion without persecution, and we will do everything in our power to help them."

THE PRIORITY FOR JEWISH ACTIVISTS

Despite the continuing commitment of concern from the United States and other Western governments, the year ended with little real change in sight. Nevertheless, hoping for significant progress in the near future, Jewish activists in the Soviet Union articulated what they considered to be basic principles which would affect their destiny.

In over a dozen petitions to reach the West, those Jews pursuing informal Jewish study wanted their activities to be formalized. Hebrew, alone among modern or ancient languages, could not be taught to or studied by ordinary citizens. It remained under a virtual ban and those attempting to teach continued to face harassment and imprisonment. The need to have an acceptable means for studying and passing on Jewish religious and cultural traditions was of significant concern to Jews, especially the young.

For many, however, the primary goal remained repatriation to Israel and reunification with kin. In pursuit of these objectives, refuseniks developed a set of minimum guidelines which the National Conference endorsed, namely: immediate exit visas to those in refusal for ten years or more; an exit visa within one year to those in refusal for five to ten years; an exit visa within two years to all those who have received a refusal; and, as a matter of priority, the release of the Prisoners of Conscience, according to an agreed-upon timetable, based on the length and percentage of time already served in prison or labor camp. The proposals also sought immediate exit visas for all former prisoners who have applied to go to Israel; the granting of exit visas within five years after the end of a security job for those refused on security grounds, or on grounds of military service; and a controlled rate of future exit visas for all applicants, as part of an institutionalized process which allowed more than 51,000 Jews to exit in 1979.

THE JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT

Questions concerning the Jackson-Vanik Amendment continued to be raised in the Congress, notably after Soviet intimations of increased emigration were hinted at in the press. The amendment, officially known as the Freedom of Emigration Amendment to the Trade Reform Act (1974), denies favorable trade status and commercial credit to the Soviet Union and other communist countries that restrict emigration. It provides that its restrictions may be waived, year by year, if the president finds that there is a significant change in these restrictive policies. It has been a controversial law, but it remains a clear and effective expression of US commitment as it pertains to the rights of Soviet Jews and others.

Supporters of the amendment insisted that, despite the well-publicized cases affording freedom to a small number of individuals, there has been no sign of any real change. Since the emigration of Soviet Jews has actually diminished, while the harassment of Jewish cultural activists and would-be emigrants has increased, no change in the law or its application was appropriate.

The NCSJ, and its constituent agencies, did suggest flexibility to the Administration, and told Soviet officials privately and publicly that "Goodwill can be achieved, but concrete results must be forthcoming." This was emphasized in one of several newspaper ads printed throughout the year, including September 19, when Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze visited the United States.

In May, a coalition of Jewish groups stated:

"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 US 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.

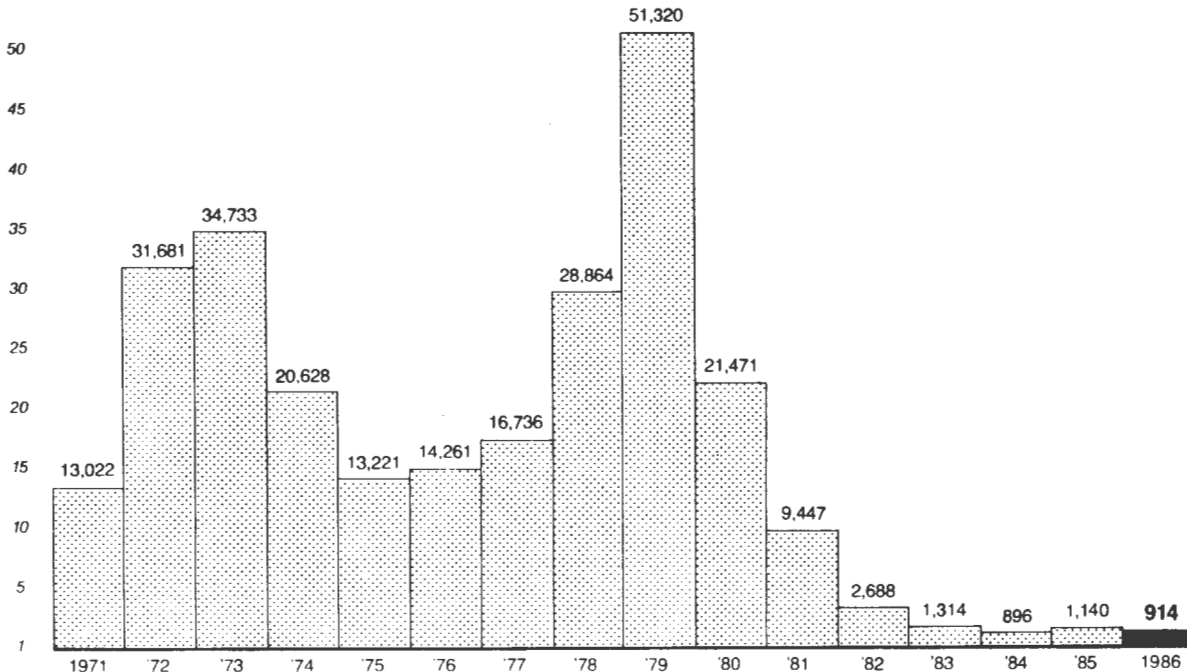
"In the end we continue to hope that the Soviet Union will allow emigration to increase. This is not just a 'Jewish issue' or a 'Western issue.' It is a fundamental matter of human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights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

In the end, if the Soviet Union wanted to demonstrate that there is substance to the much-heralded promise of "openness" and a society with a new and human face, as well as to demonstrate that it lives up to international commitments, it need only free the Prisoners of Conscience, including those whom it has incarcerated for teaching Hebrew and insisting on the right to be repatriated to Israel; grant visas to the thousands of refuseniks; and start issuing visas to the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews who have initiated the emigration procedure by requesting and receiving invitations from Israel.

January 1987

Jewish Emigration from the USSR

Thousands



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NEWSBREAK

FEBRUARY 11, 1987
NB 3-87

INNA MEIMAN DIES

NEW YORK -- INNA KITROSSKAYA MEIMAN, the wife of long-term refusenik NAUM MEIMAN, died February 9 at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, three weeks after she was allowed to go abroad for treatment of an inoperable tumor on her neck. She was 53 years old and had been waiting years for permission to leave the USSR. Mrs. Meiman, a teacher of English, was married to Professor Meiman in 1981. At the time of her own departure, Mrs. Meiman said she was leaving with "mixed feelings," since her husband had to stay behind. She is survived by a son from a previous marriage, LEO KITROSSKY, a scientist in Moscow with three children, who is also a refusenik.

ZELICHONOK GETS EARLY RELEASE

MOSCOW -- Hebrew teacher ROALD (ALEK) ZELICHONOK was released on February 6 after serving half of his three-year sentence. In hearings before two separate courts, Zelichonok was declared "reformed" and told his wife he was being released "conditionally" until the end of his term in the summer of 1988. After a 57-hour train ride, he was reunited with his wife GALINA in Moscow. They plan to continue their nine-year struggle to emigrate to Israel.

BEGUNS AND FRIENDS DEMONSTRATE

MOSCOW -- On Monday, February 9, a group of refuseniks joined IOSIF BEGUN'S wife INNA, his son BORIS (pictured right) and Boris's wife and daughter in a one-hour demonstration in front of the Ministry of Education. Holding placards calling for Iosif's release, they were protected from an unfriendly crowd by local militia.



In a conversation with the NCSJ immediately following her return home, Inna declared she, Boris and friends would continue demonstrating each day until Iosif is free.

REFUSENIKS OBJECT TO NEW REGULATIONS

MOSCOW -- The new Soviet emigration regulations, which became effective January 1, have drawn wide criticism from the Jewish refusenik community. More than 80 refuseniks wrote to Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and Comrade Smirityukov, Office Manager of the Council, detailing their objections.

The signatories, which included ALEKSANDR LERNER, VLADIMIR SLEPAK, VIKTOR FULMAKHT, LEV OVSISHCHER, FANYA BERENSHTEIN, LEONID YUZEFOVICH, YURI CHERNIAK, EVGENY LIBERMAN, PAVEL and MARTA ABRAMOVICH, YAKOV AKUTA and his wife ZHANNA UDALOVA, detailed their objections and accused the formulators of the regulations of vagueness and clouding their intentions under a "veil of mystery." They also asked that the authorities state their reasons for refusal in writing, and that the conditions for legal appeal be stipulated.

NEWSBREAK

-2-

LEV ELBERT'S WIFE PROTESTS TO RAISA GORBACHEV

KIEV -- Following the latest refusal by the OVIR to grant a visa to LEV ELBERT (NEWSBREAK, January 23), his wife, DR. INNA MIZRUKHINA ELBERT, wrote a strongly-worded letter to Mrs. Raisa Gorbachev. Excerpts as follows:

"During all these years we have been subjected to various forms of harassment which reached their culmination when my husband was convicted for his refusal to take part in military training and then on a trumped-up charge for allegedly smuggling drugs into prison.

"At the time my husband was arrested, his parents and I had to knock on every door at the Procurator's office and at the offices of the Central Committee, and I had to hold a 53-day hunger strike to prove his innocence.

"His parents are no more. What additional sacrifices will I have to make in order to be able to see my 70-year-old mother, and in order to prevent my son from sharing his father's fate?"

REFUSENIKS MAY SUE ANTI-SEMITIC PUBLICATION

MOSCOW -- The group of academic refuseniks who earlier wrote to Mikhail Gorbachev, denouncing the anti-Semitism masquerading as scholarship in A. Z. Romanenko's "On the Class Essence of Zionism" (NEWSBREAK, January 5), are now considering taking legal action against the book's publisher, Leninizdat, on the grounds that, officially, anti-Semitism is illegal in the USSR.

WIVES REFUSE OVIR OFFER

ODESSA -- HANNA NEPOMNIASHCHY and her daughter, YEHUDIT LEVIN, were called to the OVIR January 26 and told they could leave the country without their husbands. Hanna's husband, MARK, and Yehudit's husband, YAKOV, are serving three-year sentences. The women refused to leave without them. The OVIR officials remarked, "You'd better leave now, or you'll miss the boat."

Yehudit is scheduled to visit Yakov in his Dzerzhinsk labor camp. Her mother is planning to accompany her.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR MAGARIK

MOSCOW -- In an unusual admission, the Administration of Prisons have officially told NATALIA RATNER that they were in error when they put her husband, ALEKSEY MAGARIK, in a prison block reserved for hardened prisoners. She had conducted a relentless campaign to have Aleksey removed to the general camp area after he spent several weeks in the notorious Unit 16 of the Omsk labor camp in Siberia. The director of the camp has been dismissed and Unit 16 dissolved.

However, Aleksey was kept for 14 days in an isolation cell; the reason unknown.

After a 16-hour flight to the Kamchatka labor camp, ANNA LIFSHITZ (Leningrad), was allowed to visit her husband, VLADIMIR -- but for just four hours. "It is unbearably cold there," Anna told a friend. "You can imagine how difficult it is to work in a camp in such conditions."

FAINA BERENSHTEN (Kiev) hopes to be allowed to visit her husband, IOSIF, on February 29. Her daughter, YANNA DEGTYAREV will accompany her. Faina has not seen Iosif since last August.

NEWSBREAK

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60 WOMEN ON HUNGER STRIKE

About 60 women from seven cities in the Soviet Union, including Moscow, Leningrad and Riga, are undertaking a three-day hunger strike, starting March 7th, to dramatize their request for permission to emigrate to Israel. The women chose this particular time to coincide with the International Women's Day, a holiday in the Soviet Union celebrated on March 8.

Among those participating from Moscow will be MARTA ABRAMOVICH, YELENA DUBYANSKAYA, YELENA KLOTS, ADA LVOVSKAYA, YEVGENYA LUKATSKAYA, YUDIT LURIE, TATYANA ULANOVSKAYA, RIMMA YAKIR, INA USPENSKY; from Leningrad, IDA TARATUTA, NELLI SHPEIZMAN, YELIZAVETA SHAPIRA; and from Riga, RAISA GAMARNIK, DZEMMA SMIRNOVA, and AGNESSA FRIDMAN.

REFUSENIK UPDATE

VLADIMIR TSUKERMAN (Kishinev); KLAUDIA PANAREYVA (Sukumi) and her son, ALEXANDER, a former POC; and SEMION ASH and ANATOLY CHECHIK (Leningrad) were asked to re-submit requests for exit visas. ...VALERY PEVZNER (Odessa) has also reapplied.

GIRSCH VAISER (Beltsy) was refused again in December. When he tried to reapply in January, the OVIR told him that they knew nothing about the new regulations. ...Long-term refuseniks MARAT OSNIS (Chernovtsy) and DAVID VODOVOZ (Kishinev) were also refused again. ...VLADIMIR RAIZ (Vilnius), a refusenik for 14 years, was told that he and his family will not be allowed out until the year 2,000. MARK CHERNOBRODOV (Vilnius) was given the same answer. ...VLADIMIR KISLIK (Moscow), a refusenik for 13 years, and a former POC, was again refused February 2.

HAYA KOKHINA (Vilnius) has died of cancer. Several weeks ago, she asked local authorities to allow her daughter, SOFIA LANDVER, now living in Israel, to visit her. The request was turned down. ...According to her friends, former POC NAZDEZHDA FRADKOVA (Leningrad) is depressed and losing hope that she will ever be let out.

BORIS KLOTS (Moscow), who has been threatened with dismissal from his job for some time, believes that his employment problems will be resolved before the end of March. ...There was an unofficial exhibition of some 100 paintings in a Leningrad home January 23. One of the artists was MIKHAIL TARATUTA, the 26-year-old son of refuseniks IDA and ABA.

YURI FIODOROV (Moscow), one of the two non-Jews sentenced at the Leningrad trial, will leave the Soviet Union within a month.

Permission: ALBERT BURSHTAIN and his family, LEONIN KLEINMAN (Leningrad); DAVID SOLOVEICHIK, EVGENY CHUDNOVSKY, LILI ZATUCHNAYA, and EFRIM PITKOVSKY (Kharkov); VALERY SORIN, ELENA KHASINA DINABURG, LOLA VOLKOVISKAYA, MIKHAIL SHIPOV (Moscow); DORA KONSTANTINOVSKAY (Rustaveli); MARK POLONSKY (Kishinev); DAVID SHEKHTER (Odessa); (SUMUIL REIKHEL (Tallin); SOLOMON FLAKS and his family (Donetsk); MIKHAIL FRUMKER (Vinnitsa).

Arrived in Israel: MIKHAIL ELMAN (Leningrad); DIMA IOFFE (Moscow) -- Merkaz Klitah, Gilo Bet, Jerusalem; AHARON MUNBLIT (Kishinev) -- c/o Gorenshtein, Kehilat Prag 8/14, Petakah Tikva.

NEWSBREAK

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PARITSKY PUT ON HOLD

KHANKOV -- The Gosstandart Institute in Kharkov, which six years stripped ALEKSANDR PARITSKY of his Scientific degree (Candidate of Technical Sciences), appears to be the principal obstacle to his being given an exit visa. When Paritsky was recently invited to OVIR, he was encouraged when the officials greeted him with unusual civility - previously he had been harangued and openly insulted - but his satisfaction was rapidly dispelled when he was told that he would not be allowed to leave either then, or for the foreseeable future, as his former employers at the Institute refuse to lift his classification of secrecy.

Paritsky, whose 49th birthday is on March 12, first applied for an exit visa with his wife, POLINA, and their two daughters in 1976. Their application was turned down on the grounds of state security.

Aleksandr was arrested in August 1981 for allegedly "defaming the Soviet state," and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Since his release in August 1984, Paritsky has mainly worked as a stoker for central heating boilers.

RELIGIOUS FAMILIES ASK FOR REPATRIATION

TBILISI -- The families of ALEX FEIGIN and ANAIDA VEISTUKH, and the families of DMITRY PALANKER (Yerevan) and BORIS KOPEICKIS (Baku), have written an open letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, insisting that "repatriation to Israel" be considered as vital a reason for emigration as "reunification of families."

The families, all deeply religious, wrote that only in Israel could they fulfill the commandments, study in Jewish schools and yeshivot, and raise their children in a Jewish atmosphere.

NEW REGULATIONS MAY SPELL MORE TROUBLE

MOSCOW -- When applying for an exit visa, the mother of MARK ZILOTOVSKY was told that, anyone wishing to leave must submit documents, not including birth or death certificates, every six months. Officials will request approvals in writing from all members of the family, including brothers and sisters. Mark believes that, because officials are becoming even stricter about regulations, many people will be reluctant to apply.

INNA MEIMAN'S SON ARRIVES IN U.S. IN TIME FOR FUNERAL

WASHINGTON -- LEV KITROSSKY, the late INNA MEIMAN'S son from a previous marriage, was granted just one week by Soviet authorities to attend his mother's funeral. Lev, 27, a Moscow refusenik, arrived here just as her plain pine coffin was being carried from a synagogue for burial.

Inna, the wife of NAUM MEIMAN (a refusenik since 1974), died February 9 at Georgetown University Hospital, where she had been undergoing treatment for cancer. For years, Naum waged a vigorous campaign for permission for her to come to the United States for treatment, but Soviet authorities relented only a month ago -- too late to save her life.

"Soviet bureaucracy condemned Inna to a slow death by red tape," Rabbi Lyle Fishman said during the funeral service. Lev remembered his mother as a cheerful woman who managed to enjoy life despite the pain of cancer.

NEWSBREAK

MARCH 5, 1987

NB 4-87

BEGUN FREED, COMES HOME TO CHEERS

MOSCOW -- IOSIF BEGUN came home February 23, but said that, until Soviet Jews have the right to return to their homeland, "the process of democratization will be just a kind of show, nothing more -- not something real."

Iosif was greeted by his wife, INNA, and their son, Boris, and a cheering crowd who lifted him to their shoulders, threw flowers, and sang songs in Hebrew when he arrived at Kazan Station after a 30-hour trip from Chistopol prison in the Tatar republic. Iosif believes he was the last political prisoner at Chistopol sentenced under the vague law prohibiting "anti-Soviet activity."

Iosif, a mathematician and radio engineer, was released after serving more than three and a half years of a 12-year sentence. It was the third time he had been sentenced after he applied in 1971 to emigrate to Israel.

Speaking above the happy voices of friends who squeezed into the Begun apartment to celebrate his release, Iosif said that he had agreed not to engage in "anti-Soviet activity" on the condition that harassment of Soviet Jews be stopped and the right to emigrate, be unified with family, and study Jewish history and language be guaranteed.

Five straight days of unprecedented demonstrations on behalf of Iosif Begun may have hastened his release. The protest, led by Inna and BORIS Begun, despite harsh warnings to them from authorities, began on Arbat Street, February 9. News film and photographs of Soviet druzhnniki (auxiliary police) kicking and dragging away screaming demonstrators -- and a few Western reporters -- appeared nightly on television screens and in newspapers throughout the world.

8 REFUSENIKS TOLD THEY WILL NEVER LEAVE

MOSCOW -- Iosif Begun's release was tempered by a statement from the OVIR office here, identifying eight refuseniks who have been prevented from emigrating because they were once employed in what the government still contends was secret work. In an unusual move, the list was released publicly in the newspaper Vechernaya Moskva.

Two of the Jews, ALEXANDER LERNER, a computer specialist, and VLADIMIR SLEPAK, who once worked in the Television Research Institute, have been trying to emigrate for more than 15 years. Much of their work, like that of the Jews listed below, is now outdated or has become public knowledge throughout the world.

The other refuseniks on the official list were VALERY SOIFER, a geneticist, YULIAN KHASIN, a computer engineer, NATALYA KHASINA, a mathematician, YULI KOSHAROVISKY, (pictured right) an electronics engineer, RAKHLENKO, an engineer, and LEV SUD, a musician whose wife, ALLA, is a computer programmer.



BREAK**NEWS**

- 2 -

**8 REFUSENIKS
TOLD THEY WILL
NEVER LEAVE**
 continued . . .

Lerner, Zepak, and Kosharovsky are consulting lawyers about the possibility of prosecuting the OVIR authorities. "I have rarely been so angry as when I saw the boxed announcement in the paper," said Lerner. "A legal action will have the effect of informing us exactly what our so-called 'secrecy classification' really consists of. To publish things like that caused all of us deep distress. It is mental cruelty."

Meanwhile, the Anti-Defamation League has published a list of 11,000 Jews who have been repeatedly refused permission to leave the Soviet Union. The 931-page document was read aloud February 26 at rallies held in the United States and 42 other nations, under the auspices of B'nai B'rith International.

POC ROUNDUP

The cases of LEONID VOLVOVSKY, MARK NEPOMNIASHCHY, YAKOV LEVIN, and VLADIMIR LIFSHITZ, all sentenced for "defaming the Soviet state," are under review.

Sergey Kulik, a Moscow political observer, mentioned Mark and Yakov in a broadcast February 14, stating that when and if they were freed "no one is going to keep them in the Soviet Union."

In a letter to his wife, ANNA, Vladimir wrote that he had been asked to sign an appeal for clemency and did. He was told by a prosecutor that his request for clemency would not interfere with the review of his file. Vladimir added that anti-Semitism in the camp had reached its peak and was hard to describe. He continues to face extreme difficulties from camp authorities in his work and medical condition.

Mark also signed a clemency appeal. Yakov refused but signed a request for amnesty.

According to the French Press Agency, Tass published a list of prisoners whose files will be reviewed. Included were Lifshits and YULI EDELSHTEIN, LEONID VOLVOSKY, and ALEKSEY MAGARIK.

That leaves only IOSIF BERENSHTEIN, who is serving a four-year sentence for allegedly "resisting the police in the course of their duty," His wife, FANYA, (pictured right) burst into tears when she told a friend, "It appears that Iosif is being singled out for a reason I don't understand. I applied for his release when he served one-half of his sentence. I applied again last January when Mr. Gorbachev spoke of his new policy. I heard nothing on either occasion."

MILA VOLVOVSKY was rebuked by a KGB officer because of her activities on behalf of LEONID. He reproached the publication of letters in the West and the broadcasting of appeals on Kol Israel. The officer told her she should be quiet now that her husband's file is being reviewed.

ALEKSEY MAGARIK wrote his wife that he suffers from heavy coughing and that he is afraid he might have contracted tuberculosis.

In a letter to his wife, TANYA, YULI EDELSHTEIN wrote that he was hospitalized on February 13th. According to health authorities, he is in hospital in Novosibirsk for medical tests ordered by the physician who performed his urological surgery.

Tanya received a reply to a letter she sent to Gorbachev, in which she asked permission to leave the Soviet Union. The answer was that her request will be considered only after Yuli's release from prison.





National Conference on Soviet Jewry

STATEMENT OF MORRIS B. ABRAM, CHAIRMAN,
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY AND
CHAIRMAN, CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF
MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
APRIL 1, 1987

At a meeting convened this morning by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), in cooperation with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the World Jewish Congress (WJC), Morris B. Abram, NCSJ chairman, reported on his recent visit to Moscow, undertaken with Edgar Bronfman, WJC President.

The meeting, attended by nearly 150 Jewish communal leaders, provided an opportunity for the first assessment of the two leaders' visit. There was strong support for Mr. Bronfman's and Mr. Abram's conclusion that, while there appeared to be a changing atmosphere in the Soviet Union, genuine progress would be measured in terms of Soviet performance on the range of issues discussed during the Moscow talks.

Messrs. Bronfman and Abram had stated that their purpose in going to the USSR was to aid the interests of the Jewish minority in that country and, as private citizens, to further international harmony. Their aim was to try to resolve outstanding issues affecting Soviet Jews, and remove them as an issue of international contention.

The discussions in Moscow covered many key issues of concern to Soviet Jews including, but not limited to, emigration and family reunification.

According to Mr. Bronfman and Mr. Abram, they were reassured on the following points:

1. Soviet Jews with exit visas for Israel will travel via Rumania on flights to be established.
2. All refuseniks and their families will be allowed to emigrate to Israel within a one-year period, except for legitimate national security cases. A procedure will be established, however, to review previous visa denials on national security grounds. This procedure may involve officials on a level as high as the Supreme Soviet.
3. First degree relatives may emigrate for family reunification within an established time frame. There may be flexibility within the framework of the current narrow interpretation of "first degree relative."
4. Cases of those refuseniks recently placed in a "never allowed to emigrate" category will be reviewed.
5. All Jewish religious books may be imported into the USSR, and a recommended list of books will be submitted.
6. Synagogues will be opened in all sites where there is a demonstrated need.

- over -

A coalition of forty-five national organizations and over three hundred local community councils and federations

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7. Soviet Jews will be allowed greater access to rabbinical training. Some may even be allowed to study in the United States.
8. The teaching of Hebrew in school or synagogue settings will be considered together with similar restrictions applied to other religious groups.
9. A kosher restaurant will be opened in Moscow, and liberal provisions will be made for ritual slaughter.

After further consultation within the Jewish community, and with members of Congress and government leaders, Mr. Bronfman and Mr. Abram would be prepared to suggest incremental responses based on measured progress on the above-mentioned points. Under consideration would be support for a change in the Stevenson Amendment, as well as annual waivers of the trade restrictions in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, based on very substantial and sustained emigration. Only annual waivers will be considered until the problem of Soviet Jewish emigration has been completely resolved.

According to Mr. Abram, all concerned parties will now await Soviet performance on the above articulated points, before they would be prepared to say that "glasnost" is a real process of positive change which includes Soviet Jews.

NEWSBREAK

APRIL 22, 1987
NB 7-87

SLEPAKS ON HUNGER STRIKE

MOSCOW -- To mark the 17th anniversary of their refusal, MARIA AND VLADIMIR SLEPAK staged a hunger strike in conjunction with their son, ALEKSANDR, in the U.S.

Vladimir and seven other long-term refuseniks recently were received at the All-Union OVIR by a general, who told them that the Ministry of Interior does not have the authority to deal with their problems. They were also told that the KGB has their files and that their refusals were still in effect. A KGB official said that if they want, they "can sue me."

"KEEP US IF YOU WANT, BUT FREE OUR CHILDREN"

MOSCOW -- IRINA BRAILOVSKY, ELENA MARGULIS, ERENA MATLINA, NATALYA ROZENSHTAIN, NINA DIKAYA, (Moscow), and ZHANNA PALANKER (Erevan), wives of long-term refuseniks whose applications have been rejected on the grounds of state security, sent the most desperate appeal to the Supreme Soviet a parent can write. "Let us go," they told authorities, "but if you insist on keeping us without hope, at least let our children go."

One of the women added, "It is no easy thing for parents to send their beloved children away. The fact that we are making such a plea can only be a measure of the depth of hopelessness and frustration to which we have been pushed."

EMIGRATION CONTINUES UPWARD TREND

Emigration figures for the first two weeks of April indicate a continuation of the upward trend developed in March. Last month 470 Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union, compared to 146 in February. The April total is, at least, likely to match the March figure.

TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE IN DOUBT

MOSCOW -- The structure and perhaps the existence of the Tripartite Committee, the Soviet body established to investigate the validity and length of security classifications, is unclear, according to leading refuseniks.

It has been reported that the committee would be comprised of N.A. Makarov of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Human Rights Bureau. However, IRINA BRAILOVSKY said that she and a number of other "security" refuseniks have tried in vain to elicit a name or even an address to which they could apply to have their cases re-examined.

If another example was needed about the insanity of refusals based on security grounds, the case of LEA AKKERMAN, mother of well-known refusenik VLADIMIR PRESTIN (Moscow), has provided it. Several weeks ago, Lea was refused again -- this time until 1993 -- on the grounds that her husband, NAUM, who died in 1985, was privy to state secrets.

POC ROUNDUP

NATALIA RATNER-MAGARIK and TANYA EDELSHTEIN were invited to the Procurator General's office on April 13. It was hinted that the sentences of their POC husbands, ALEKSEY and YULI, might be reduced.

NEWSBREAK**REFUSENIK UPDATE**

IOSIF BEGUN (Moscow) submitted his documents for emigration to the All-Union OVIR and was promised an answer within one month. But at the end of March he was called by an official and told to apply to the Moscow OVIR, which he does not intend to do, since he was promised an answer by the All-Union OVIR.

VIKTOR BRAILOVSKY's request to visit his father in Israel was denied on the grounds that "there are no diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union." Viktor's son, LEONID, applied separately for an exit visa and was also refused.

VLADIMIR and ANNA LIFSHITZ visited their son, BORIS, in the military hospital in Vologda. They believe that since he suffers from a duodenal ulcer he should be exempted from military service. MASHA Lifshitz celebrated her Bat-Mitzvah March 22. In a telephone conversation, Vladimir said that he received no mail while he was in prison, but upon his release he was given over 400 letters from "friends," primarily from the U.S. "Please give great thanks to all!" he asked.

ROALD ZELICHONOK (Leningrad) was given a one-year residence permit to live in his native city.

MIKHAIL LOSYEV (Moscow), 23, a technician, and his wife, LYUBOV, 24, a musician, were refused at the end of March. They went on a seven-day hunger strike April 2 and planned to hold a demonstration with GRIGORY GRINBERG April 18 and 19. ...BORIS FRIEDMAN (Leningrad), a cancer patient, has been refused again, as was GRIGORY GENUSOV (Leningrad), VITALY DEGTYAREV (Moscow), DORINA PARITSKY (Kharkov).

LEV ELBERT, who has been fasting to protest his refusal (NEWS-BREAK, April 2), collapsed and is under medical supervision. He is very weak but hopes to be able to go to the post office to receive phone calls from abroad. KARMI, Lev's son, sent an appeal to Gorbachev, announcing his intention to join his parents' hunger strike. ...LEONID and MARINA YUZEFOVICH, refuseniks for six years, began a hunger strike March 19.

Permission: Moscow: MIKHAIL LOMONOSOV with 14 family members, including his married daughter and her family, MIKHAIL and TATIANA AMSHILAVSKY, ARKADY SKAKOVSKY, BORIS KANEVSKY, GRIGORY KANTOROVISH, DAVID KVARTIN. Kishinev: VLADIMIR TSUKERMAN, SIMON SHNIRMAN, GRIGORY LEIDERMAN, FEIGA CHEBAN, MOISEY PROKUPETZ, ANNA SERPER. Odessa: YAKOV GOFMAN, GENRIETTA GROSSMAN, VALERY LEMELMAN. Tallin: SHALOM TEYTS, RAPHAEL NEIZVESTNY. Leningrad: MARK REZNIK, ANATOLY CHECHIK, ISAAK GOLBRAYKH, BORIS YELKIN, YULI KAROLIN, LEONID ZELIGER, MIKHAIL SALMAN. Volgograd: GRIGORY VAYNEK, SEMION VEYNER. Riga: GRIGORY LEMBERG, EFIM GOLDBERG. Berdichev: ALEKSANDR LANIS. Chernovtsy: SHEIKA RABINOVICH. Vilnius: YOSIT SHCHUPAK. Vinnitsa: MINA PAPIERNIK.

Arrived in Israel: BORIS DEVIATOV, LEONID KLEINMAN, PAVEL ASTRAKHAN, ANATOLY CHECHIK, DANIEL FRADKIN, LILYA ZATUCHNAYA.

Emigrated: BORIS YELKIN (Leningrad), VLADIMIR and ALEKSANDR BELKIN (Minsk), EVGENY CHUDNOVSKY (Kharkov) and MIKHAIL FUKS-RABINOVICH (Moscow).