

AJHS Finding Aid for the Lawrence I. Lerner Papers

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Lerner, Lawrence I.
Title:	Guide to the Lawrence I. Lerner Papers, 1987-1988, 1991 *P-952
Dates:	Creation: 1987-1988, 1991
Abstract:	The collection contains the papers of Soviet Jewry movement activist and New Jersey-based attorney, Lawrence I. Lerner, who repeatedly traveled to the Soviet Union in the 1980s to visit Refuseniks. Mr. Lerner participated in filing legal pleas for Prisoners of Conscience based on international treaties and the Soviet Constitution, and after the collapse of the U.S.S.R., he became President of the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union. The collection consists of four trip reports taken by Mr. Lerner in 1988-1989 and 1991 and case histories of Refuseniks whom he visited, or considered visiting during those trips. Some of the case histories include photos and notes by Mr. Lerner.
Identification:	P-952
Extent:	1 Manuscript Boxes (1/4 linear foot)
Language:	English
Repository:	American Jewish Historical Society,

Table Of Contents

Historical Note	3
Scope and Content Note	4
Administrative Information	5
Physical Location	5
Access Restrictions	5
Acquisition Information	5
Arrangement	5
Preferred Citation	5
Related Material	5
Use Restrictions	6
Controlled Access Headings	6
Detailed Description of the Collection	7
Series I: Lawrence I. Lerner Papers, 1987-1988, 1991	7

Historical Note

The Papers of Lawrence I. Lerner 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 Movement 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.

Lawrence I. Lerner is an attorney admitted to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Mr. Lerner served as a member of the President's Advisory Committee on Domestic Policy Review of Industrial Innovation from 1978-1979. While specializing in intellectual property laws, Mr. Lerner also applied his expertise to cases concerning the rule of law affecting social justice, such as racial discrimination, fair housing and employment in his home state of New Jersey. Starting in 1979, he became concerned with the dire situation of Jews in the Soviet Union. Mr. Lerner repeatedly traveled to the Soviet Union to visit Refuseniks and participated in filing legal pleas for Prisoners of Conscience based on international treaties and the Soviet Constitution. After an unsuccessful run for the House of Representatives in 1996, Mr. Lerner retired from the practice of law and became the President of the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union (UCJFSU), formerly known as Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, a national umbrella organization for approximately fifty grassroots Soviet Jewry movement agencies. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the UCJFSU continued to fight Antisemitism and xenophobia and to promote human rights and the rule of law in the former Soviet states. UCJFSU coordinates over fifty organizations that monitor human rights in the F.S.U.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of reports on four trips to visit Jews in the Soviet Union taken by Lawrence I. Lerner in 1988, 1989 and 1991. Also included are case histories of the Refuseniks whom Lerner visited or considered to visit during those trips. Some of the case histories contain photographs and notes by Mr. Lerner.

The collection consists of one half manuscript box.

Administrative Information

Physical Location

Located in AJHS New York, NY

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 Lawrence I. Lerner in 2007.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into a single series.

[Papers of Lawrence I. Lerner, 1987-1988, 1991](#)

Preferred Citation

Published citations should take the following form:

Description of item, date of item, Papers of Lawrence I. Lerner, *P-952, Box #, Folder #, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.

Related Material

The Papers of Lawrence I. Lerner 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 [Jewish Defense League \(I-374\)](#), the [Union of Councils for Soviet Jews \(I-410, I-410A\)](#), [Houston Action for Soviet Jewry \(I-500\)](#), [Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews \(I-505\)](#), [Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry \(I-507\)](#), [The Jewish Chronicle Soviet Jewry Collection \(I-523\)](#), [B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum Soviet Jewry Movement Collection \(I-529\)](#), [Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry \(I-530\)](#), [Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism \(I-538\)](#), 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 \(P-870\)](#), [Leah Lieberman \(P-869\)](#), [Si Frumkin \(P-871\)](#), [Elaine Pittell \(P-873\)](#), [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 \(P-891\)](#), [David Waksberg \(P-895\)](#), [Pamela B. Cohen \(P-897\)](#), [Moshe Decter \(P-899\)](#), [William Korey \(P-903\)](#), [Morey Schapira \(P-906\)](#), [Charlotte Gerper Turner \(P-907\)](#), [Myrtle Sitowitz \(P-908\)](#), [Kathleen M. Hyman](#)

(P-911), Babette Wampold (P-912), Rabbi David Goldstein and Shannie Goldstein (P-918), Leslie Schaffer (P-923), Arthur Bernstein (P-925), Dolores Wilkenfeld (P-927), Sylvia Weinberg (P-928), Irwin H. Krasna (P-934), Constance S. Kreshtool (P-935), Betty Golomb (P-938), Grace Perl binder (P-942), Mort Yadin (P-943), Ann Polunsky (P-886), Lillian Foreman (P-945), Marilyn Labendz (P-946), Abraham Silverstein (P-947), Bert Silver (P-949), Billie Kozolchik (P-950) and John Steinbruck (P-951).

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
- Human rights
- Jews, Soviet
- Notes (documents)
- Photographs
- Refuseniks
- Reports
- Soviet Union
- United States

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Lawrence I. Lerner Papers, 1987-1988, 1991

Box	Folder	
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1	1	Refusenik Profiles and Photographs, 1987-1988
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Box	Folder	
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[Digital Item]		Refusenik Profiles and Photographs, 1987-1988
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1	2	Trip Reports, 1988-1991
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[Digital Item]		Trip Reports, 1988-1991
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