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FROM  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY  
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL  
MARCH 15 - 17, 1983

PI

THE WHITE HOUSE

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 10, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES BAKER, III

FROM:

FAITH WHITTLESEY *FHW*

SUBJECT:

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SOVIET JEWRY

Michael Gale has been invited by the National Conference of Soviet Jewry to participate in the Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry which will take place in Jerusalem, Israel from March 14 - 17, 1983. I strongly recommend that Michael be approved to participate in this important meeting. The organization is a 501 (c)(3) and is willing to pay all of his expenses.

The Administration has been working very actively with the American Jewish community on the issue of Soviet Jewry and is working particularly effectively and closely with the National Conference. Michael's attendance will be extremely well received and would underscore the Administration's ongoing commitment on this issue. Michael's participation would also be an indication of the importance we place on working closely with the American Jewish community on issues of concern to them.

Because of the time limitations, I would urge your early consideration and approval of this request.

*✓ FHW*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Approve

\_\_\_\_\_  
Disapprove

\_\_\_\_\_  
JAB approval or comment:

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 10, 1983

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FROM: FAITH WHITTLESEY

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Approve

---

Disapprove



# National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Chairman

Theodore R. Mann

Vice-Chairpersons

Robert B. Goldmann, New York City

Robbi David Hill, National Council

of Young Israel

Donald Lefton, Miami

Rita Salberg, Anti-Defamation League

of B'nai B'rith

Nan Wood, National Council of Jewish Women

Treasurer

Mervin Riseman, American Jewish Committee

Financial Secretary

Bobble Abrams, Council of Jewish Federations

Secretary

Margery Kohrman, Women's American ORT

Immediate Past Chairman

Burton S. Levinson, Los Angeles

Executive Director

Jerry Goodman

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David A. Harris

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(In Addition to the Officers)

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Hebrew Congregations

Elaine Pittell, Hollywood, Fla.

Edward Robin, Los Angeles

Herbert Rosenthal, Dallas

Daniel Rubin, Bergen County, N.J.

Joseph Smukler, Philadelphia

Joel J. Sprayregen, Chicago

Will Stern, Jewish Labor Committee /

Workmen's Circle

Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, American Zionist

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Marda Weinberg, Washington, D.C.

Former Chairmen

Eugene Gold, Jerusalem

Label Katz, \*(deceased), B'nai B'rith

Stanley H. Lowell, New York City

Richard Moass, American Jewish Committee

George Malsien, \*

United Synagogue of America

Rabbi Israel Miller, \*

American Zionist Federation

Rabbi Herschel Schacter, \*

Religious Zionists of America

Lewis H. Weinstein, \* Boston

\* American Jewish Conference

on Soviet Jewry

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Sol Goldstein,

Washington Advisory Committee

Betty Golomb, Commission on Education

Charlotte Jacobson,

Soviet Jewry Research Bureau

Dr. Seymour Lachman, Greater New York

Conference on Soviet Jewry

Jacqueline K. Levine,

Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry

Bernard White,

Washington Advisory Committee

March 4, 1983

Mr. Michael Gale  
Office of the Public Liaison  
Old Executive Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Michael:

The Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry will take place in Jerusalem from March 14-17, 1983. Two previous conferences, held in Brussels in 1971 and 1976, were historic events in the annals of Western advocacy on behalf of Soviet Jewry, each bringing together delegates from several dozen countries.

On behalf of the Presidium and the Conference Steering Committee, it is an honor to invite you to come to Jerusalem, at our expense, to join with us in this important gathering. Your attendance would be extremely well-received by the large contingent of American Jewish leadership, and would underscore, from our viewpoint, the Administration's ongoing desire to strengthen its Outreach program to the Jewish community.

The Jerusalem Conference, like its predecessors, will involve major figures from political life, arts and sciences, academia, jurisprudence and many other supporters from around the world. Several hundred Americans will be among the delegates.

The aims of the Conference are threefold: 1) to express international solidarity with the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union, 2) to protest vigorously the closing of the emigration gates, the pervasive anti-Semitism, and the unrelenting harassment of Jewish cultural and religious expression in the U.S.S.R., and 3) to call upon the conscience of the world at large concerning the flagrant violations of the human rights of two million Soviet Jews.

Please contact David Harris, the director of our Washington Office, for additional information and to indicate the likelihood of your attendance.

Sincerely,

*T. R. Mann*

Theodore R. Mann  
Chairman, NCSJ

*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

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**Rabbi Herschel Schocter**,\*

Religious Zionists of America

**Lewis H. Weinstein**,\* Boston

\* American Jewish Conference

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Washington Advisory Committee

**Betty Golomb**, Commission on Education

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Soviet Jewry Research Bureau

**Dr. Seymour Lachman**, Greater New York

Conference on Soviet Jewry

**Jacqueline K. Levine**,

Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry

**Bernard White**,

Washington Advisory Committee

March 4, 1983

Mr. Michael Gale

Office of the Public Liaison

Old Executive Office Bldg.

Washington, D.C. 20500

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Soviet Jewry Research Bureau

**Dr. Seymour Lachman**, Greater New York  
Conference on Soviet Jewry

**Jacqueline K. Levine**,

Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry

**Bernard White**,

Washington Advisory Committee

March 2, 1983

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

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to our earlier correspondence concerning a videotaped message from yourself to be broadcast at the Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry, we very much hope that our request will meet with your approval.

As we noted, five hundred Jewish leaders and other American supporters of Soviet Jewry, including elected officials, clergy, academicians, artists and writers, will join with delegates from several dozen other countries in the Free World to express support and solidarity for the beleaguered Soviet Jewish minority. Your message would serve as eloquent testimony to the priority your Administration has accorded this important humanitarian issue, and would be warmly received not only by Conference delegates but all who look to the United States as the foremost international defender of basic human rights and liberties.

Indeed, your willingness to prepare a message would also have an important impact on other Western governments, including the British, who are now considering their level of participation at the three-day Conference.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to a favorable reply.

Respectfully,

Theodore R. Mann, Chairman  
National Conference on Soviet  
Jewry

Julius Berman, Chairman  
Conference of Presidents  
of Major American Jewish  
Organizations

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

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# National Conference on Soviet Jewry

February 18, 1983

Chairman

Theodore R. Mann

Vice-Chairpersons

Robert B. Goldman, New York City  
Rabbi David Hill, National Council  
of Young Israel

Donald Lefton, Miami

Rita Salberg, Anti-Defamation League  
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Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry

Bernard White,

Washington Advisory Committee

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

Dear Mr. President:

The Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry will take place in Jerusalem from March 15-17, 1983. Two previous conferences, held in Brussels in 1971 and 1976, were historic events in the annals of Western advocacy on behalf of Soviet Jewry, each bringing together delegates from several dozen countries.

The Jerusalem Conference, like its predecessors, will involve major figures from political life, arts and sciences, academia, jurisprudence and many other fields, joined by Jewish community leadership and other supporters from around the world. Several hundred Americans will be among the delegates.

The aims of the Conference are threefold: 1) to express international solidarity with the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union, 2) to protest vigorously the closing of the emigration gates, the pervasive anti-Semitism, and the unrelenting harassment of Jewish cultural and religious expression in the U.S.S.R., and 3) to call upon the conscience of the world at large concerning the flagrant violations of the human rights of two million Soviet Jews.

Aware that your schedule does not permit your personal attendance at the Conference, we would like to request a videotaped message of 3-5 minutes' duration, to be broadcast at the opening session. Such a message would underscore still further to the international community the importance our Government attaches to the fate of Soviet Jewry. We would, of course, assume all expenses associated with the videotaping.

Please have a member of your staff contact, David Harris, director of our Washington Office, for any additional information.

Respectfully,

Theodore R. Mann  
Chairman, National Conference  
on Soviet Jewry

Julius Berman  
Chairman, Conference of  
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National Conference on Soviet Jewry  
10 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016  
212-679-6122

*file*

*Michael Gale*

To:  
From: Jerry Goodman  
Executive Director

# Conference on Soviet Jewry

I thought you might find this of interest

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

Because of your deep concern for human rights and the particular plight of Jews in the Soviet Union, we would like to have this Administration represented at the forthcoming Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry, convening in Jerusalem March 15. We understand that you will not be able to personally attend this historic gathering, but we hope an appropriate Cabinet level representative can open the proceedings. In addition, Mr. President, your personal sentiments can be conveyed to more than 1,000 delegates via a video taped message. Together with those of other heads of state, this would be one of the most important components of the conference.

We are hopeful this request will be filled, and we look forward to working with your associates to facilitate this undertaking.

Respectfully,

Theodore R. Mann, Chairman  
National Conference on Soviet  
Jewry

Julius Berman, Chairman  
Conference of Presidents  
of Major American Jewish  
Organizations

This message was sent by cable to the President.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 6, 1963

I am happy to extend my greetings and warm regard to members of the 98th Congressional Class for Soviet Jewry as you convene your inaugural meeting. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on this vital issue.

The issue of Soviet Jewry is of high priority to the Administration. We have repeatedly stated that our concern for human rights in general, and Soviet Jewry in particular, is integral to our national interest and remains a major focus of our foreign policy.

In the last few years, we have witnessed a steady decrease in the number of Jews permitted to emigrate from the Soviet Union. The fact that levels of emigration have plummeted and that the instances of harassment and denial of exit visas have increased clearly signify the intensification of Soviet repression and arbitrary treatment of Soviet Jews. Jews are still denied opportunities to gain higher education. They are prevented from securing good jobs, and they are thwarted from studying their own culture and the Hebrew language. Clearly, anti-semitism is rampant in the Soviet Union.

The inhumane actions of Soviet authorities violate both the spirit and the letter of the Helsinki Accords as well as other relevant international agreements to which the Soviet Union is a signatory.

I want you to know that the fate of these people, as well as that of other Soviet citizens deprived of their basic human rights and freedoms, is of immense

concern to this Administration. We have worked and will continue to work assiduously to induce more flexible and benign practices by Soviet authorities with regard to the freedom of movement and fundamental rights. The issue of Soviet Jewry has been an integral issue on the agenda of such international forums as the Madrid Review Meeting on CSCE and the meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

We have strived to make the Soviet Union cognizant of the strong importance we attach to this issue as an essential component of security and cooperation in Europe and as a major issue in U.S.-Soviet bilateral relations. Our unwavering stance has been that progress in the security area cannot be achieved without concurrent progress in human rights, particularly that of emigration and family reunification.

I can assure you that we will continue to seek opportunities to encourage the Soviet Union to liberalize its policies on freedom of movement and fundamental rights.

Our commitment to basic human rights is spurred by the spirit of freedom which is the cement of our democratic society. We will not accept the egregious violations committed by Soviet authorities. In providing an effective response to these violations, we recognize that actions by concerned citizens are extremely important. Your meeting constitutes an important part of our common struggle for the rights of the oppressed Soviet Jews.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful meeting.

Handwritten signature of Ronald Reagan in cursive script.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 2, 1983

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
IN A  
MEETING WITH JEWISH LEADERS

February 2, 1983

The East Room

10:07 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, and please sit down. And thank you very much. I've just had the opportunity to hear from your leaders regarding the future of the Middle East and world Jewry, and I thank you all for coming to the White House today. We're honored to have you. And I want to take a few moments now, if I could, to discuss some thoughts of my own about the critical issues that we face together.

First, let me say again how honored I am that the leaders of American and world Jewry many of you whom I've known over the years, are meeting together here.

This week marks the 50th anniversary of Adolph Hitler's rise to power. It's incumbent upon us all, Jews and Gentiles alike, to remember the tragedy of Nazi Germany, to recall how a fascist regime conceived in hatred brought a reign of terror and atrocity on the Jewish people and on the world, and to pledge that never again will the decent people of the world permit such a thing to occur. Never again can people of conscience overlook the rise of anti-Semitism in silence.

Americans can be proud, I think, that our government is moving forward to build a memorial in our nation's capitol to commemorate the Holocaust. Those who perished as a result of Nazi terror, millions of individual men and women and children whose lives were taken so senselessly, must never be forgotten.

I'm aware that, in April, American Holocaust survivors and their families will gather in Washington to thank our country for what it has done for them. And this gathering should touch the heart of every American.

You know, perhaps better than I, that the defeat of the Third Reich did not present a final triumph over bigotry and prejudice. Even today in the free world we hear of swastikas painted on synagogues, of holy books and scrolls desecrated by hoodlums, and of terrorist attacks. We see Jewish schools in Europe forced to employ armed guards to protect children, and many congregations, even in this country, hiring guards to protect worshipping during the high holy days. These things bear witness that the fight, even in the free world, is not yet won.

In totalitarian societies, and particularly the Soviet Union, Jews face even greater adversity. Despite the rights enumerated in the Soviet constitution and in the Helsinki agreements, Soviet Jews are denied basic rights to study and practice their religion, to secure higher education and good jobs, or to emigrate freely. Heroic men and women like Anatoly Shcharansky, who openly proclaim their Jewish pride and desire to emigrate, are subjected to brutal harassment and imprisonment.

MORE

But, just as Soviet Jews will not forget their own heritage, nor abandon hope for freedom, we will not forget them. We will not, as the Western democracies did four days\*ago, turn a deaf ear to distant pleas for help.

There are those who suggest that a new era of improved East-West relations is possible because the new Soviet leadership shares Western tastes. Well, yes, we're told that Mr. Andropov drinks Scotch and fine French wines and listens to jazz and rock and roll and reads Western literature. Frankly, it doesn't appear to affect Soviet policy in Poland or Afghanistan.

But make no mistake, we seek better relations with the Soviet Union. We pray for the day when all Soviet citizens will enjoy basic human liberties, improvement in that area. And the Kremlin knows this would do much better for East-West relations.

My administration has persistently maintained pressure on Soviet authorities to live up to their agreements. Specifically in the CSCE Review Conference, our representative, Max Kampelman, has continued to raise, not only the emigration issue, but also to challenge those Soviet internal practices which deny Soviet Jews and other citizens as well their basic human rights and violate the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Accords. Secretary Shultz has also discussed these issues with Foreign Minister Gromyko. Those of us who believe in better relations with the Soviet Union, yet, at the same time, value freedom and human decency, we've made it plain now we want deeds, not rhetoric and repression from the new Soviet leadership. We've had enough of words. There's no better way for them to begin than by releasing the prisoners of conscience in Siberia and restoring Jewish emigration to the levels of the late 1970's. And I might add, they could give us an accounting of one of mankind's true heroes, Raoul Wallenberg.

Let me now turn to a third item that I wanted to discuss with you, the Middle East. America's commitment to Israel remains strong and enduring. And, again, I ask you to focus on deeds. Since the foundation of the State of Israel, the United States has stood by her and helped her pursue security, peace and economic growth. Our friendship is based on historic moral and strategic ties, as well as our shared dedication to democracy. We've had disagreements, as would be expected between friends, even between good friends. Our friendship continues, however, and there should be no doubt that America's commitment to Israel's security remains as it always has been.

Over the last year, our diplomats and Marines have been engaged in a campaign for peace and security in the Middle East. As I said last September, we believe that the events of the past year have created new opportunities for peace that must not be lost. The current political fluidity and general desire to break the cycle of terror and war present a special chance to bring peace to this long-troubled region. It's vital to the United States, to Israel and to all those who yearn for an end to the killing that we not let these current opportunities pass by.

MORE

\*decades

The proposals I made to build an enduring peace are strongly rooted in the history of the region and are designed to promote negotiations that are designed to promote negotiations that will achieve a solution acceptable to all the parties. They are based on an historic U.S. commitment to Israeli's security. They reaffirm the Camp David Accords which deem that peace must bring security to Israel and provide for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Our proposals are founded on the Camp David process and United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which produced the region's first meaningful peace treaty, ending the state of war between Egypt and Israel.

Israel and Arab leaders must take the necessary risks for peace to take root and bloom if we are to succeed. It is riskier to do nothing, to let this time pass with no tangible sign of progress.

We share with Israel three goals in Lebanon: A speedy withdrawal of all foreign forces, a strong central government for Lebanon with jurisdiction over all its territory and full and effective guarantees that Southern Lebanon will no longer be used as a staging ground for terrorist attacks against Israel.

To achieve these goals will require negotiating flexibility by all of the parties.

With respect to the broader peace process, again, great courage and some risk will be required on both sides. Israel must be prepared to engage in serious negotiations over the future of the West Bank and Gaza. As I've stated previously, the most significant action demonstrating Israel's good faith would be a settlements freeze. On the other hand, King Hussein should step forward, ready to negotiate peace directly with Israel.

Each of these steps is independent but related. And for all three, the time to act is now. The fight against anti-semitism, the struggle for Soviet Jewry and the search for peace and security in the Middle East require courage, sacrifice and tenacity from all parties.

There are ample excuses for those who do not share our goals or dedication; but if history is the guide, those who see opportunities for peace and pursue them, who see injustice and condemn it, who fight for liberty will in the end prevail.

We're making the future in which our children will live. Only the courage to act will insure that it is a more peaceful, secure and free world.

The Talmud tells us: "The day is short, the work is great. You don't have to finish the work. Neither are you free to desist from it." And also from the Talmud: "For God could find no vessel which was full of blessing as shalom, peace."

America knows God's blessings. Our cup truly runneth over. We seek only to share the blessings of liberty, peace and prosperity.

Now, my schedule is such I wanted to hear further from you with regard to your views, had, as I say, a brief opportunity before our meeting here with your leaders. But I am going to have to depart.

END

10:17 A.M. EST

ADDRESS BY  
AMBASSADOR JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK  
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TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY  
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Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Mayor, distinguished guests of the dais, distinguished delegates:

It is fitting -- indeed, it is a matter of the deepest symbolic significance -- that we have come to the city of Jerusalem on the eve of Passover, the commemoration of the first exodus, to express our solidarity with Soviet Jews in their struggle to exercise their most basic human rights -- freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and freedom of exit. In this city of faith and history, the determination of Soviet Jews to resist cultural annihilation takes on a very special meaning -- one that spans the ages and transcends, even as it illuminates, the harsh realities of our world. In this season of freedom and renewal, the struggle of Soviet Jews to liberate themselves from bondage burns with special brightness -- a brightness that cannot be dulled or extinguished as long as there are people with courage and dignity and a desire for freedom that cannot be denied.

Just as the Jewish people retell each Passover the story of the exodus so that every generation may understand the timeless and universal meaning of the Jewish freedom struggle, so too must all freedom-loving people -- Jew and non-Jew alike -- recognize and affirm that the cause of freedom means the freedom to be oneself; it requires eternal vigilance and human solidarity.

I speak to you tonight not merely as an individual who believes in freedom and the need to defend it, but as a citizen of a country founded on the principles of freedom, and as the representative of a government dedicated to the protection and extension of freedom throughout the world. By virtue of this belief, the United States is bound morally and by common interests with all those who share this commitment -- above all with those who uphold this commitment in the face of violence and oppression.

Surely no people understand the meaning of freedom more clearly than the Jewish people, because no people has been more brutally victimized by the enemies of freedom, and never more than in this century when civilization has been menaced as never before by the forces of modern totalitarianism. Just last month, at a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Adolf Hitler's rise to power, President Reagan declared it is "incumbent upon us all, Jews and Gentiles alike, to remember the tragedy of Nazi Germany, to recall how a fascist regime conceived in hatred brought a reign of terror and atrocity on the Jewish people and on the world, and to pledge that never again will the decent people of the world permit such a thing to occur. Never again can people of conscience overlook the rise of anti-semitism in silence." "In truth," the President continued, "the defeat of Hitler did not mark the final triumph over anti-semitic bigotry and persecution. Even today in the free world," he continued, "we hear of swastikas painted on synagogues, of holy books and scrolls desecrated by hoodlums, and of terrorist attacks. We see Jewish schools in Europe forced to employ armed guards to protect children, and many congregations, even in America, hiring guards to protect worshipping during the high holy days."



This anti-semitism, which offends and menaces free societies, does not take place in a vacuum but thrives in an international environment in which hatred of Jews and violence against them is actively promoted by the enemies of freedom. Having now spent more than two years at the United Nations, I am not unfamiliar with this international campaign against Jews which masks itself in propaganda against Zionism, in an effort even to equate Zionism with racism and to have it declared criminal under international law. The denunciations of Zionism have become so commonplace in what is euphemistically called the community of nations that it is easy to forget the origins of this campaign of anti-semitic vilification.

In fact, it dates back to the summer of 1967 when, in the wake of the Six-Day War, the Soviet Union launched a massive propaganda assault against Zionism and against Judaism itself. Not only was Zionism equated with every conceivable evil -- from racism to militarism to Nazism -- but even the Torah and the Talmud were depicted as preaching racism, hatred and violence. Significantly, this campaign drew upon and echoed the themes of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the infamous anti-semitic tract, first published in Russia in 1905, which alleged a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world through control of banks, press, and the infiltration of the Freemasons.

The small and exceedingly vulnerable Jewish minority in the Soviet Union has been subjected to increasing persecution and, largely as a result of that, hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews have sought to emigrate.

The plight of Soviet Jews has many different dimensions. On one level, it is the denial of the right of emigration and reunification with families. On another level, it is the denial of cultural and linguistic rights. On still a third level, it is the flagrant discrimination and anti-semitic propaganda and practice. In each case actions against Jews violate principles of international law contained in covenants, conventions and declarations which the Soviet Union has ratified or endorsed and is therefore peculiarly obligated to respect. The right of emigration is a cornerstone of human rights and has been regarded as such for literally thousands of years. It was Socrates who called it an "attribute of personal liberty" and the Magna Carta which incorporated it into "natural law." John Locke derived the whole idea of political obligation to the State from the right to emigrate, since he believed that the moral basis of a citizen's allegiance and obedience was his decision to remain. The corollary to this view is, of course, that the right to emigrate is a necessary guarantee for other rights since it ensures a citizen the ability to emigrate from a country where these other rights are denied. Thus did the United States Congress declare in 1868 that "the right of expatriation is a natural and inherent right of all people, indispensable to the enjoyment of the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." For a racial community facing discrimination and persecution, which is the case of the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union, the denial of the right to leave may be tantamount to the total deprivation of liberty, if not of life itself. In recognition of this basic truth, Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: "Everyone

has the right to leave any country including his own, and return to his country." The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirms, in Article 12, that "everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own." The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination expressly forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin in the application of the right to leave or enter any country. More recently, in August, 1975, the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Final Act which stresses in the provisions included in basket three that the parties are to "expedite" and "facilitate" the "reunion of families" and that those applying for exit visas should not be deprived of their rights.

Far from honoring the pledges contained in these various documents, the Soviet Union today virtually denies members of the Jewish minority in that country the right to leave. Between 1979 and 1982, the yearly emigration of the Soviet Jews has been cut by 95 percent, and it continues to fall. During the first two months of this year, only 206 Jews have been allowed to emigrate, less than one-half the rate of emigration for 1982.

The magnitude of the denial of the right to emigrate may be seen in the fact that the 260,000 Jews who were permitted to leave over the last 15 years have left behind them at least half a million relatives who are awaiting the opportunity to be reunited with their families in Israel and elsewhere. The 381,000 Jews still in the Soviet Union who have requested and received from their relatives in Israel "vzovs" (the possession of which is a precondition for

submitting a request to emigrate to Israel) find themselves in an especially vulnerable position. Having become known to the KGB, they are routinely classified as "unreliable elements," with all the cruel disabilities implied in this classification.

There are also many other Jews who have been sent "vyzovs" from their relatives in Israel but have never received them, presumably because they were intercepted by Soviet authorities. And then there are untold thousands of Jews who wish to leave especially since there is now little likelihood that they will be allowed to leave in any event.

There are also more than 8,000 Jews who have received refusals to their applications for permission to emigrate. The situation of these so-called "refuseniks" is even more tragic, for most of them have been fired from their jobs and their children have been expelled from universities. The professors, scientists and scholars among them are even denied the use of libraries and laboratories and thus lose proficiency in their professions readily.

And then there are those who have been arrested and imprisoned for desiring to emigrate or because they studied or taught Hebrew or wrote samizdat articles on Jewish culture. These "Prisoners of Zion," as they are known throughout the world, have become famous for their courage in the face of cruel oppression. They include Anatoly Shcharansky, sentenced to 13 years in labor camp in 1978 on a trumped-up charge of treason. Cruelly persecuted and denied all communication with his family, his very life is now in danger. They include as well Kim Fridman, Dr. Victor Brailovsky, Iosif Begun, and most recently Feliks Kochubievskiy, who was arrested for his efforts

to found a USSR-Israel Friendship Society. And they include Ida Nudel and Vladimir Slepak who have served their sentences but are still denied the right to leave.

These are among the heroes of the Soviet Jewry struggle. Their cause is our cause, their ideals are our ideals. They shall not be forgotten. They are not alone.

The second measure of minority rights in the Soviet Union is the right of cultural, linguistic, and religious freedom. Principle seven of the Helsinki Final Act, citing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, states in Article 27 that "in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

Yet for the Jewish minority, and in different ways for other minorities as well, these obligations -- cultural, linguistic, educational and religious -- are all observed in the breach. Virtually all Jewish institutional life has been eliminated and Yiddish language schools liquidated. Indeed, here are no Jewish schools in the USSR, not even in the so-called Jewish Autonomous Oblast. The Hebrew language has no official status, and as for the private teaching of Hebrew, teachers are threatened with possible arrest and trial. For example, Iosif Begun, fired from his job as a mathematician after he applied to emigrate to Israel, was arrested in 1977 for "systematically engaging in vagrancy." His "crime" was that he took up the private teaching of Hebrew as a means of earning a livelihood.

Article 18 of the Covenant states that each individual has the right "to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." Yet the Jewish religious community is denied the right to form a national or regional organization. It is the only denomination prevented from maintaining organized links with co-religionists outside the Soviet Union. No authentic Jewish religious periodical or bulletin is permitted, the publication of religious Jewish literature is virtually nonexistent, and its importation from abroad has been sharply restricted. Jewish ritual objects cannot be manufactured and Jews are not permitted to receive matzoh from abroad for the observance of Passover. Rabbinical training is non-existent and the 1975 law on religious associations has been used by the authorities to prevent religious services held in private homes -- a necessity given the virtual absence of synagogues.

The third measure of denial of rights is anti-semitism and anti-Jewish discrimination. Compounding the Soviet assault on the integrity of its Jewish community, on their culture and religion, is the massive anti-semitic propaganda campaign referred to earlier. Here, too, the Soviet Union stands before the international community in blatant violation of its own solemn international undertakings.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination stipulates in Article 4 that contracting parties condemn and are pledged to eradicate racial hatred and

discrimination in any form. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states in Article 20 that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

The Soviet Union callously violates these obligations through its massive anti-semitic propaganda campaign, the basic thrust of which -- according to one Trifum Kichko, the author of "Judaism and Zionism," who was awarded a certificate of honor by Soviet authorities -- is that Judaism is a religion that "teaches thievery, betrayal, and perfidy," along with "poisonous hatred of all peoples." Even the pogroms of a century ago are now justified as merely "so-called outbursts of anti-semitism" which were "artificially exaggerated and widely used by Jewish entrepreneurs and rabbis" but were, according to the Soviet view, really "a reaction to the exploitation to which the broad masses were subjected in capitalist enterprises." These quotes are from a book entitled "Zionism as a Form of Racism and Racial Discrimination," by Lydia A. Modzhorian, a prominent legal scholar active in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. These same themes have been echoed in many Soviet military journals, indicating that anti-semitic propaganda is now part of the political indoctrination of the armed forces in which all males over the age of 18 are required to serve.

With the exit gates virtually closed to Jews, with their right to enjoy their culture and practice their religion denied, with their schools closed and their national language outlawed, with the propaganda of hatred being increasingly disseminated against them, is it any wonder that the Jews of the Soviet Union seek to exercise their fundamental right to emigrate?

I began by noting the universal character of the Jewish freedom struggle. It is, of course, the struggle of a people, of a national group, and as such it is significant and important of itself. But this struggle, by necessity as it were, poses a moral challenge to a system of totalitarianism that cannot tolerate the independent existence of any group, especially one with a clear identity and a long and noble history of resistance against persecution. In striving to preserve their cultural and religious identity and to live as Jews in freedom, the Soviet Jewry movement strikes directly at the principle of totalitarianism, which by its very nature must deny the most fundamental human rights guaranteed in international law -- freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of association and the right to emigrate to secure liberty and enjoyment of these rights. In this sense, it dramatizes and invigorates the universal yearning for freedom and is an inspiration to peoples throughout the world in their opposition to totalitarian oppression and to oppression of all kinds.

In closing, I want to read a message from President Reagan to this Conference. It reads:

I want to express to you my deep concern for the tragic plight of the Soviet Jews. The issue of Soviet Jewry is of utmost importance to this Administration, just as it is to you who are gathered at this Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry. We have stated repeatedly that active concern for human rights is integral to our national interest and our foreign policy. Spiritual freedom is a fundamental pillar of human rights. Hence, the rights of all religious groups in the Soviet Union will remain in the forefront of U.S. human rights policy.

Such Soviet actions as denying Soviet Jews their freedom to emigrate are an affront to all of us who cherish individual liberties. Unfortunately, the situation continues to worsen.



The rate of emigration has plummeted, instances of harassment have increased, and new applicants are regularly denied exit visas. The world community must intensify its effort to stem and reverse these trends. I can assure you that the United States will help to lead this effort.

The tragic plight of Soviet Jews, however, is not solely limited to unreasonable visa denials and harassment of would-be emigrants and refuseniks. Their persecution in the Soviet Union has continued and has reached its current level primarily as a result of official government policies. We are told that many talented young Jews cannot gain admission to institutions of higher learning and cannot secure jobs commensurate with their education and experience. Under the guise of anti-Zionism, the Soviet press frequently publishes slanderous articles and books deriding Jewish culture, traditions and religion.

Despite the rights enumerated in the Soviet constitution and despite the fact that the Soviet Union is a signatory to such international agreements as the Helsinki Accords, Soviet Jews are not permitted to study about their own culture and the Hebrew language.

Western political leaders must convince their Soviet counterparts that a more flexible and humane approach to the questions of freedom of movement and fundamental rights is in the Soviet interest. Durable progress in East-West relations cannot be achieved without concurrent progress in human rights. U.S. officials will continue to discuss individual cases of visa denials, harassment, and family reunification with Soviet authorities. Moreover, the plight of Soviet Jews will remain a key issue on the agenda of such international forums as the Madrid review meeting on CSCE and the meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

We will continue to urge the Soviet Union to live up to the international standards it has freely accepted in a series of solemn agreements. Our commitment to basic human rights is borne by the spirit of freedom which is the soul of a democratic society. In refusing to accept Soviet mistreatment of its own people, we believe that actions by concerned citizens of other countries are extremely important. In saluting your meeting, I recognize that governments and private citizens are engaged in a common struggle for the rights of men and women everywhere. We stand with you.

Let all Jews in the Soviet Union -- whether refuseniks, prisoners of conscience or citizens seeking to maintain their human dignity -- know that we will not forget them. We will firmly support their just cause, for it is a major concern to freedom loving people everywhere.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful meeting.

Ronald Reagan

Our meeting here in Jerusalem is part of our common struggle for the rights of the oppressed Soviet Jews. We are all proud to be here. We are honored to be in solidarity with brave people like Anatoly Shcharansky, who give meaning and hope to the fundamental values of Western civilization.

For Shcharansky, Brailovsky, for Ida Nudel, for Vladimir Slepak, and for all their brethren in the Soviet Union, I say we stand with you in hearing and honoring your determination to be free.

Thank you.