

OUTCRY!

NEWSLETTER OF THE BAY AREA COUNCIL ON SOVIET JEWRY

MOREY SCHAPIRA, PRESIDENT

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SCHARANSKY TRIBUNAL SPEAKS: USSR GUILTY AS CHARGED

SCHARANSKY ENDS HUNGER STRIKE

Scharansky Allowed Exchange of Mail; Ends Fast

Anatoly Scharansky's mother has received a 14-page handwritten letter from her son, dated February 7, which confirms that he has ended his hunger strike. She said that he was gaining weight and that headaches and dizziness were abating but that he was suffering from heart pains.

Ida Milgrom, Scharansky's 74-year-old mother, said her son ended the four-month fast on January 14, after he received his first note from her in more than a year. It was on that day she finally gained entrance to Chistopol Prison, 500 miles east of Moscow, where Anatoly had been held in an absolute communication blackout since January, 1982. In a brief exchange of censored notes, Mrs. Milgrom learned that Anatoly was suffering from a total absence of strength, constant headaches, dizziness, fever, and changes in blood pressure. She appealed at that time to authorities to admit her son to the hospital, but was unsuccessful.

A week later, Soviet leader Yuri Andropov wrote to French Communist Party leader Georges Marchais that Scharansky had ended his hunger strike and was in satisfactory health. Both Mrs. Milgrom and Scharansky's wife, Avital, demanded further proof, which was not forthcoming.

In the following week, Mrs. Milgrom appealed to Soviet health officials without any success. She received indications that Anatoly had not, in fact, ended his hunger strike.

On January 27, Mrs. Milgrom sent a telegram directly to Yuri Andropov, expressing her fear that the fast was not over and asking for help in getting Anatoly hospitalized. It was not until she received Anatoly's letter of February 7 that she confirmed the hunger strike was over.

Mrs. Milgrom said that the letter was a great relief, but that the heart pains he mentioned worried her because her husband died three years ago of heart disease.

Scharansky Denied Fair Trial; Mistreated in Prison Judicial Commission Calls Upon Soviets to Release Scharansky

All the legal arguments had been heard, all the depositions had been presented, and the witnesses had all taken the stand and stepped down. While the three-judge commission retired to formulate its decision, the 450 people in the audience tensely waited for the result. And, despite the known biases of most of the sponsors of the event, while they waited, no one was quite certain just what the verdict would be.

The time was 10:15 on the evening of Sunday, January 23. The place was Fort Mason Conference Center in San Francisco. The event was "The People vs. the Government of the USSR: An International Tribunal Investigating Crimes Against Anatoly Scharansky." The verdict: Guilty as charged.



Photo credit: Jon Haber

UNPRECEDENTED EVENT

The tribunal was unprecedented. Never before had the Soviet government been tried for violations of its own constitution and laws in its treatment of one of its citizens. And for Anatoly Scharansky, it couldn't have come at a more appropriate time: Scharansky had just observed his 35th birthday, his sixth behind bars, and was engaged in the fourth month of a desperate hunger strike in protest of his complete isolation.

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