

AJHS Finding Aid for the Elaine Pittell Papers

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Guide to the Elaine Pittell (1934-) Papers, undated, 1974-1991, 1993, 1994 *P-873
Dates:	Creation: undated, 1974-1991, 1993, 1994; Creation: Majority of material found within 1975 - 1988
Abstract:	Papers of Elaine Pittell cover the period from mid-1970's to early 1990's and document her and her husband's Robert Pittell's activities as the Chair of the Jewish Federation of South Broward's Soviet Jewry Committee. The documents include correspondence, memos, minutes, publications, news clippings, audiocassettes, videocassette, disc negatives and pins.
Identification:	P-873
Extent:	0.75 Linear Feet (1 manuscript box, 1 half manuscript box)
Language:	English, Russian, Finnish
Repository:	American Jewish Historical Society,

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Historical Note

<p>The Papers of Elaine Pittell represent one collection housed within the Archive of the American Soviet Jewry Movement (AASJM). These papers reflect the effort, beginning in the 1960s through the late 1980s, of thousands of American Jews of all denominations and political orientations to stop the persecution and discrimination of Jews in the Soviet Union. The American Soviet Jewry Movement (ASJM) is considered to be the most influential Movements of the American Jewish community in the 20th century. The beginnings of the organized American Soviet Jewry Movement became a model for efforts to aid Soviet Jews in other countries, among them Great Britain, Canada, and France. The movement can be traced to the early 1960s, when the first organizations were created to address the specific problem of the persecution and isolation of Soviet Jews by the government of the Soviet Union.</p>

Elaine Pittell became inspired to get involved in the Soviet Jewry Movement in 1969, after reading an open letter from a group of Soviet Jews detailing the oppression and intolerance they were subjected to in the USSR. In 1974 she founded the Soviet Jewry Committee as a part of the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of South Broward, Florida. As the Chair of the Committee Elaine Pittell supervised the implementation of programs such as Adopt-A-Family and Adopt-A-Prisoner, briefing of travelers to the USSR, phone calls and mass mailings of holiday postcards to the Soviet Jews, appeals on their behalf with the Soviet and the American authorities, education of Jewish communities on the Soviet Jewry Movement and many other activities. In 1984 Mrs. and Dr. Pittell traveled to the Soviet Union, visiting many Refusenik families in Moscow and Leningrad. Elaine Pittell was among the 50 representatives from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry who in 1988 flew to Helsinki and met there with the Secretary of State George Shultz, intending to focus the attention of the approaching Soviet-American Summit in Moscow on the plight of Soviet Jews.

Scope and Content Note

The collection is arranged in two series.

Papers of Elaine Pittell cover the period from mid-1970's to early 1990's and document her and her husband's Robert Pittell's activities as the Chair of the Jewish Federation of South Broward's Soviet Jewry Committee. The documents include correspondence, memos, minutes, publications, news clippings, audiocassettes, videocassette, disc negatives and pins.

Sweater with the word "Freedom" woven on the front, back and sleeves, worn by Elaine Pittell on a demonstration in Helsinki during the pre-Summit conference on Behalf of Soviet Jewry can be found in the American Jewish Society museum collection under the accession number <http://museums.cjh.org/web/pages/cjh/Display.php?irn=18453&QueryPage=%2F> 2009.033.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers, except items that may be restricted due to their fragility, or privacy.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Elaine Pittell in 2008.

Digitization Note

Pins and pendants were digitized and made fully accessible online in 2014. The audiocassettes and VHS tape in Series II were digitized and made fully accessible online in 2017.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into two series as follows:

Series I: General, undated, 1974-1991, 1993, 1994

Series II: Audiovisual Materials and Pins, undated, 1976, 1977, 1984

Preferred Citation

Published citations should take the following form:

Description of item, date of item, Papers of Elaine Pittell, P-873, Box #, Folder #, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.

Related Material

The Papers of Elaine Pittell is one individual collection within the Archive of the American Soviet Jewry Movement (AASJM) located at the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS). Other Soviet Jewry Movement collections at AJHS include the records of [Action for Soviet Jewry \(I-487\)](#), the [National Conference on Soviet Jewry \(NCSJ; I-181 and I-181A\)](#), the [Union of Councils for Soviet Jews \(I-410, I-410A\)](#), the [Houston Action for Soviet Jewry \(I-500\)](#), Medical Mobilization for Soviet Jewry, the papers of Joel Ackerman (P-787), Julia Mates Cheney (P-806), Jerry Goodman (P-863), Laurel and Alan J. Gould (P-866), Carolyn W. Sanger (P-870), Si Frumkin (P-871), Sanford A. Gradinger (P-880), Shaul Osadchey (P-882), Leonard S. Cahan (P-883), Doris H. Goldstein (P-887), David H. Hill (P-888), Margery Sanford (P-889), Pinchas Mordechai Teitz (P-891) and Pamela B. Cohen (P-897).

Individual accounts of activities within the Soviet Jewry Movement are preserved in the [UJA Oral History Collection \(I-433\)](#), which includes accounts from members of the following organizations: the Union of

Councils for Soviet Jews, Bay Area Council on Soviet Jews (BACSJ), Seattle Action for Soviet Jews, Houston Action for Soviet Jews, Chicago Action for Soviet Jews, Colorado Committee of Concern for Soviet Jews and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. Interviewees include accounts by Lillian Forman (BACSJ), Ann Polunsky, Morey Schapira, Myrtle Sitowitz, Deborah Turkin, David Waksberg, Sylvia Weinberg and Dolores Wilkenfeld. In addition, posters related to the Soviet Jewry Movement can be found in the [Jewish Student Organizations Collection \(I-61\)](#).

Additional materials from other collections include records dealing with the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) located within the [North American Jewish Students Appeal \(NAJSA, I-338\)](#) and the records of the [National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council \(NJCRAC, I-172\)](#). Related records are also located at the AJHS in Newton Centre, MA including [memorabilia and ephemera of the New England Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry \(I-237\)](#) and the [Records of the Student Coalition for Soviet Jewry – Brandeis University \(I-493\)](#).

Use Restrictions

No permission is required to quote, reproduce or otherwise publish manuscript materials found in this collection, as long as the usage is scholarly, educational, and non-commercial. For inquiries about other usage, please contact the Director of Collections and Engagement at mmeyers@ajhs.org.

For reference questions, please email: inquiries@cjh.org

Controlled Access Headings

- Antisemitism
- Audiocassettes
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Commemorative jewelry
- Correspondence
- Emigration and immigration
- Former Soviet republics
- Helsinki (Finland)
- Human rights
- Jews, Soviet
- Legal documents
- Memorandums
- Minutes (administrative records)
- Negative prints
- Photographs
- Prisoners -- Legal status, laws, etc
- Publications (documents)
- Refugees
- Refuseniks
- Soviet Union -- Politics and government -- 1953-1985
- United States
- Videocassettes

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Series I: General, 1974-1991, 1993-1994

Box	Folder	
1	1	Activities of Robert and Elaine Pittell, undated, 1975, 1977-1978, 1984-1988
1	2	Booklet on Soviet Jewry Programming for Jewish Communities and Synagogues, Compiled by the Soviet Jewry Committee of South Boward, FL, 1976-1977
1	3	Briefing Materials for Travelers to the USSR, 1987
1	4	Conference on Soviet Jewry, 1976, 1982-1983, 1985, 1987-1988
1	5	The Helsinki Final Act and the Moscow Summit, 1988
		(contains Finnish)
1	6	Log of Telegrams Sent to the Soviet Jews, to the USSR Officials and to the US Officials, 1974-1987
1	7	Public Action in Support of Soviet Jews, 1975, 1977, 1987
1	8	Soviet Publications in English Language, 1984
1	9	Trip Report by the United Jewish Appeal Florida Regional Delegation, April 1984, 1984
1	10	Zeiman Family Case, undated, 1984, 1987-1991, 1993-1994

Series II: Series II: Audiovisual Materials and Pins, undated, 1976, 1977, 1984

2	1	Photographs, 1987-1988
2	2	Disc Negatives: Trip to the USSR, October 1984, 1984
2	3	Audiocassette 1: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Opening at JFK Airport, Prayer, Demonstration, Opening Session, Belgian children sing Hatikvah, Belgian Choir, Message from Soviet Jews, Ghendin, Frank Church, Letter from Senator Jackson, 1976
[Digital Item]		Audiocassette 1: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Opening at JFK Airport, Prayer, Demonstration, Opening Session, Belgian children sing Hatikvah, Belgian Choir, Message from Soviet Jews, Ghendin, Frank Church, Letter from Senator Jackson, 1976
2	3	Audiocassette 2: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Frank Church, Alexander Voronel, Menachem Begin, Elie Wiesel, Irma Cherniak, Sylva Zalmanson, 1976
[Digital Item]		Audiocassette 2: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Frank Church, Alexander Voronel, Menachem Begin, Elie Wiesel, Irma Cherniak, Sylva Zalmanson, 1976
2	3	Audiocassette 3: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Closing Session—Golda Meir, Elaine Pittell, Soviet Olim Dance and Song Group, Bayard Rustin, Golda Meir introduced by David Blumberg, 1976
[Digital Item]		Audiocassette 3: Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, Brussels: Closing

Session—Golda Meir, Elaine Pittell, Soviet Olim Dance and Song Group, Bayard Rustin, Golda Meir introduced by David Blumberg, 1976

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| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 4: Tatiana Zieman; Simchat Torah, 1984 |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 4: Tatiana Zieman; Simchat Torah, 1984 |
| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 5: Soviet Jewry Luncheon with Ted Kennedy, undated |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 5: Soviet Jewry Luncheon with Ted Kennedy, undated |
| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 6: Alan Pollack Presentation on Soviet Jewry, undated |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 6: Alan Pollack Presentation on Soviet Jewry, undated |
| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 7: Rabbi Balfour and Reverend Malcolm Boyd, 1976 April 25 |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 7: Rabbi Balfour and Reverend Malcolm Boyd, 1976 April 25 |
| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 8: Message from Ida Nudel, Moscow, 1976 October |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 8: Message from Ida Nudel, Moscow, 1976 October |
| 2 | 3 | Audiocassette 9: Press Conference for Natalia (Avital) Sharansky and Mikhail Steglitz at Westside Baptist Church, Hollywood, FL, April 11, year unknown, undated |
| [Digital Item] | | Audiocassette 9: Press Conference for Natalia (Avital) Sharansky and Mikhail Steglitz at Westside Baptist Church, Hollywood, FL, April 11, year unknown, undated |
| 2 | 4 | Promotional video for 'Anna and Lena—Sounds of Freedom' documentary, circa 1980s |
| | | VHS, Musician Anna Rozovsky Performing a Special Program Dedicated to Her Refusenik Sister Lena Rozovsky, Tel-Ad Studios, Jerusalem. |
| [Digital Item] | | Promotional video for 'Anna and Lena—Sounds of Freedom' documentary, circa 1980s |
| | | VHS, Musician Anna Rozovsky Performing a Special Program Dedicated to Her Refusenik Sister Lena Rozovsky, Tel-Ad Studios, Jerusalem. |
| 2 | 5 | Nine Soviet Jewry Movement Pins, One Metal Star of David Pendant with Text "Hillel Butman: U.S.S.R. Prisoner of Conscience", undated |
| [Digital Item] | | Nine Soviet Jewry Movement Pins, One Metal Star of David Pendant with Text "Hillel Butman: U.S.S.R. Prisoner of Conscience", undated |