



UCSJ QUARTERLY REPORT

Union of Councils for Soviet Jews • 1819 H Street, N.W. • Suite 410 • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 775-9770

Circulation 150,000
\$2.50

Spring 1988

END OF THE YEAR EDITORIAL

Pamela B. Cohen, National President
Micah H. Naftalin, National Director

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews concludes that the week of December 6, 1987 marked a major turning point for Soviet Jews and the Soviet Jewry movement, and that 1988 calls for revised assumptions and new strategies.

The historic outpouring of almost a quarter of a million American demonstrators in Washington to demand freedom for Soviet Jews was a powerful mandate. But, as the week of the Summit went on, it became clear that merely "raising" the human rights issue by the American people, segments of the American press, and the Administration, is insufficient to produce any significant movement.

More telling, the prospect of a 1987 Summit clearly failed to persuade the Soviets during 1987, that the American price for improved relations would depend on high and sustained levels of Jewish emigration. The modest increase in exit visas this past year (8,155) is in stark contrast to the comparable period of warming relationship in the late 1970's that culminated in 1979 with the emigration of more than 51,000 Soviet Jews. Indeed, our government fostered the impression that expanded trade would be high on the United States' agenda irrespective of progress in the field of emigration or Soviet failure to comply with the Helsinki Accords and other human rights agreements. This signal to the Soviets was made evident by the involvement of the U.S. Department of Commerce in facilitating Gorbachev's meeting with leading American industrialists on the last day of the Summit.

Most important, our predictions of last spring, and again in December, were realized in early January when, for the first time, the Soviets began to strictly enforce the first degree relative invitation limitation. Without much question, they are signaling a firm bar to application by the vast majority of the 400,000 Jews wishing to emigrate. Even though they subsequently backed down under pressure, and agreed to accept the applications based on invitations of more distant relatives, word is now arriving from the Soviet Union that the invitations are not being delivered.

Accordingly, as we face 1988 and beyond, the UCSJ will continue to develop and press for more active

intervention and linked negotiation on behalf of Soviet Jews, both by our government and by the very Americans who demonstrated their commitment on December 6 in Washington. We call upon the Department of State and the Congress to work with us in developing more effective economic tools for negotiating improved Soviet human rights performance, and ask the business community, as well, to recall that they and their stockholders are Americans, committed by tradition and law to human rights.

We hold that U.S. Government insistence upon credible and direct linkage in the area of human rights be a *sine qua non* for enhanced relationships in the fields of cultural, scientific, medical, legal, sister cities and similar exchange programs, as well.

In the final analysis, it will be the grassroots commitment of the American public to the moral imperatives of human rights and Soviet Jewish emigration that will assure that appropriate considerations of linkage are applied to the dangerous and vital circumstances of Jews in the Soviet Union.



During a discussion of human rights and Soviet Jewry prior to the December Summit, Secretary of State George Shultz poses with UCSJ National President Pamela Braun Cohen and Conference of Presidents Chairman Morris Abram. Other distinguished American Jewish leaders joined the meeting for discussions of matters concerning Israel.

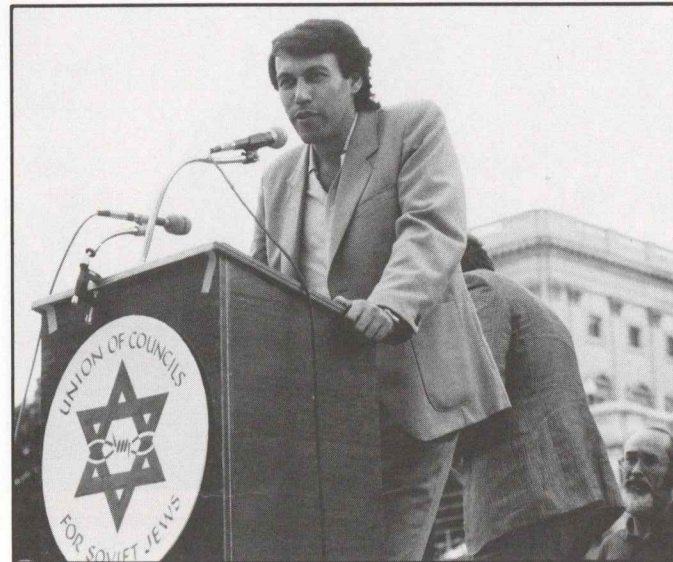
1987 UCSJ ANNUAL MEETING

The highly successful 1987 UCSJ annual meeting, which took place at the Westin Hotel in Washington, D.C., was one of the highlights of the year. This year's theme — "The Rescue of Soviet Jews Demands Activism" — was addressed from many angles by UCSJ leaders from across the country and abroad, State Department officials, U.S. Congressmen and Senators, Israeli officials, and former POC's, Refuseniks and Soviet emigres.

Several important awards were given at the annual meeting. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman was presented with the prestigious UCSJ Sharansky Freedom Award for 1987 by Pamela Braun Cohen. Lillian Hoffman, chairperson of the Colorado Committee of Concern for Soviet Jewry, presented the UCSJ Humanitarian Award to Patience Huntwork of the Independent Task Force on ABA-ASL Agreement.



A Congressional panel discussion entitled "Will Glasnost Weaken Economic Leverage on Behalf of Soviet Jews?" gets the close attention of (left to right) Congressman James Scheuer (D-NY), Pamela Braun Cohen, and Congressman John Miller (R-WA) at the UCSJ annual meeting. Speaking (not shown) was Congressman Gerry Sikorski (D-MN).



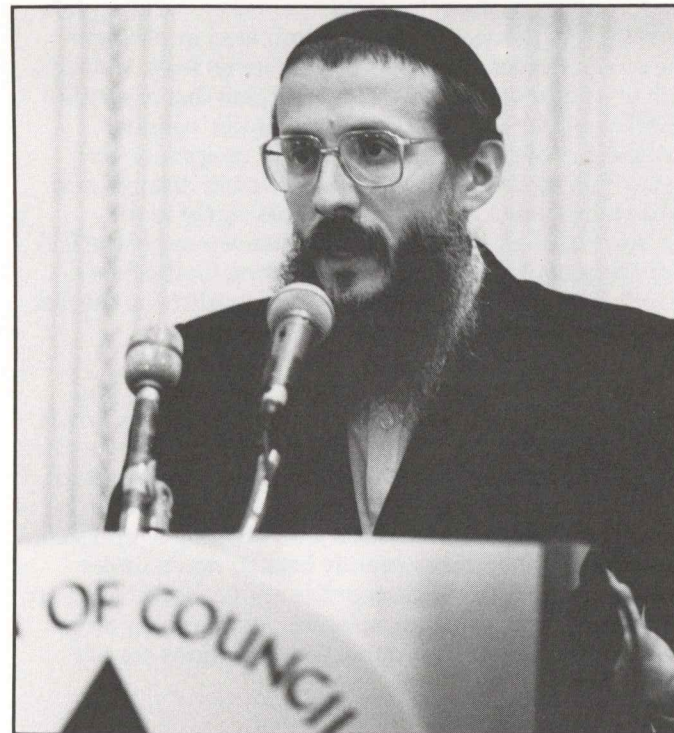
Former Prisoner of Conscience Zachar Zunshine, who emigrated to Israel with his wife Tanya last year after spending three years in a Soviet prison, expresses his appreciation to the UCSJ for its support and efforts.



Prior to his address at the UCSJ annual meeting, former Prisoner of Conscience Natan Sharansky greets Pamela Braun Cohen, UCSJ Treasurer Howard Cantor (left) and Micah H. Naftalin, National Director UCSJ.



Micah H. Naftalin introduces the White House Special Assistant to the President, Fritz Ermarth, Senior Director for European and Soviet Affairs, who discussed the Reagan administration's firm commitment to Soviet Jewry at the annual meeting.



Former Prisoner of Conscience Josef Mendelevich, Chairman of the Soviet Jewry Education and Information Center in Jerusalem, addresses the UCSJ membership at the annual meeting.

RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The last few months of 1987 were memorable ones for UCSJ, and 1988 has started out no less exciting. In September, we had the Soviet Emigre Rally — the first official gathering of its kind — which drew Soviet emigres to the United States from all corners of the country to celebrate the creation of CAUSE (Concerned Americans United for Soviet Emigration).



Here, Pamela Braun Cohen, National President of UCSJ, addresses several hundred participants at the Soviet Emigre Rally. Seated in front row from left to right are former Refuseniks Natasha Bekman and Tanya Zunshine; former Prisoner of Conscience Zachar Zunshine; Yuri Federov; UCSJ board member Rabbi Leonid Feldman; (continuing across aisle) Ambassador Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs; Micah H. Naftalin, National Director UCSJ; and Leonard Terlitsky.

On a much larger scale, December's "Freedom Sunday" brought approximately 250,000 demonstrators to Washington, D.C. in an unprecedented show of American solidarity for Soviet Jewry. UCSJ played an active role in planning the important event during the rally and in press conferences and meetings during the December Summit. One such noteworthy activity was the press conference conducted by Pamela Braun Cohen and Congressman Toby Roth (R-WI), linking human rights and untied bank loans to the Soviet Union.



Former Prisoner of Conscience Natan Sharansky is introduced by Pamela Braun Cohen, following her remarks at the historic gathering in the nation's capital. Standing from left to right are Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), former long-term Refusenik Maria Slepak, singer Mary Travers, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, former Prisoner of Conscience Vladimir Slepak, Congressman Jack Kemp (R-NY), singer Pearl Bailey, and Congressman Bob Mrazek (D-NY).

UCSJ MAKING HISTORY

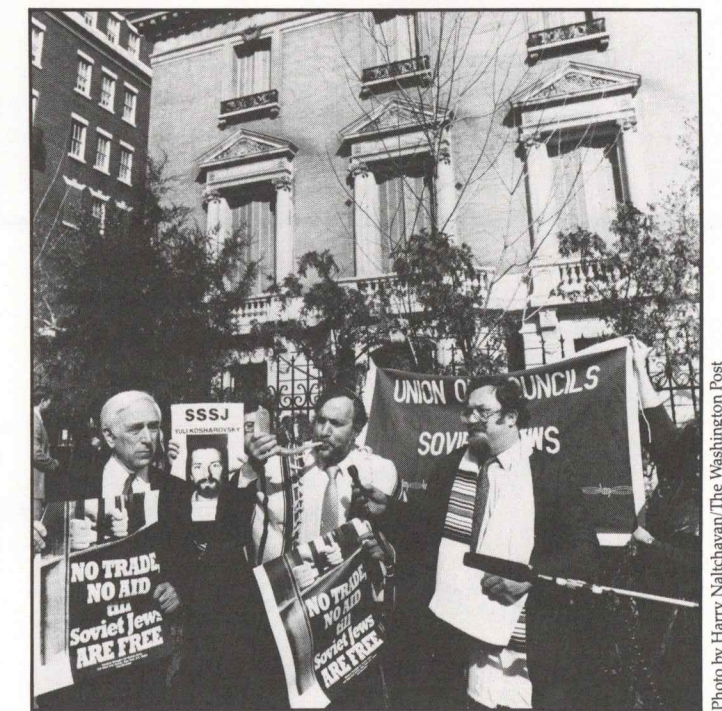
"This is an historic moment: As a result of yesterday's Supreme Court ruling, we are demonstrating 500 feet closer to the Soviet Embassy than ever before. Today, for the first time, we can say directly to the Soviet Embassy, and to Mr. Shevardnadze — there is no glasnost for Soviet Jews!

"Here, despite the opposition of our State Department and Metropolitan Police, we have an independent Supreme Court that can overturn even a relatively modest abridgement of Constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and assembly. Here, general secretaries and KGB bullies do not decide.

"Here, basic rights of the individual, such as the right to emigrate, are preserved in laws that are guaranteed and not manipulated from day to day depending on the politics or whim of the moment. Here, aggrieved citizens can appeal their cases.

"We are here to tell Mr. Shevardnadze that Americans see an unbreakable link between the cause of peace and the cause of human rights and emigration . . . And finally, we are here to say to our own government that merely raising human rights is not enough. There must be substantive negotiations which link Jewish emigration to economic benefits. High numbers of Jews crossing the border to freedom is the human rights equivalent of verification of Soviet signed promises."

Opening remarks of Micah H. Naftalin, National Director, at UCSJ/SSSJ historic rally at the front gates of the Soviet Embassy, Washington, D.C., March 23, 1988.



From left, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Rabbi Avraham Weiss and Micah H. Naftalin protest in front of the Soviet Embassy. Other participants included Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ); Glenn Richter, national coordinator SSSJ; Soviet emigre Igor Tufeld; and Washington Committee for Soviet Jewry leaders Joan Dodek (president) and Ruth Newman (executive director).

New Freedom Put To Test at Embassy Gate

Anti-Soviet Demonstrators and Police Strike Balance

By Marc Fisher
Washington Post Staff Writer

For one hour yesterday, protesters for Soviet Jews and D.C. police staged a delicate duel on the sidewalk in front of the Soviet Embassy. The winner, both sides said, was freedom of speech.

One day after the Supreme Court struck down the District law banning demonstrations within 500 feet of foreign embassies, 12 members of Washington and New York Jewish groups, joined by two U.S. senators, moved the issue from the pages of legal opinions to 16th Street NW.

At 3 p.m., 12 demonstrators, 13 D.C. police officers and uniformed Secret Service agents, and 26 reporters and photographers assembled outside the front gate of the Soviet Embassy.

"We're testing the limits of Washington glasnost," said Glenn Richter of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, whose group often has gathered a block away from the embassy to demonstrate on behalf of Jews who have been refused permission to leave the Soviet Union.

As several Soviet diplomats sat on benches in their sun-drenched driveway, protesters lined up outside the embassy's black iron gates, holding anti-Soviet posters.

Rabbi Avraham Weiss of the Bronx, who has been arrested several times for violating the 500-foot law and spent two days in the D.C. Jail after refusing to pay a fine, blew the shofar, or ram's horn, in a ritual call for peace. Police stood 10 feet away.

Sens. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz) urged the Reagan administration to include human rights issues in final negotiations with the Soviets on the INF arms treaty.

As Lautenberg spoke, police officers politely asked protesters to open a path for a man pulling a shopping cart down the sidewalk. They did.

"We are glad to be here, where freedom reigns, where the Supreme Court protects us from oppression from our friendly police who are standing by," Lautenberg said.

Speeches completed, police Sgt. Gary Nelson told organizers that they were complying with the new rules, except that they ought not obstruct the entire sidewalk. "We'll let it go this time," he said.

Thrilled by the chance to approach the embassy and eager to find out exactly how much latitude they had, the protesters plunged ahead.

First, they sat down on the sidewalk, reading prayers and singing. Police conferred with one another and did nothing.

Next, the group faced the embassy's open door and chanted, "One, two, three, four, open up the iron door. Five, six, seven, eight, let our people emigrate." That seemed acceptable, too.

As three diplomats left the embassy, Weiss approached them, offering leaflets and shouting short messages such as "Free our brothers and sisters" or "Be decent, be moral, be ethical."

Two Soviets ignored the rabbi's handouts; one said, "No, thank you."

But when Weiss confronted the next group of exiting diplomats, he blocked their path.

Police immediately moved to Weiss. "Hey, hey, you cannot try to stop them," an officer told him. Interfering with anyone's movement was disruptive, something the law still prohibits, the officer said.

The rabbi smiled and said, "Okay, thanks."

Finally, the protesters discovered the mailbox attached to the embassy gate and started to stuff it with leaflets. They looked over to the police, who did not react.

Fresh out of provocative ideas for the afternoon, the protesters went home.

D.C. police declared the impromptu session of constitutional interpretation a success.

"We're going to be lenient until everyone understands the new rules, which should take a month or so," Nelson said. "Overall, they were fine."

D.C. police have opposed any change in the 500-foot rule, arguing that demonstrators would be more difficult to control without a buffer between them and the embassy.

Police were instructed on new protest rules at roll call yesterday, he said. They learned well, the protesters said.

"This was a decision that was opposed by the police and the State Department," said Micah Naftalin, national director of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. "The new rules make it more inconvenient for them. But even so, in stark comparison with the Soviet system, they go along with the rule of law."

"Here, general secretaries and KGB bullies do not decide. Here, we can demonstrate freely."

March 24, 1988

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

This article appeared on page 1 of *The Washington Post*.

Demonstrations likely to be less dramatic, more direct

By Marc Fisher
Washington Post Staff Writer

The face of protest in the District will immediately change as a result of the Supreme Court ruling allowing demonstrations within 500 feet of embassies, police and leaders of political groups said yesterday.

Protest groups have lost the ability to stage dramatic mass arrests simply by walking toward an embassy — a tactic that has led to thousands of arrests near the Soviet and South African embassies in recent years.

But protesters say the ruling will allow those who have shouted from afar to take their message directly to their targets. They will begin today, when the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews holds a demonstration at the front gate of the Soviet Embassy on 16th Street NW.

"We're testing the waters by going as close as you can get," said spokeswoman Jennifer Kane.

"Our demonstrations could be less dramatic now," said Micah Naftalin, national director of the Soviet Jewry organization, which attracted extensive media coverage in 1986 when a group of rabbis was arrested for crossing the 500-foot line outside the Soviet Embassy.

"There's a trade-off. Arrests have helped to dramatize the issue. But this will make it more feasible to have serious, peaceful demonstrations where the embassy staff can watch. Our message will be more direct."

That directness will "put us at an extreme disadvantage," said Assistant D.C. Police Chief Isaac M. Fulwood Jr. "The 500-foot rule afforded us better control and time to react to situations," providing a buffer of space, time and emotion.

The ruling means we're going to have to put more people at embassies," Fulwood said. And he said police work will be more difficult because officers will have only the sidewalk between demonstrators and an embassy.

The police department will now comb through other laws in an effort to find new ways to provide security for visiting diplomats, Fulwood said.

TransAfrica, an antiapartheid organization that organized daily protests near the South African Embassy, relied heavily for publicity on arrests based on the 500-foot rule, said director Randall Robinson. More than 4,000 people were arrested during

TransAfrica demonstrations between 1984 and this year, he said.

But the protest group nonetheless welcomes the court ruling. We intend to take our demonstrations to within inches of the South African embassy to show them the extent of our displeasure with their vicious policies," Robinson said. "Now we'll be able to sustain a presence in front of the embassy."

Eli Bitzer, a spokesman for the embassy of South Africa, said his country "has no comment at this stage." A spokesman for the Israeli Embassy also declined to comment.

Art Spitzer, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union's local office, said that the ruling gives protesters more leeway in approaching embassies, but it doesn't allow practices such as making excessive noise or blocking doorways.

This means that demonstrators would be forced to do something more disruptive if they are intent on being arrested," he said. "So they may be losing a tool. But my greater concern is with the rights of people who want to demonstrate and not be arrested."

Several members of the Conservative Action Foundation, the group that challenged the D.C. law, celebrated their victory yesterday by assembling outside the Soviet Embassy, where D.C. police and Secret Service agents were gathered because of the visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. The demonstrators gave agents a copy of the Supreme Court ruling, but were nonetheless told to move away from the embassy because agents had not yet received orders.

A D.C. police spokesman said the demonstrators were not even asked their names.

Although most arrests stemming from violations of the 500-foot rule have come at the Soviet and South African embassies in recent years, protesters also have been arrested near the Israeli, South Korean and Vatican embassies.

Although charges against almost all of those arrested in the Trans-Africa demonstrations were eventually dropped, some protesters have been convicted and fined. A few, such as some of the rabbis in the 1986 incident, served short jail terms because they refused to pay fines. Those convicted of the charge were open to a minimum 60-day jail term and a \$100 fine.

The State Department, which has opposed efforts to ease restrictions on demonstrations, had no immediate comment on the ruling yesterday, a spokesman said.

Staff writer Victoria Churchill contributed to this report.

March 23, 1988

AROUND WASHINGTON

On several occasions over the past year, the UCSJ conducted press conferences with U.S. Senators and Congressmen to voice shared concern of specific Soviet Jewry issues. "Divided spouses" was recently highlighted at a reception and press conference co-sponsored by the UCSJ and Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Bob Graham (D-FL), Paul Simon (D-IL), Lawton Chiles (D-FL) and Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD). At the event, Senator Lautenberg congratulated Andrea Wine, former divided spouse, several hours after she was notified that her husband had received permission to emigrate.



In another reception coordinated by UCSJ, participants gathered at the Senate Office Building to phone long-term Moscow Refusenik Benjamin Charny on his 50th birthday and to assure him of their continued concern for his case. Standing from left to right are Senator Timothy Wirth (D-CO); former Refusenik Yuri Blank, holding his daughter, and his wife Anna Charny-Blank; UCSJ National Director Micah H. Naftalin; and Congressman Bob Markey (D-MA).

SOVIET EMIGRE ART RECEPTION

In March 1988, UCSJ organized and sponsored an art reception featuring the works of Eugene Abeshaus and Misha Taratuta, former Soviet Refuseniks and artists now living in Israel. The event was coordinated in cooperation with South Florida Conference on Soviet Jewry, District of Columbia JCC, Hyatt Regency Hotel and Safeway Foods.



Soviet emigre artist Eugene Abeshaus explains the religious and modern elements of his work to Senator Lawton Chiles (D-FL), the statesman who "adopted" the artists and supported their exhibition in the Senate Rotunda in Washington.

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 1988

Julie Mendel
Union of Councils for Soviet Jews
1819 H St., NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. Mendel:

Let me join the Union in celebrating the joyous news that the Khassin family will soon receive exit visas to leave the Soviet Union.

I know how hard all of you have worked to enable this courageous family to realize its dream of "Next Year in Jerusalem." While their struggle has been long and difficult, let us hope it has brought freedom closer to the countless others who remain behind.

I assure you that I will continue my efforts to ensure that all those who wish to depart the Soviet Union are permitted to do so.

Again, my warmest personal congratulations on this happy occasion.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy
Edward M. Kennedy

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

March 4, 1988

Dear Ms. Cohen and Mr. Naftalin:

I was moved by your letter and your concern about the human rights situation in the USSR — especially with regard to Soviet Jews. I share that concern. I, too, was disturbed by the lack of progress and some backward movement since the Washington Summit. For most of last year, the Soviet leadership seemed to be moving toward humanitarian reform in conjunction with economic reform, but as 1988 began, we saw another tightening of controls. We saw welcome gestures, like the release of Naum Meiman and Alexander Lerner after nearly two decades of waiting. But we also saw enforcement of more narrow emigration requirements and continued refusals to applicants on spurious grounds of state security.

Secretary of State Shultz has just returned from Moscow and, I am pleased to report, he received some clarifications from the Soviets about what happened. They have once again assured us they will facilitate increased emigration, and we intend to hold them to their word. We still hope they will transform lip service to human rights ideals into adherence to human rights commitments.

In our efforts to bring legitimate pressure on the Soviet government regarding human rights abuses, we strongly support the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik and Stevenson Amendments. We also oppose the Soviet Union's joining the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. The centralized Soviet economy is simply incompatible with GATT's free-market philosophy.

My Administration remains fully committed to the defense of individual liberty and will always stand behind Soviet Jews in their fight for freedom of emigration and conscience. We will never relax our efforts until these freedoms are a reality — not only for the Soviet Jews, but for all people everywhere.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Ms. Pamela Braun Cohen
National President
Mr. Micah H. Naftalin
National Director

UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS
1819 H STREET, N.W., SUITE 410
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
NEARPRINT

STANLEY F. CHYET
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
3077 UNIVERSITY MALL
LOS ANGELES CA 90007

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
UCSJ



“Through our suffering we [Prisoners of Conscience] have been able to push the gates of the U.S.S.R. just slightly ajar. Through the tiny opening we have made in the Iron Curtain, Jews manage to get out of the U.S.S.R. . . . But the opening is small and vulnerable, and we implore all of you in the free world to keep a close watch on the opening and not to allow the gates to be slammed shut again.”

—Ida Nudel—

Refusenik and former Prisoner of Conscience