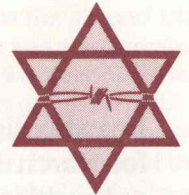


ALERT

INFORMATION FROM THE
UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS
1411 K Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 393-4117



The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews is a Washington-based, independent organization dedicated to the freedom of emigration and human rights for all Soviet Jews.

Vol. XII No. 3

March 31, 1986



Congressman Charles B. Rangel

Congressman Charles Rangel Joins UCSJ Advisory Board

The UCSJ is pleased to announce that Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) has agreed to serve as a member of the UCSJ Advisory Board. Rangel is currently serving his eighth term as the Representative of New York's 16th Congressional District, which covers the neighborhood of East and Central Harlem; the Upper West Side, and Roosevelt Island.

Congressman Rangel is the fourth ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, where he serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures. In addition, he is also Chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control and is Deputy Whip for the House Democratic leadership. Among his numerous honorary degrees and awards is the Achievement Award from the New York Urban Coalition.

Stated Lynn Singer, Chairperson of the UCSJ Advisory Board, "We are honored that Rep. Rangel has joined the Board and see his membership as the culmination of a successful relationship we have had with him over the years."

Brutality Against POCs Intensifies

Soviet Jewish prisoners of conscience are increasingly becoming victims of physical brutality perpetrated in labor camps and while awaiting trial. The beginning of this disturbing trend can be traced back to 1984. The frequency of injuries intentionally inflicted on POCs has escalated dramatically since then.

In marked contrast to the sentencing of previous POCs, a number of these Hebrew teachers and cultural activists are interned in holding cells and camps with criminal offenders, rather than with political prisoners. The extent and severity of the injuries are not as easily documented as brutality sustained by refuseniks, as the POCs cannot get independent diagnoses, and in most cases, cannot even be seen by members of their own family.

The instances of injury described are confined to and the result of outright

physical brutality and do not address other pervasive physical and mental punishments used to torment POCs, including pressure to admit guilt; extensive confinement in solitary; deprivation of food, exercise, and communication with family members; and a myriad of other pressures, all used in an effort to break the POCs.

In February, POC Yuli Edelshtein, a Moscow Hebrew teacher was diagnosed with a crushed femur. While the exact cause of the injury is still unknown, the injury is viewed as suspicious. Edelshtein is expected to be non-ambulatory for six months. To prevent him from becoming permanently disabled, he requires surgery and physical therapy. His family has no evidence of his having received adequate medical care nor have they been

(Continued on page 9)

UCSJ Accords Vote of Confidence to Helsinki Commission

Mark Epstein, Executive Director of UCSJ, delivered testimony in support of the Helsinki process to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) at hearings held on February 27.

The CSCE, popularly known as the Helsinki Commission, is an independent advisory agency commissioned by the Congress to monitor compliance of the signatories to the obligations agreed upon in the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The U.S.' participation in the Helsinki process is under scrutiny; the purpose of the hearings was to evaluate whether the process has been successful.

Excerpts from Dr. Epstein's testimony follow:

"Members of the UCSJ leadership and staff have been in attendance at every major meeting, and every major international event, associated with the Helsinki process. In Madrid, we maintained a professionally staffed office, the Robert F.

Drinan Human Rights Center, and UCSJ leaders visited frequently. We were in regular contact with the United States delegation under Ambassador Kampelman, as well as foreign delegations. I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of this contact, and of the

(Continued on page 10)



There is no greater tribute to this nation and its values than that, through our public institutions, we can express views on (our) most fundamental human values.

—UCSJ Executive Director Mark Epstein

NEWSBRIEFS

Investigation into the case of **VLADIMIR LIFSHITZ** of Leningrad has ended, with the trial scheduled for March 19. Lifshitz is expected to be charged with anti-Soviet slander. Anna, his wife, is pressing authorities to allow her to be one of his defense lawyers. The court will decide on her request at a special session on March 19. Because Vladimir Lifshitz has renounced his Soviet citizenship and has become an Israeli citizen, Anna has asked the Dutch Embassy to assist in his defense. (The Dutch represent Israel's interest in the USSR, since Israel does not have formal diplomatic ties with the Soviets.)

POC **ALEC ZELICHENOK** of Leningrad was hospitalized for intestinal bleeding. In light of his medical condition, his wife Galina is pressing for his release from labor camp. His blood pressure reached 190/130. Galina's phone was disconnected.

POC **ZACHAR ZUNSHAIN** of Riga, in a letter to his wife Tatiana, described the psychological torture to which he has been subjected in prison. Tatiana was notified she would be permitted to meet with Zachar on March 11. The meeting lasted only ten minutes. Tanya is now on a hunger strike, standing outside the prison camp in Irkutsk.

A number of refuseniks throughout the USSR undertook a joint hunger strike for the duration of the Communist Party Congress. **NATASHA BECHMAN** of Moscow held a press conference on February 18 to announce the refuseniks' plans.

The **GOLDSHTEIN** family of Tblisi has received permission to emigrate. The news comes after 13 years of their pressing authorities, for which Grigory Goldshtein served a year in a labor camp. Twelve-year-old Avi has been a refusenik since birth.

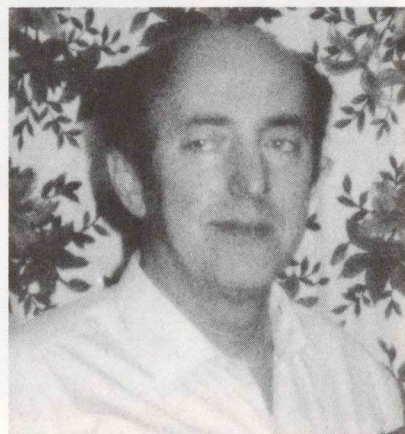
POC **LEONID VOLVOVSKY** of Gorky has reached his Siberian labor camp where he was sentenced to serve his three year sentence. His wife Mila is in Moscow trying to find out his precise whereabouts.

Former POC **BORIS KALENDAREV** of Leningrad has received permission to emigrate.

In January, **EDUARD GUDAVA** of Tblisi, a member of the Phantom Orchestra, was sentenced to four years in labor camp on charges of malicious hooliganism. He had put up a sign on his balcony demanding that the KGB stop harassing his family.

ARMEN KHATCHATURIAN of Moscow has reportedly received permission.

(Continued on page 9)



Vladimir Lifshitz



Alec Zelichenok



Grigory and Avi Goldshtein

Embassy Convictions Continue

Nine Soviet Jewry activists arrested in October, four Christians arrested in September, and 21 students arrested in October, were found guilty by the D.C. Superior Court of conducting an illegal demonstration in front of the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

For the first group, Judge Joseph Hannon refused to hear the proposed defense, although he did accept the proffer (written account) of what the witnesses would have said had they been allowed to testify about Soviet persecution of Jews.

The group's attorney, Seth Waxman, demonstrated that persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union is so severe and consequently their situation so critical, that the demonstration was perceived by the activists as necessary to save Soviet Jews from further harm. Waxman cited State Department reports on Soviet rights violations and anti-Semitism and referred to specific prisoners of conscience in his lengthy statement.

In deciding to postpone the probation sentence pending appeal, Judge Hannon called the statement submitted by Waxman as "indeed a remarkable record," going so far as to suggest that the case might have sufficient merit to win on appeal.

More Schapira, President of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, declared, "I am quite heartened by Judge Hannon's decision to grant these nine brave individuals a stay in their sentences. I am confident that with the evidence presented by Seth Waxman we have a very good chance of winning this case on appeal." The nine defendants were Bill Graham, West Bloomfield, Michigan; Sergei Broudie, Acton, Massachusetts; Dr. Konnilyn Feig, San Rafael, California; Dorothy Mahlin, Southfield, Michigan; Rusty Frank, San Francisco; Rabbi Ira Korinow, Haverhill, Massachusetts; June Daniels, Des Moines, Iowa; Malka Lipkin, Woodbridge, Illinois; and Yosef Abramowitz of Boston. The arrests took place immediately following the UCSJ's annual meeting.

The trial of the two Christian clergy and two church volunteers also resulted in stayed sentences. These four were part of a group that traditionally volunteers to stand in for the Jewish community on the Yom Kippur holiday.

Defendant Rev. John Steinbruck, pastor of Luther Place Memorial Church, explained to the judge that he was "part of a faith tradition that has brutalized and persecuted Jewry for centuries. Yom Kip-

pur is as good a day as any to atone for some of this." This was the second trial for Rev. Steinbruck. He was also arrested on May 1, along with 24 rabbis, and tried and convicted with that group as well.

Watching the proceedings in the courtroom, Rabbi David Oler, chairman of the Washington Board of Rabbis' Soviet Jewry Action Committee, said, "For rabbis and other Jews to protest on behalf of their Soviet brethren is to be expected. But when Christian leaders also speak out against the religious persecution of Soviet Jews and are willing to accept the consequences of their actions, it represents a spiritual act which is a source of inspiration for all Americans."

Others tried, included Amy Anderson, a volunteer at the St. Peter's Night Shelter for Homeless Women; Jon Robitscher, a layman with the Episcopal Church; and Father Eugene Brake, a volunteer chaplain at the Department of Corrections.

The demonstrations are part of an activist-inspired continuing campaign underscored in December by five Washington area rabbis who chose to serve 15 days in a federal correctional institution to call attention to the plight of Soviet Jews. A number of defendants arrested in the series of demonstrations have decided to appeal their convictions.

The Washington Post

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 22, 1986

A U.S. Attorney's Random Justice

ONE OF THE continuing mysteries of prosecution in the capital city is a dual standard of treatment by U.S. Attorney Joseph diGenova's office of people who choose to demonstrate in front of embassies here. It's been going on for more than a year now and has yet to be explained satisfactorily. It boils down to this mysterious difference: if you demonstrate in front of the Soviet Embassy, you're likely to be charged, prosecuted and punished, but if you demonstrate in front of the South African Embassy, you may be charged but the charges are dropped before you get near a court. What kind of interpretive latitude is this?

We're not talking isolated instances. In March 1985, we noted that some 1,665 people had been charged with breaking a law by demonstrating within 500 feet of the South African Embassy. Mr. diGenova had seen to it that charges were dropped before anyone went to court. The number has since passed the 2,000 mark, and the policy hasn't

changed. Meanwhile, those who protest within 500 feet of the Soviet Embassy are going to court; just the other day, 21 students were convicted, given 15-day suspended sentences and ordered to pay \$60 each in fines and court costs. What's the difference?

In a letter last summer to a House Judiciary subcommittee chairman, Mr. diGenova cited legal precedents that he said allow discretion in choosing how or whether to prosecute. He says this can take into account the wishes of ambassadors at the embassies where the incidents occur and the possibility of retaliation against U.S. embassies if protesters here are let go without charges.

At that rate, you could wind up with 100 different treatments of protesters, each tailored to the whims of a different ambassador around town. It might be a politically convenient arrangement, but it's no way to enforce a law that applies uniformly to every embassy—and should be enforced with some semblance of equity.



ALERT

On Capitol Hill



GERRY SIKORSKI
8th DISTRICT, MINNESOTA
WHIP AT LARGE



COMMITTEES
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE
CHAIRMAN, INVESTIGATIONS
CIVIL SERVICE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 21, 1986

Mikhail Gorbachev
General Secretary of the Communist Party
Kremlin RSFSR
Moscow
USSR

Dear Mr. Gorbachev:

I am saddened and distressed to learn about a particular Soviet woman, Inna Meiman, whom your government will not allow to leave the Soviet Union to seek medical treatment. Lisa Paul, a Russian studies student at the University of Minnesota, recently undertook a 25-day hunger strike on Mrs. Meiman's behalf. I urge you to consider her case.

Mrs. Meiman has a severely debilitating cancer which is slowly killing her. She learned of her cancer about two years ago when a tumor appeared on the back of her neck, close to the spinal column. Mrs. Meiman was diagnosed as having soft tissue sarcoma. Over the past two years, she has had four risky, painful operations, the last one in August, 1985. So much muscle tissue has now been removed that no further surgery is feasible.

Immediately after the first operation, in October 1983, Mrs. Meiman received generous invitations to undertake treatment in oncological clinics in Sweden, France, the United States, and Israel. Personal invitations were also extended from a former Swedish Minister of Health and a former French Minister of Health. She was refused permission to go for treatment at that time.

In September, 1985, Mrs. Meiman applied to the national emigration chief to let her go with her mother, brother, son and two grandchildren, leaving her husband behind. On September 18, the national emigration chief told her she could not leave because she had been married to Naum Meiman, a prominent professor of mathematics, for too long, and her departure would constitute a security risk for the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gorbachev, I urge you to reconsider your decision to hold Inna Meiman in the Soviet Union. My colleagues and I in the United States Congress feel strongly that Inna Meiman's case is one of life and death and that the Soviet Union can no longer turn its back to this woman's pleas.

I am hopeful that, once made aware of her case, you will preserve the human dignity of this woman and help save her life.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gerry Sikorski
GERRY SIKORSKI
Member of Congress

Bill Richardson
BILL RICHARDSON
Member of Congress

Peter Kostmayer
PETER KOSTMAYER
Member of Congress

James Oberstar
JAMES OBERSTAR
Member of Congress

Bill Lowery
BILL LOWERY
Member of Congress

Norman Lent
NORMAN LENT
Member of Congress

Ken Kramer
KEN KRAMER
Member of Congress

Ron Wyden
RON WYDEN
Member of Congress

Lawrence Coughlin
LAWRENCE COUGHLIN
Member of Congress

Herbert Bateman
HERBERT BATEMAN
Member of Congress

Vic Fazio
VIC FAZIO
Member of Congress

Inna Meiman Focus of Congressional Letter

Members of Congress, led by Rep. Gerry Sikorski (D-MN) wrote to General Secretary Gorbachev urging him to reconsider his decision to hold refusenik Inna Meiman in the Soviet Union. The letter follows a dramatic hunger strike undertaken by American student Lisa Paul, on behalf of Mrs. Meiman, whom Paul met while working in the USSR. (ALERT Jan 31, 1986). Inna Meiman is suffering from a rare form of cancer.

In a desperate attempt to get proper care for his wife, Professor Naum Meiman, one of the founding members of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki Watch Group, held a press conference in Moscow for western reporters on February 17. At the conference, he distributed copies of a letter in which he asked Senator Ted Kennedy to intervene with Gorbachev to allow his wife to seek treatment in the West. Kennedy had met with a number of refuseniks including Naum Meiman during his visit to Moscow in early February.

Nevada Congressman Phones Moscow Refuseniks

Rep. Harry Reid (D-NV) has kept in touch regularly with refuseniks Helen and Arkady Mai of Moscow, ever since his visit to the Soviet Union in January 1985 as part of a Congressional delegation. On January 12 of this year, Reid successfully placed a call to the Mais during a Jewish Federation meeting in his home district. A speaker phone allowed the audience to participate in the call, during which the Mais, refuseniks of 13 years, could only hint at their overall situation and focused on more personal matters. Helen Mai asked Congressman Reid when he would be returning to Moscow, an indication that the couple are not hopeful they will be permitted to emigrate soon.

The State Department special assistant to the undersecretary for economic affairs, Elliott Hurwitz, joined Reid in speaking to the group on the issue of Soviet Jewry, underscoring the importance of continued contact with refuseniks by Americans.

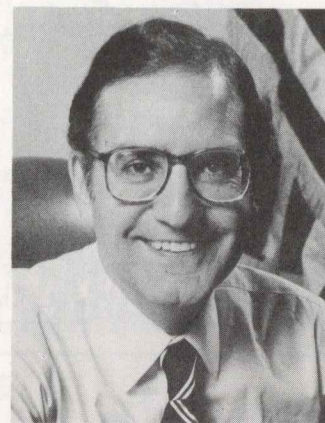
Legislation Introduced to Honor Anatoly, Avital Scharansky

Congressman Ben Gilman (R-NY) has recently introduced legislation which would award both Anatoly and Avital Scharansky with a Congressional gold medal in recognition of their dedication to human rights. Speaking to the House of Representatives as he introduced this legislation, Congressman Gilman stated, "They have made a contribution to the entire world through their words and deeds, having elevated the concept of human rights to a global scale. They have earned our utmost respect and admiration, and are highly deserving of such an honor." The bill, H.R. 4186, currently has 75 House sponsors and has been referred to the House Banking Committee.

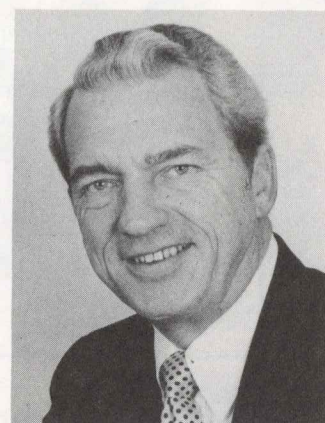


ALERT

On Capitol Hill



Senator George Mitchell (D-ME)



Rep. Thomas N. Kindness (R-OH)

Congressional Call to Conscience Co-Chairs Named

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews is pleased to announce that Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) and Congressman Tom Kindness (R-OH) have been named Co-chairs of UCSJ's Congressional Call to Conscience Vigil for the second session of the 99th Congress.

The Call to Conscience began in 1976 and has become one of the best mechanisms for Members of Congress to speak out on behalf of Soviet Jews seeking freedom of religion and the right to emigrate. Each week, statements on specific Soviet Jewry cases are inserted into the Congressional Record by members who have adopted an individual refusenik or family.

In August of 1985, Senator Mitchell was a member of the Senate delegation which visited the Soviet Union and he had the opportunity to meet with several refuseniks and discuss their plight. Congressman Kindness has played a key role in questioning the prosecution of demonstrators arrested at the Soviet Embassy.

Stated Morey Schapira, President of the UCSJ, "We are extremely pleased that these outstanding members of the United States Congress have agreed to chair our Congressional Call to Conscience. As the second Summit approaches, it is crucial that our elected officials' voices be heard. Through the efforts of Senator Mitchell and Congressman Kindness, I am confident that the Soviet Jewry issue will be raised from Washington to Moscow."

Soviets Say "Nyet" to Flowers

Several Congressional wives, carrying vibrant bouquets of spring flowers, were told "nyet" by Soviet officials at the Embassy to their request to deliver flowers on behalf of women refuseniks in the Soviet Union.

The flowers, donated by member councils and friends of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, were being given in celebration of International Women's Day. It is tradition in the Soviet Union to give flowers as a sign of love and friendship. The wives

were attempting to deliver the flowers on behalf of Nadezhda Fradkova and Ida Nudel, two well-known women of refuseniks.

Annette Lantos, Chairwoman of the Congressional Spouses Committee of 21, stated, "As women, we are uniquely qualified to speak out for refusenik women. We know that life for refusenik women in the Soviet Union is particularly hard. Many lose their jobs after applying to emigrate. Their husbands are forced to take menial employment to avoid being jailed as a "parasite." They must rely on friends to provide even the barest of living conditions for their families. As women and spouses we understand this pain."

Joining Mrs. Lantos were: Jane Gephardt (who has adopted Nadezhda Fradkova), Katie Lowery, Kathryn Porter, and Nancy Siljander.

Before the embassy event, UCSJ hosted a breakfast for the congressional spouses' group. The speaker was Dina Kaminskaya, former Soviet attorney, exiled because she regularly gave legal aid to refuseniks.

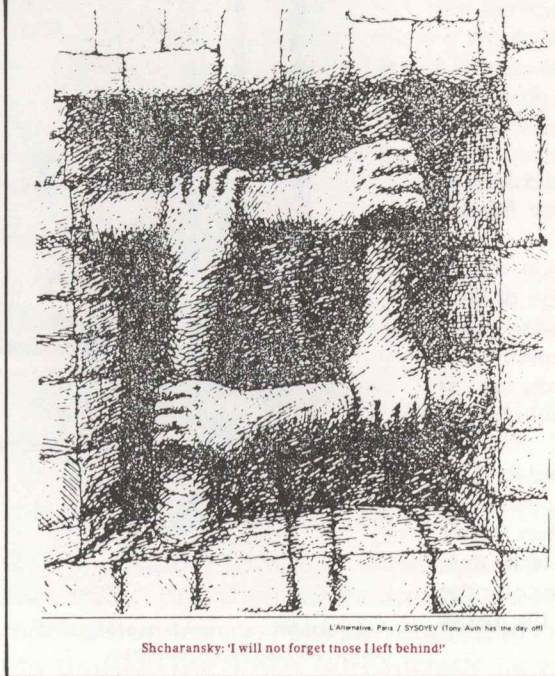
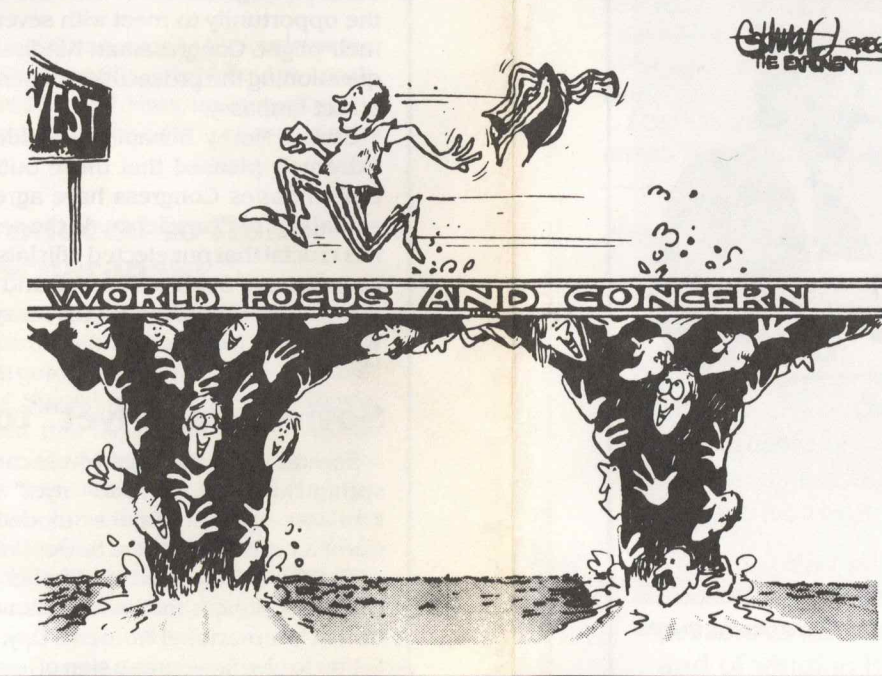
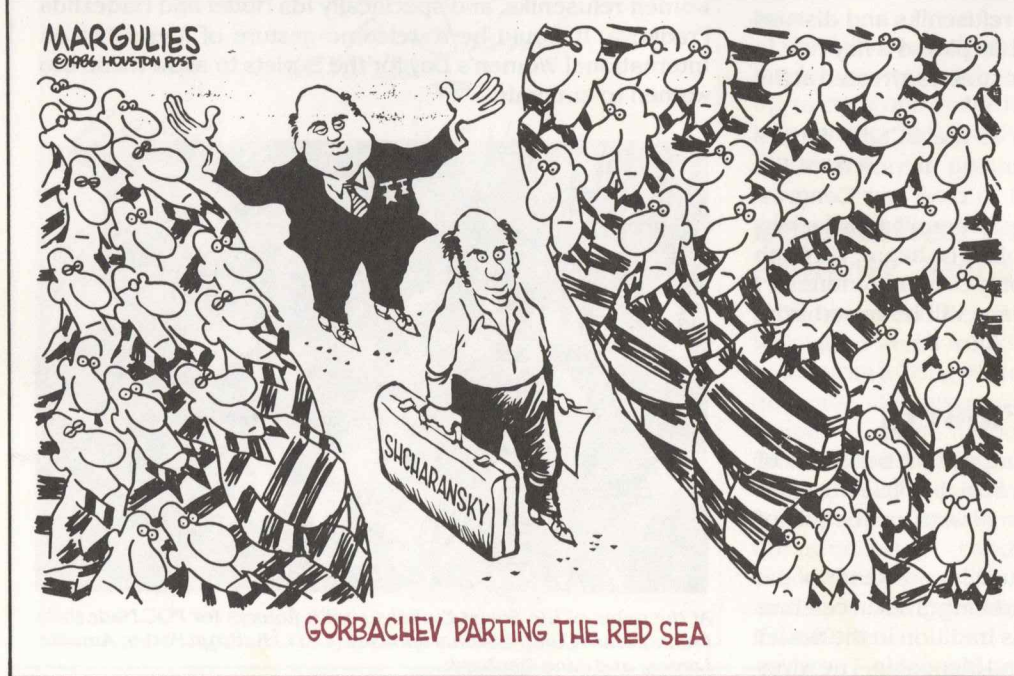
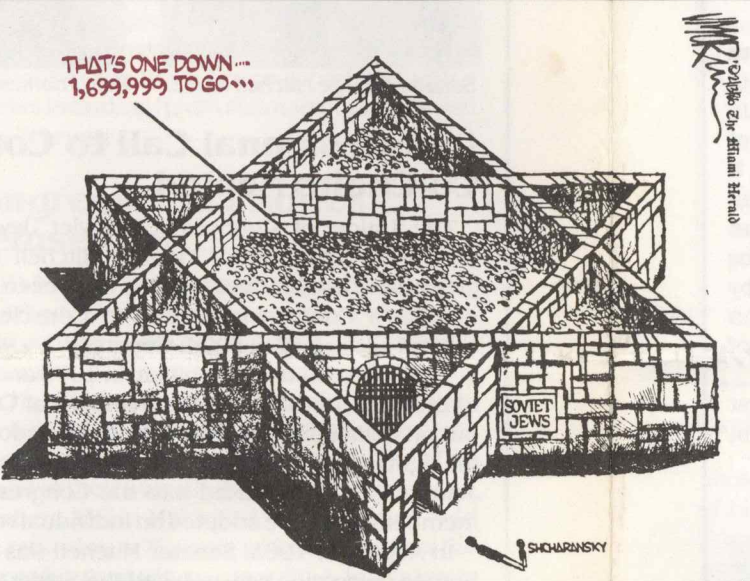
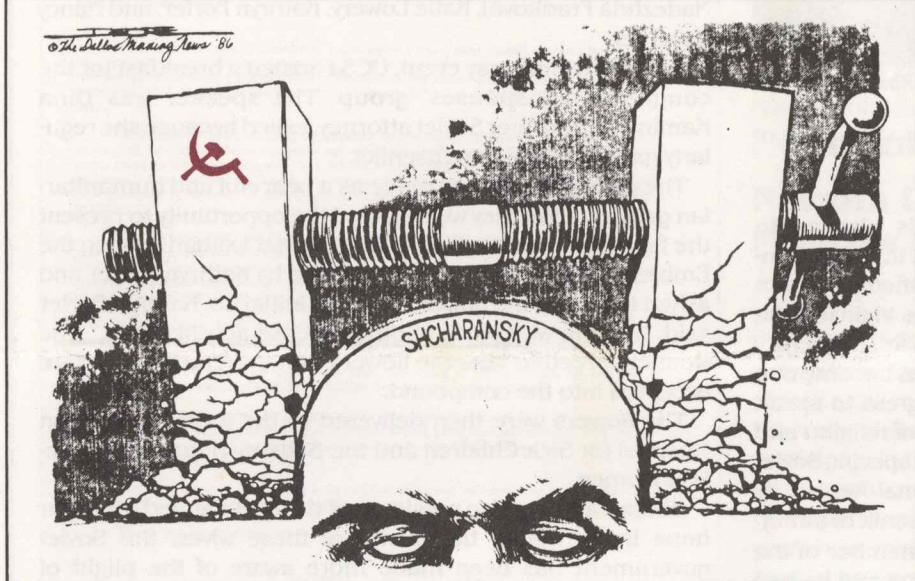
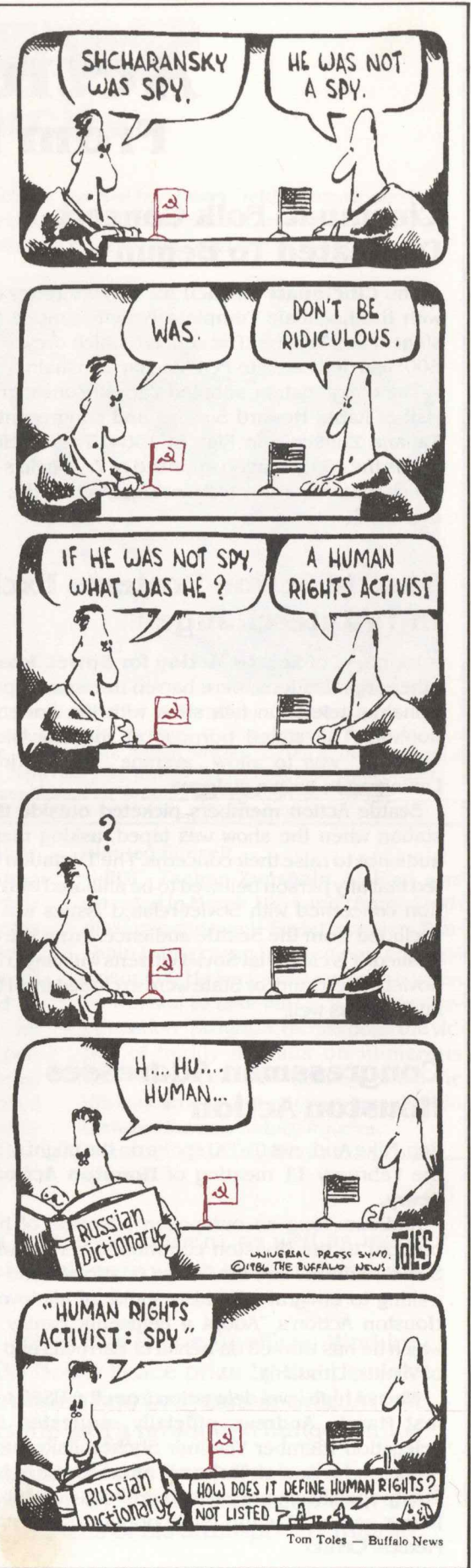
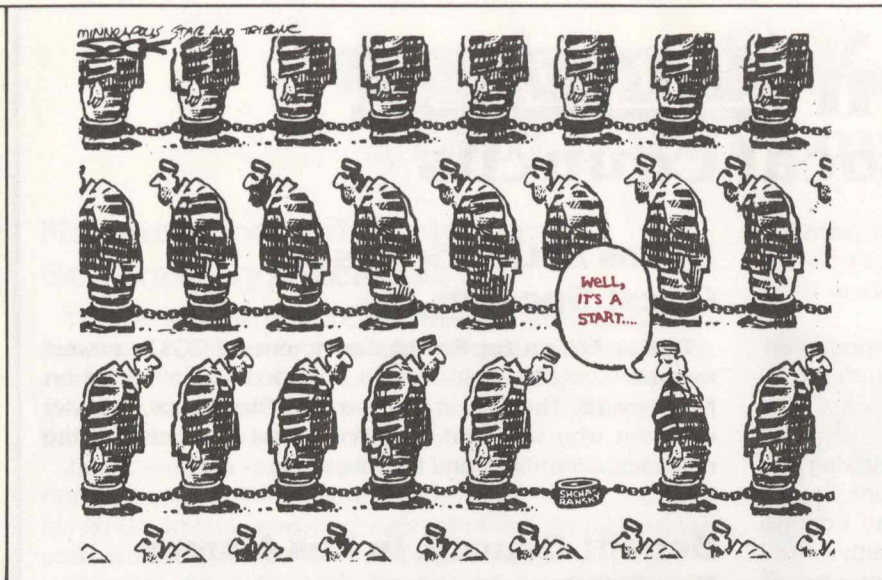
The offer of flower was made as a peaceful and humanitarian gesture. After they were denied the opportunity to present the flowers to Embassy officials, a Soviet woman leaving the Embassy compound was approached by Kathryn Porter and asked to accept the flowers. After an initial no, Kathryn Porter said, "As one woman to another, please accept these." The woman agreed to take the flowers. However, no flowers were accepted into the compound.

The flowers were then delivered to the local Washington Hospital for Sick Children and the Bethany House for Homeless Women.

Hinda Cantor, a vice president of the UCSJ, stated, "It is our hope that through the efforts of these wives, the Soviet government has been made more aware of the plight of women refuseniks, and specifically Ida Nudel and Nadezhda Fradkova. It would be a welcome gesture of friendship on International Women's Day for the Soviets to allow these two women to emigrate."



At the gates of the Soviet Embassy, with flowers for POC Nadezhda Fradkova are Congressional spouses (l. to r.) Kathryn Porter, Annette Lantos, and Jane Gephardt.



Action **ALERT**

From Local Councils

Cincinnati Folk Concert Dedicated To Begun

The **Cincinnati Council for Soviet Jewry** co-sponsored with the Rockdale Temple a benefit concert featuring folk singer Mary Travers. The concert, which drew a crowd of over 500, was dedicated to POC Zachar Zunshain.

The congregation adopted Zachar Zunshain following the visit of Rabbi Howard Simons and congregant John Fox to Tatiana Zunshain in Riga in 1984. The Cincinnati Council keeps the congregation apprised of Zunshain's health status, which has deteriorated seriously over the past several months.

Seattle Action Protests Exclusion In TV Interchange

Members of **Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry**, along with other organizations, were barred from participating in a Phil Donahue television talk show with the Soviets via satellite hookup. The stated purpose of the television talk show "summit" was to allow "average" citizens in Seattle and Leningrad to have a dialogue.

Seattle Action members picketed outside the Seattle TV station when the show was taped, asking members of the audience to raise their concerns. The TV station readily admitted that any person believed to be affiliated with any organization concerned with Soviet-related issues was purposefully excluded from the Seattle audience. From the dialogue that ensued, it is clear that Soviet citizens with any criticisms of the Soviet system and/or State were excluded from the Leningrad audience as well.

Congressman Addresses Houston Action

Rep. Mike Andrews (D-TX) spoke on the plight of Soviet Jews at the February 11 meeting of **Houston Action for Soviet Jewry**.

Andrews, long an outspoken advocate of human rights, brought to the Houston community his knowledge of U.S.-Soviet relations and how these relations affect Jews who are waiting to emigrate. He also spoke of his involvement with Houston Action's "Adopt a Refusenik Family" Program, in which he has worked on behalf of Karmella and Vladimir Raiz of Vilnius, Lithuania.

When a high level delegation from the USSR toured the U.S. last March, Andrews officially requested that ranking delegation member Vladimir Shcherbitsky and then Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin intercede on behalf of the Raiz family, specifically asking Shcherbitsky to secure a visa for the Raizes so that Vladimir could obtain treatment at the Texas Medical Center.

Dallas Action Sponsors Guest Speaker

Dallas Action for Soviet Jewry, one of UCSJ's newest member councils, held its well attended kick-off event on February 16. Their guest speaker was Oleg Popov, a Soviet emigrant who was, and remains, a vital link between the refusenik community and the free world.

Benefit Concert In Los Alamos For POCs

The **Los Alamos Committee on Soviet Anti-Semitism** and the Los Alamos Ministerial Fellowship, on January 20, co-sponsored a concert honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The musical program was a benefit honoring prisoners of conscience worldwide. The Reverend Barbara Henderson, a member of both co-sponsoring organizations, opened the evening program by highlighting the plight of refuseniks and POC's, drawing attention to Reverend King's public support for Soviet Jews. In addition, messages of support were sent by Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM), Rep. Joe Skeen (R-NM), and a representative of Amnesty International spoke on the case of a Soviet Christian POC.

The well attended benefit concert was notable as the first and only event in honor of Reverend King and the first interfaith event in the history of Los Alamos.



Judy Goldman, president of Houston Action for Soviet Jewry, thanks Congressman Mike Andrews.

Action **ALERT**

From Local Councils

Member Councils Celebrate Scharansky's Release

The **Des Moines Action Committee for Soviet Jews** and the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines held a service on February 12 for the community to express joy and thanksgiving for the release of Anatoly Scharansky, and concern for the POC's remaining in the Soviet Union.

June Daniels, a vice president of UCSJ and co-chair of Des Moines Action, visited Scharansky in the Soviet Union before his arrest, and has worked closely with Avital throughout the years she has attempted to secure his release.

The **Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews** celebrated Scharansky's release at a Freedom Party on February 23. Attendees had the pleasure of tearing up and otherwise destroying "Free Scharansky" postcards, bumper stickers and buttons that have marked the long campaign for Scharansky's release.

In a more serious vein, following the party, Professor David Wyman, author of *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and The Holocaust 1941-1945*, spoke and then participated in a panel discussion, "The Abandonment of Soviet Jews?". Other panel participants included Morey Schapira, president of UCSJ, and Dr. M. Michael Thaler, president of the Holocaust Library and Research Center.

Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry held a prayer service, followed by a celebration of the release of Anatoly Scharansky. Local broadcast and print media covered the event.



The last Long Island Vigil for Scharansky (unknown to the participants) took place in January at the Anatoly Scharansky Freedom Grove. (l. to r.) Rep. Robert Mrazek (D-NY), Rep. Raymond McGrath (R-NY), Mark Nashpitz, former Soviet POC, and Lynn Singer, Executive Director, Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry.

Brutality (Continued from page 1)

allowed to see him. Since the beginning of his stay in this camp, Edelshtein was brutally beaten several times. The purpose of at least one of the beatings was to "exorcize" him of his religious beliefs. Edelshtein was arrested in September 1984 on false charges of drug possession.

POC Vladimir Lifshitz of Leningrad, arrested in January, was beaten soon

after he was placed in the Investigation Prison to await his trial. He spent ten days in the hospital. No member of his family has been permitted to see him or to learn the extent of the severity of his injuries.

In December 1984, the day after Yosef Berenshtein of Kiev was sentenced to four years for "resisting the police," he was attacked in his cell. He received permanent injuries and will remain almost totally blind for life. Authorities asserted to his wife Fanya that he had intentionally

blinded himself.

POC Zachar Zunshain of Riga was arrested in March 1984 and charged with disseminating anti-Soviet slander. Zunshain is in a camp housing only criminal prisoners. He was severely beaten when he refused to take part in a "political re-education" program. He has been the victim of bodily assaults on numerous occasions. The first beating, when he initially arrived in the camp, resulted in broken ribs and kidney injuries.

Newsbriefs (Continued from page 2)

LEV and **ALLA SUD** of Moscow were denied permission. OVIR officials told them, as well as many others in Moscow, that reunification of families is based *only* on families in which husband and wife are separated.

Soviet phychiatrist **ANATOLY KORYAGIN**, imprisoned for his active role in the unofficial Working Commission on Psychiatric Abuse, was nominated for the 1986 Nobel Peace prize by the Helsinki Commission. Koryagin was sentenced in 1981 to seven years in camp and five years in exile. At last report, he was severely debilitated due to his treatment in the camp and a prolonged hunger strike.

Former refusenik **LEONID FELDMAN** was in Washington in February where he spoke to the press, several members of Congress and their staffs, and the local community. To educate people on the pressures all refuseniks are under, Mr. Feldman shared his experiences of his attempts to emigrate and of winding his way through the Soviet bureaucratic maze.

Mission Accomplished: International Committee Disbanded

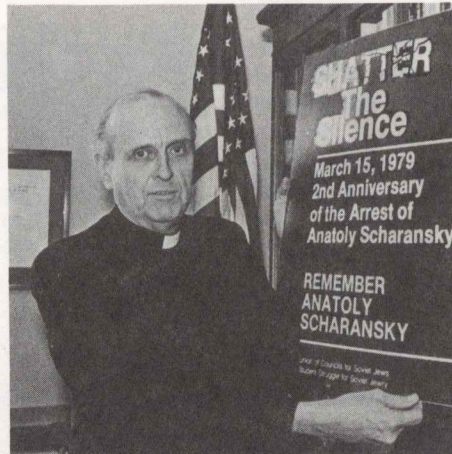
Father Robert Drinan, former Congressman from Massachusetts and chairman of the International Committee for the Release of Anatoly Scharansky, recently wrote to Anatoly and Avital happily pointing out that this would be the last letter he would ever write on the Committee's stationery. On February 11, the UCSJ and the International Committee held a joint press conference at the National Press Building just prior to Anatoly's release. Excerpts from his statement follow:

I arrived in Moscow in the late afternoon of August 10, 1975. I was scheduled to attend a trial of a dissident the following morning but when they discovered that a member of Congress was going to be there, they postponed the trial until the day after I was scheduled to leave the USSR. At a gathering of some 15 observers, I asked for Anatoly Scharansky. When he came forward, I presented to him a beautiful picture of his wife, Avital, that had been taken two weeks previously in Israel against the golden sun of Jerusalem. He took it; he sat down; he pondered; he kissed it; he had not seen his wife in more than a year. He and I became friends from that date.

For seven days he was my guide and translator. He took me to visit Dr. Sakharov and it was very clear to me that Mr. Scharansky was the de facto leader of all of the dissidents and the human rights activists in Moscow and beyond. Consequently, it was not entirely surprising to all of us that some time after that, in 1978, he was picked up in a KGB sedan on Gorky Street and sentenced to 13 years.

I recall very vividly that Avital, his wife, was in my office in the Rayburn Building the day after that terrible verdict came down. And she, at that time, made up her mind — she became determined — that she would do everything possible in her power. She had many, many friends and associates all around the world, but the person who was more responsible than anyone else for Anatoly's release is his wife, Avital. Tirelessly and relentlessly, she went to every Western country and she published this beautiful book in 1979, *Next Year in Jerusalem* with photos and with love letters from Anatoly. This has been and will continue now to be one of the most moving documents in this particular century. It is Avital who brought about the miracle that happened this morning, February 11, 1986.

What happened to me in Moscow in August 1975, when I met Anatoly changed my life in several ways. I can never forget Avital's indomitable courage during these nine exhausting years. I thank her and her husband for what they have done for me and what they have done for the World.



Father Robert F. Drinan, formerly chairman of the International Committee for the Release of Anatoly Scharansky.

Helsinki (Continued from page 1)

access to the U.S. delegation which such intimate cooperation has made possible. I believe the Helsinki Commission itself not only facilitated this relationship between the UCSJ and other non-governmental organizations on the one hand and the American delegation on the other, but, indeed, lent legitimacy and support to the very concept.

"The opportunity to call the Soviet Union to account for its actions, to be able to hold them responsible before the international community for their violations of human rights, is extremely important. For those who believe that, by engaging in the dialogue, we unwittingly, or by default, legitimize Soviet actions, need only pause and consider for a moment the immense resources which the Soviet Union expends in promoting its own case and its own view of the world in the United Nations and in other fora. They are extremely concerned about what the world thinks of them, and have a strong need for legitimacy and acceptance. I believe it far better, and far more damaging to their case, to hold them to account before the colleagues and nations whom they wish to impress, rather than allowing them to dominate the field unchallenged.

"One of the Soviet Union's greatest long-term strategic roles is to undermine

the Western alliance and to separate Europe of the West from Europe of the East; hence, we have the opportunity to press our case in a context which the Soviet Union is extremely reluctant to abandon.

"It is that leverage which enables us to present our views, and for which the Soviet Union is willing to undergo the public humiliation which accompanies Helsinki discussions in the area of human rights. If we did not treat this (issue) in a serious fashion, they would not devote so much time and energy to propagandizing about it at home and abroad.

"The Helsinki process has, along with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act, produced remarkable, tangible results. I believe this Commission has been the central body and the most vigorous and successful vehicle for expressing the opinions of citizen organizations. By its very existence under the auspices of the United States Congress, the Commission enables private citizens to have a voice in the process. It is through the Commission that organizations such as our own can effectively participate in this process, and it is with the help of the Commission that, in the finest tradition of American democracy, the people's voice is heard."

UCSJ Provides Documentation

The UCSJ has prepared a report and documentation focusing on efforts by the Soviets to interfere with communication and contact between Soviet citizens and individuals in the United States. The report, prepared for the U.S. delegation to the Bern Experts Meeting on Human Contacts, includes examples and evidence of interference in the areas of postal and telephone communications and visitor contact. UCSJ member councils, Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry and South Florida Conference on Soviet Jewry, were instrumental in compiling the documentation.

The Bern meeting, which will be held from April 15-May 26, is the last in a series of subsidiary meetings which were mandated at the 1980-1983 Madrid CSCE conference to review implementation of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Previous meetings included an experts meeting on human rights in Ottawa (May - June, 1985) and a cultural forum in Budapest (October - November, 1985). The next CSCE review conference convenes in November 1986 in Vienna.

Gorbachev Affirms Sakharov's Continued Internment

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in a February interview with the French communist newspaper, *L'Humanite*, termed dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov a criminals who would never be allowed to leave the country because of his knowledge of "State secrets." His statement, coming at the height of rumors and speculation prior to Anatoly Scharansky's release, was seen as significant because it was the first time Gorbachev referred to Sakharov by name and publicly accused the human rights activist of being a criminal.

Gorbachev also alleged that Soviet Jews "are free and have equal rights, as all the other nationalities are," calling statements otherwise, "part of a vociferous anti-Soviet campaign, of a veritable act of psychological warfare against the USSR." He further denied that there are any political prisoners in the Soviet Union, stating, "we do not put people on trial for their convictions."

Sakharov's Letter Reveals Truth

U.S. News and World Report, in its February 24 issue, published letters written by Sakharov and smuggled out of the Soviet Union, detailing some of the abuses suffered during his exile in Gorky. A letter to the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences on October 15, 1984, contained a passionate appeal to allow his wife, Yelena Bonner, visit the West for medical treatment. Bonner, who, in October 1985, was finally permitted to travel to the West on a temporary medical visa, has had her request to extend the visa through June approved by Soviet authorities. Meanwhile, Sakharov continues to languish in exile, isolated in his Gorky apartment, the victim of continuing torment by the KGB.

Mathematicians Intercede on Behalf of Imprisoned Colleague

The desperate situation of an ailing, imprisoned Soviet colleague captured the attention of participants at the week-long Annual Meeting of the American Mathematical Society in New Orleans, La. which concluded on January 11. More than 300 conferees petitioned the upper echelon of Soviet officialdom for the release of Dr. Josef Begun. While serving his third term in the gulag for his Jewish

activism and human rights activities, Begun was recently sentenced to an especially onerous regime in the infamous Chistopol Prison.

The New Orleans petition concentrated on the signers' heightened fear, "that the current conditions of his internment that entail reduced rations and little exercise, will result in irreparable damage to his health." Dr. Begun, 53 years old, had to be hospitalized within the labor camp for his cardiac condition during the past year. "Under the circumstances," they continued, "we appeal. . . on humanitarian grounds to ease the conditions of Dr. Begun's imprisonment as you consider granting him an early release."

Dr. Murray Gerstenhaber of the University of Pennsylvania, who, attended the conference in New Orleans, has been following Dr. Begun's case closely for some time. Gerstenhaber reported, "Many of the people at the AMS meeting expressed the opinion that increased cultural and scientific exchange will depend on increased freedom, generally the freedom emigrate."

Professor Boris Schein of the University of Arkansas, who emigrated from the Soviet Union six years ago, coordinated the circulation of the petition. He observed, "We in the West may not know what these petitions mean to those on whose behalf they are sent: they are a tremendous moral support for our oppressed colleagues. I know — I was a refusenik. I could have been in the same place as Begun. He is exactly the same sort of criminal as I — an absolutely innocent man."

The AMS is apprised of the deteriorating situation of Dr. Begun by the Committee of Concerned Scientists, an independent organization of 4,500 American scientists dedicated to the protection and advancement of the human rights and scientific freedom of colleagues worldwide.

Refusenik's Family Situation Worsens

"This," said refusenik Anatoly Genis, with a sweep of his arm, "is not what I expected for my children."

The "this" that Genis referred to was the disrepair of his family's apartment and life since the first time he applied for an exit visa over nine years ago. Their situation has worsened considerably during the past year, and the poverty and poor health in which the family lives was confirmed by recent visitors.

When Dr. Genis, of Moscow, first applied for emigration, he lost his job as a mathematician specializing in the field of probability. He was able to find odd jobs as a loader, street sweeper, fireman, zoo watchman, freight car conductor and, most recently, a janitor in the Moscow subway system.

The family is barely surviving the trials of refusenik life and is suffering from stress-related illnesses. Last June, Genis was out of work again. At last report, he had not been able to find new employment. The family is destitute and ask their friends in the West to press for their emigration to join their relatives already in Israel.

San Francisco Mayor Intends to Pursue Sister City Ties

Despite strong community opposition, San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein stated she plans to revive her proposal for San Francisco to become a sister city to Leningrad. The Mayor made her comments during a luncheon at the World Affairs Council of Northern California in February. Feinstein previously stated she would postpone the sister city plan as a result of the extensive public protest to her proposal.

"My observation is that the fate of various minorities in the Soviet Union has something to do with the increasing hostilities between our two countries," declared Mayor Feinstein to the World Affairs Council. "The more hostile the two countries become, the more I have seen the tightening of emigration restrictions on those who would like to leave the Soviet Union."

While a correlation between detente and emigration figures is generally accepted, the Mayor did not question or even address the propriety of the Soviets' habit of, in effect, punishing their own citizens when relations with the U.S. sour.

Correction

The November 15, 1985 *ALERT* included an article on a Soviet Jewry rally in Paris in September, several days prior to Mikhail Gorbachev's visit. According to the Comité Des Quinze, UCSJ's affiliate in France, the demonstration attracted roughly 10,000 people, not 30,000 as had been reported. Furthermore, French President Mitterrand was not as supportive of human rights organizations and activists as press reports of the event have led the public to believe.



The Jews of Riga conducting a Yahrzeit (memorial) Service at Rumbuli on the anniversary of the destruction of the Riga Ghetto. The photo was taken in the spring of 1985.

Late Breaking News!

On March 19, **VLADIMIR LIFSHITZ** was sentenced to three years. Representatives of the American and Dutch Consulates were not permitted to attend the trial. His wife Anna Lifshitz and fellow refusenik Semyon Borovinsky refused to testify against him.



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Inside Today's Alert

Brutality Against POCs Intensifies	p. 1
UCSJ Accords Vote of Confidence to Helsinki Commission	p. 1
Congressman Charles Rangel Joins UCSJ Advisory Board .	p. 1
Newsbriefs	p. 2
Embassy Convictions Continue	p. 3
Washington Post Editorial	p. 3
Alert on Capitol Hill	p. 4
Scharansky's Release — The Cartoonists' View	p. 6
Action Alert from Local Councils	p. 8
International Committee Disbanded	p. 10
UCSJ Provides Documentation	p. 10
Gorbachev Affirms Sakharov's Continued Internment ...	p. 11
Mathematicians Intercede on Behalf of Imprisoned Colleague	p. 11
Refusenik's Family Situation Worsens	p. 11
San Francisco Mayor Intends to Pursue Sister City Ties ..	p. 11

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews is composed of 39 local councils, 4 domestic affiliates, 3 international affiliates and 55,000 individual members dedicated to helping Soviet Jews, especially those desiring to emigrate.

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84 Jews left the Soviet Union in February