



INFORMATION FROM THE
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ALERT

VOL. VIII NO 21 DATE October 7, 1983

UCSJ ANNUAL MEETING

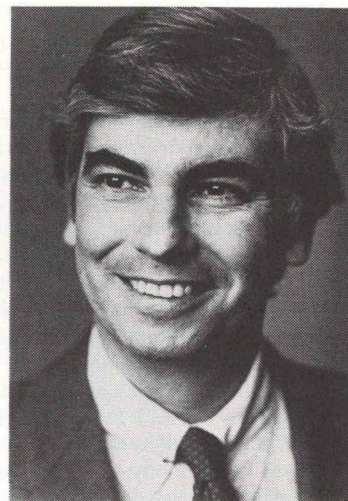
"The concern for human rights and our interest in Soviet Jewry must not be pushed off the agenda," says Stuart Eizenstat, legal counsel to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, in announcing the UCSJ's upcoming annual meeting.

Eizenstat's behest is largely reflective of September's events--the shooting down of the Korean passenger plane, Senator Jackson's sudden death, the Madrid Conference, Shcharansky's "half-way mark" in his 13-year sentence. Says UCSJ President Lynn Singer: "In the midst of heightened repression within the Soviet Union, U.S.-Soviet relations have altered...We have come to a turning point in Soviet Jewry."

The UCSJ annual meeting, October 14-17, at the Capitol Hyatt Regency in Washington, D.C. is appropriately scheduled to address the central question--where do we go from here?--and provide the opportunity to highlight two major events: a cocktail reception honoring United States Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT) and a special program in tribute to the late Senator Henry M. Jackson.

Award to Sen. Dodd

Honored for his outstanding leadership on behalf of Soviet Jewry, Senator Dodd is this year's recipient of the Anatoly Shcharansky Freedom Award, last presented to Ambassador Max Kampelman in 1981. The Dodd reception, scheduled for Saturday evening October 15, culminates a full day of presentation and workshops, including remarks from eminent author Martin Gilbert, official biographer of Sir Winston Churchill and co-author of the award-winning documentary film, Genocide; and three former leading Soviet Jewish activists--Alexander Shipov, Yuri Shtern, and Lev Ulynovsky--as well as discussions on legal issues, medical mobilization and political action.



Tribute to Jackson

He cherished freedom and human rights, pushing legislation to sustain Jews and others in the Soviet Union. He was a fervent friend and supporter of the free world. On Sunday afternoon, October 16, the UCSJ plans a remembrance and tribute to the late Senator Henry M. Jackson. Ben Wattenberg, Jackson's long time associate, will chair the program, recalling Jackson's leadership in the cause of Soviet Jewry.

Personal remembrances from those who worked with the Senator and knew him best will be in attendance, including Mark Talisman, Director, Washington Office, Council of Jewish Federations, and many of the late Senator's most recent Senatorial staff.

In an address last June 1983, Jackson delivered what may be his most telling words: "You and I have worked side by side in great historic causes--human rights, social justice, democracy and world peace. You are not among the fainthearted, nor do you tire of the struggle. We share the conviction that persistence has its rewards."

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Ben J. Wattenberg

A Decent Man

Sen. Henry M. Jackson was, by far, the most decent, most professional and most idealistic man I have known in American political life. In a unique way, these traits intertwined to create an American legislative giant whose legacy here and around the world may well surpass that of many who held our presidency—the job he trained for, and deserved.

He was so un pompous it was almost laughable. "Carrying your own bag" became a political symbol in 1976. Candidate Jimmy Carter was regularly photographed leaving a plane carrying his own garment sack—his way of saying, "Well, here's a man who would not be an 'imperial' president." Scoop not only carried his own bag: I remember bizarre scenes during the 1972 presidential campaign, coming off little chartered planes late at night with no press in attendance, when staff aides had to be quick and physically prevent the senator from carrying their bags as well as his own.

He was so unphony, it could be politically painful. He was a religious man. It was pointed out to him that it would be helpful to allude to that in his campaign speeches. No, he said, that's private.

He never took a dime for a speech. The money went directly, and quietly, to a scholarship fund.

Ben Wattenberg's association with the late Senator Jackson is marked by the years 1972 and 1976, when Mr. Wattenberg was a campaign advisor for the Senator's Democratic Presidential nomination.

As Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Mr. Wattenberg currently is co-editor of their bi-monthly magazine, Public Opinion. An author and co-author of several books on electoral politics, foreign policy, and demography, Mr. Wattenberg also writes a syndicated column and a weekly broadcast, in addition to hosting a public affairs program aired by the Public Broadcasting Service.

In 1980, Mr. Wattenberg was chosen by President Carter as a Public Member of the American delegation to the Madrid Conference on Human Rights. In 1981, he was appointed by President Reagan to the Board of International Broadcasters which oversees the activities of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

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In the 1976 campaign he was advised to borrow money personally to keep the campaign alive; it was what other candidates were doing when federal matching funds were snarled by a legal battle. Jackson refused. It was likely that the money would be repaid, but not certain. Jackson wouldn't do it even though it meant dooming his chance for the presidency. "I'm not a wealthy man," he said, "I've got a wife and young children. Suppose something happens to me? I'm not going to risk their future by going into debt."

He cared deeply about his staff and their problems. More than one of them regarded him as a father.

There are many decent men in the world, but Henry Jackson's personal decency had a political dimension. It ended up writ large on the international scene.

Those who didn't know him, or where he came from, called him a "cold warrior" and a "hawk" and thought him obsessed with weaponry.

He was, in fact, an idealist. Jackson was obsessed all right—about indecency. He had fought fascists—the Silver Shirts—back when he was a young prosecutor in Washington state in the late 1930s. He was with the American forces that liberated Buchenwald. He loathed totalitarianism—of right and left—because it was indecent. He was not surprised that the Soviets were capable of shooting down a civilian airliner.

And so it came to pass that this man—who some thought cared mostly about military hardware—became the father of the human rights movement.

There are arguments pro and arguments con about the specific efficacy of the Jackson Amendment, which stipulated that America would not grant trade benefits to nations that did not allow free emigration.



1912-1983

But when all is said and done, when all the charges and countercharges are set aside, two facts remain. Several hundred thousand people—Jews and non-Jews—were able to emigrate from the Soviet Union because of the Jackson Amendment. And the United States went on record as saying human rights mattered. We were prepared to reward those who were mov-

ing toward human rights and punish those who were not.

In 1975, I visited Andrei Sakharov at his dacha outside of Moscow. The Jackson Amendment was controversial then, as now. I asked him what he thought about it. "Jackson knows how to make things happen," he said. "He is our champion."

The bedrock premise of the Jackson Amendment has energized much of American foreign policy ever since—for the better. We Americans said, finally: we care about decency.

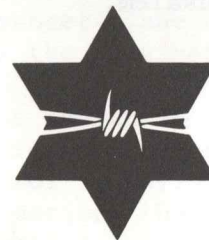
Scoop cared enough about what his politics meant to become a consummate professional politician. He never lost touch with the voters back home in Washington state. He raised plenty of money, and raised it early. He campaigned for Democrats all over the country, including those whose politics did not always appeal to him. He knew that you couldn't get help unless you gave help.

He was elected to the Senate in 1952 with 56 percent of the vote. That was too close. In the next five elections he averaged 72 percent of the vote. One year he got 82 percent. He rather liked that one.

Jackson's decency drove his idealism. His professionalism bolstered his idealism. He ended up at a unique spot in the firmament of American, and global, politics. He was a liberal on domestic affairs; he knew that government could do decent things at home. And he was the man who understood that we had to be strong if we were to promote the values of decency around the world. That's why he cared so much about strategic arms and defense.

It is the tragedy of recent American politics that such a position combining domestic and international decency—which is at the essence of what most Americans believe—has had such a difficult time finding a home in Scoop's party, let alone the other party.

The battle is not over, however. There are millions of people out there who believe in what Scoop believed. They call themselves Jackson Democrats.



THE UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR
A REMEMBRANCE AND TRIBUTE TO
SENATOR HENRY JACKSON

Ben Wattenberg will be chairing a program recalling Senator Jackson's leadership in the cause of Soviet Jewry. The remembrances will be personal from those who worked with the Senator and knew him best.

Sunday Afternoon

October 16th 1-3PM

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Washington, DC

NEWS BRIEFS

SPECIAL--The UCSJ learned through a telephone call from MESH's mother that wife Marina was told by Odessa authorities that "MESH IS FREE"! Fifteen hundred telegrams were received in protest of Soviet demands requiring Mesh to serve army reserve duty.

* * *

The sudden death of Senator Henry M. Jackson brought grief and expressions of condolence from all over the world. Twenty-five former citizens of the Soviet Union, now citizens of Israel, signed a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Jackson, noting her husband's "efforts (which) made possible our repatriation to Israel." Signatories included: Former Prisoners of Conscience RUTH ALEXANDROVITCH, ANATOLY ALTMAN, MARK DYMSHITZ, SENDER LEVINSON, NATAN MALKIN, IOSIF MENDELEVITCH, LEV ROITBURD, YAKOV SUSLENSKY. Others included: SHIMON AZARKH, DINA BEILIN, SCHMUEL BRONFMAN, YEVGENY LENCHICK, AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN, PROF. EMIEL LUBOSHITZ, DR. VLADIMIR MAGARAK, DR. IRMA PLAVIN, DR. YEVGENY REINBERG, DR. DAN ROGINSKY, ALEXANDER SHAPIRO, ALEXANDER SHIPOV, DR. YURI SHTERN, LEV ULANOVSKY, DR. LEV UTEVSKY, ILYA YEGUTIAV, PROF. ILYA ZUSMAN.

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Former refuseniks MARK and LUDMILLA BRODKIN and their three children of Saratov are now in Israel, reunited with Mark's parents who emigrated to Israel in 1980. Their son, YAKOV, born on December 5, 1980, will have his bar mitzvah in Israel this November.

* * *

ALEXANDER PARITSKY's next visit has been cancelled, wife POLINA learned from a recent letter. Although Paritsky is due to complete his sentence next Spring, family and friends fear that Paritsky could be re-arrested and charged on completion of his sentence, as typical of Soviet treachery.

Send letters of protest to: USSR/671111 BURYATSKAYA ASSR/KABANSKII RAYON/Vydreno Uchr. 94/4/2 otryad/Camp Commandant

* * *

COL. LEV OVSISHCHER of Minsk has been invited to act as Co-Chairman of one of three plenary sessions of the World Assembly of Jewish World War II partisans and soldiers, held the first week of October in Jerusalem.

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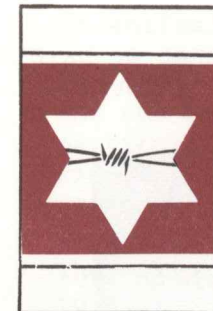
Told by doctors that she would do irreparable damage to her body if she continued, INNA ELBERT went off her hunger strike of almost six weeks.

Send letters of support to: USSR/Ukrainian SSR/Kiev 92/Volgodradskaia 6/Kv. 33

* * *

Longest refusenik (since 1966), BENJAMIN and TANYA BOGOMOLNY, have not been receiving letters from England. Although they were called to the post office to collect two letters, they were told the letters were "lost".

Check your pink mail receipts for registration number 22954 and notify your post office.



SPECIAL ALERT

UCSJ SPONSORS TRIP TO USSR

US Rep. McGrath Visits Refuseniks "Maintains level of Commitment"

Congressman Ray McGrath (R-NY) was the only elected U.S. official in the Soviet Union at the time of the KAL 007 incident. McGrath's visit to Leningrad and Moscow, sponsored by the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, was solely to "aid and comfort the refuseniks." McGrath was accompanied by UCSJ Associate Director Judith Slovin and Congressional aides to Congressmen Sander Levin (D-MI) and Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA). In light of the KAL news, American Consulate officials shuttled McGrath and his small group to Helsinki, cutting short their week long trip by one day.

McGrath shares what he described as "a special kind of trip" in his Congressional office:

ZORN: What further insights do you have regarding the KAL 007 as a result of your trip to the Soviet Union?

McGRATH: Had I not made the trip, the entire incident would be inexplicable. How anybody can destroy a commercial, unarmed passenger plane out of the sky just baffles the imagination. However, having been there, and having seen the way they treat their own people, it's not hard to understand that they live by a doctrine of control by intimidation. And therefore, all actions that are perceived as security threats to them are done away with in a hurry.

ZORN: The New York Times reported that Soviet-American relations are so frozen that they may not thaw until after next year's Presidential election, contrary to earlier predictions that the incident would "blow over" in a couple weeks. Is this fortuitous, or dangerous for those Soviet Jews wishing to emigrate?



Left to right: Congressman Ray McGrath (R-NY); Lev Blitshtein; Mike Schwartz [aide to Congressman Sander Levin (D-MI)]; Trish Hanower [aide to Congressman Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA)]; and UCSJ Associate Director Judith Slovin.

McGRATH: It is interesting to note that on some areas between our two countries, we have maintained the same degree of relations, such as nuclear disarmament, the Pershing, and the grain deal. On these issues, there has been seemingly no change. But until a restitution, or at least an admittance of guilt, there will obviously be, not only American resentment, but also international resentment. I think it (KAL) will affect the relations between the two countries that could have improved as a result of perhaps the grain deal, the lifting of the pipeline sanctions or perhaps some movement in Geneva. Now, all is back to

"...THEY LIVE BY A DOCTRINE OF
CONTROL BY INTIMIDATION..."

McGRATH - CONTINUED

square one, including the issue of the refuseniks.

ZORN: What do you see is the level of public awareness about Soviet Jewry?

McGRATH: I am in an atypical area of interest in Soviet Jewry because of the activities of the Long Island Committee on Soviet Jewry. As a result, I get questioned by those other than Jews.

ZORN: How have you been in touch with the non-Jewish community regarding Soviet Jewry, and your recent trip to the Soviet Union?

McGRATH: This trip has made them somewhat aware. I spoke to a Catholic Rosary Society meeting on this subject. I talked about the freedom of religion, and our ability to worship as we please. This is simply not so in the Soviet Union. We have disproved the Billy Graham assertions that there is freedom of religion in the Soviet Union.

ZORN: Many contend that when relations between the U.S. and Soviet Union are good, the rate of emigration is high, and when relations are bad, emigration is low. Do you agree?

"...I AM MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT THE SOVIETS ONLY DO THINGS IN THEIR BEST INTEREST..."

McGRATH: There is past history that could indicate that to be true. But the period of detente between the Soviet Union and the United States experienced during the Nixon years, had no real great effect on emigration--at least not a substantial effect. Of course, people point to the grain deal of 1978 and note the increase in emigration in 1979. But I am more convinced than ever that the Soviets only do things that are in their best interest. We have to create atmospheres where they can do things in their best interest and also do things we want. What throws a fly in the ointment is published articles in the Soviet Union on "Emigration equals treason", and the establishment of an Anti-Zionist Committee. I don't know if you can reconcile a philosophy that emigration is treasonous with free emigration.

ZORN: Those who assert good relations equals high emigration contend that we have a self-defeating policy on human rights and emigration.



Left to right: Yakov Rabinovich; Ida & Aba Taratuta; Mrs. Janet Slovin; Alex Zelichonok; and Rep. McGrath.

McGRATH: That is an opinion that is not shared by the refuseniks themselves. The refuseniks believe that in order to deal with the Soviet government, we should be strong. The only thing they appreciate is strength--and that came from refusenik, Aba Taratuta.

ZORN: How then would you describe the current Administration's policy on human rights?

McGRATH: I think the Administration is as interested in human rights (as others). I spoke to Secretary Shultz after the plane incident and suggested to him to send a list of 269 names of refuseniks. Shultz suggested that that is already being done, but that he'd be grateful under the circumstances to get even one refusenik out as a result of the KAL incident. Nevertheless, I don't think Secretary Shultz or the President has any less dedication or commitment than anybody else.

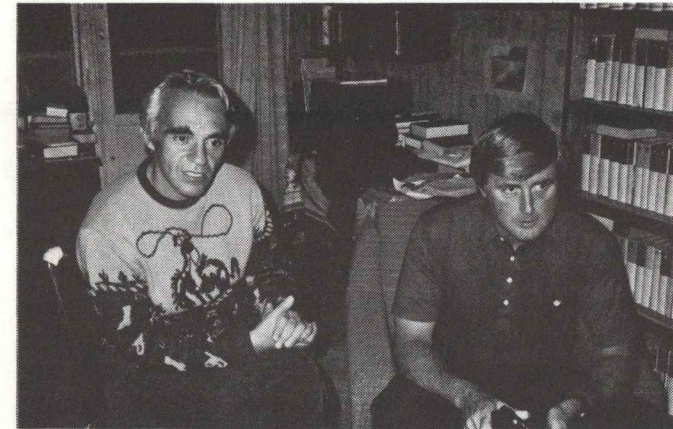
ZORN: The United States has dropped plans to resume talks on cultural, scholarly, and scientific exchange programs as well as reopening the consulate in Kiev. Do you concede to these actions? Does more need to be done?

McGRATH: I am not sure those negotiations would have any real effect on the overall relations between our two countries.

McGRATH - CONTINUED

Those are things that would have been nice, and the Kiev Consulate would be important, particularly to the refuseniks. My experience has been that our people who work at the State Department over there are very much concerned about the plight of the Soviet Jews. They give great comfort to them by just being so interested. We have only two buildings, the Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate in Leningrad. The Elbert case comes out of Kiev. It would have been nice to have had a consulate there. On the other hand, the problem has been that most people have been criticizing the President for lack of initiative in cutting off relations. It is difficult to walk that line. I think the President has acted responsibly...But I don't believe these are the kinds of earth-shaking steps that the Soviet Union is going to cower to. And yet I do believe that they are a source of irritation to them.

ZORN: You visited with several refusenik families. Are there any particular stories that you would like to share?



Professor Alexander Ioffee, mathematician, with Rep. McGrath.



Lev Blitshtein with Rep. McGrath.

McGRATH: In Moscow, we visited with Judith Ratner. That was a very emotional experience. She had not seen her mother, not even a picture in ten years. We all watched a recent film of her mother in Judith Ratner's home. To hear her say: "Oh, my mother, my mother, she's gotten so old, so sick"...You just had to be there.

ZORN: How did Moscow differ from Leningrad?

McGRATH: There is a whole different group in Moscow than in Leningrad. The Moscow group is less intense. They naturally were concerned for their well-being, and their cause, but they were more carefree, as evidenced by their leader Lev Blitshtein, who is one who just can roll with the punches, who has a great attitude under the circumstances.

"IT IS VERY EASY FOR THE SOVIETS TO TURN OFF THE U.S....BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO TURN OFF EVERYBODY."



McGrath comforts Judith Ratner, seated with her two sons Sasha & Misha.



68-year old Abe Stolar with wife Irene, in Moscow.



Professor Alexander Ioffe, with wife Rosa & daughter Anna.

ZORN: Why are the Soviet Jews in Moscow more carefree?

McGRATH: The people in Leningrad are more "cultural", more "Jewish"--Hebrew and Hebrew classes, and the culture and traditions of the Jewish faith, whereas in Moscow, their activities have been crushed. Also in Moscow the refuseniks are older. They have been working at their freedom longer, perhaps a bit more resigned to their situation. Some of them have been refused 16 to 18, even 20 times. With that comes a different attitude, somewhat less militant in Moscow than in Leningrad, although similarly concerned.

ZORN: What were the refuseniks' homes like?

McGRATH: The homes are not of a standard you and I would like to live in, although Lev Blitshtein was very proud of his place because he had two bedrooms. In Leningrad, to get into the apartments, you had to walk through and up stairwells that were completely dark and dirty. One family we visited with was sharing a bathroom and kitchen with seven families.

ZORN: Do you perceive your role as Congressmen altered or heightened as a result of your trip to the Soviet Union?



Left to right: Alex Zelichonok, Rep. McGrath & Leonid Kelbert, playwright.

McGRATH: I have been working in this area for a number of years. But you have to change after visiting the Soviet Union, because if you have worked before, you're going to work harder after. You sit with these people, empathize with them, listen to their problems. It's very difficult not to be responsive to that kind of stimulus...You always have to have small victories to sustain yourself to continue your interest. It is tough to maintain a level of commitment. This is one of those things--going to the Soviet Union and speaking with the refuseniks--that maintains a level of commitment.

ZORN: Did you become discouraged about the situation for the refuseniks?

McGRATH: It becomes very easy to say, "it's a lost cause", because you send letters every month, or a couple times a month, and you don't get a response. But I have always been one to believe that it is still a worthwhile effort. Without public opinion being focused on some of these people, I don't believe that some of these people would be alive. Unless there was good reason for the Soviets to keep them alive, I don't think they would. Therefore, this international effort of keeping the focus on some of these refuseniks and Prisoners of Conscience has had

the effect of keeping some of these people alive.

ZORN: Do you believe then, that Soviet officials are indeed deeply distressed by Western consensus against them on human rights?



Left to right: Grigory Genusov, Leah Shapiro & Pavel Astrakhan, in Leningrad apartment.

McGRATH: They are not overly concerned. Obviously the plane and their reaction to it showed that...They are not that distressed. But the fact is that in the civilized world, while they cannot let public opinion affect the way they do things--because then they would lose their control--they are a little sensitive to it.

ZORN: Where do you think efforts should be focused?

McGRATH: I have told Lynn Singer, of the Long Island Committee on Soviet Jewry and the President of the UCSJ, that the areas of emphasis now ought to be the areas the Soviets consider precious to them: their standing in the scientific community, in the artistic community. I think that if we were able to put together a strong artist effort or scientific effort...

ZORN: For what purpose?

McGRATH: To deplore the conditions of scientists in the Soviet Union. Their inability to relate to, correspond with,

or have anykind of connections with their peers on the outside....I believe that will have an effect--it is a weak point with them. The Soviets have a great concern about their reputations in these areas.

ZORN: Are our efforts in the U.S. Congress sufficient?

McGRATH: While Congressmen have had an upfront posture towards the emigration problems including human rights in the Soviet Union, I think it is helpful what the Union of Councils is doing with their international efforts (the UCSJ Interparliamentary Group).

ZORN: How does an international effort have an impact?

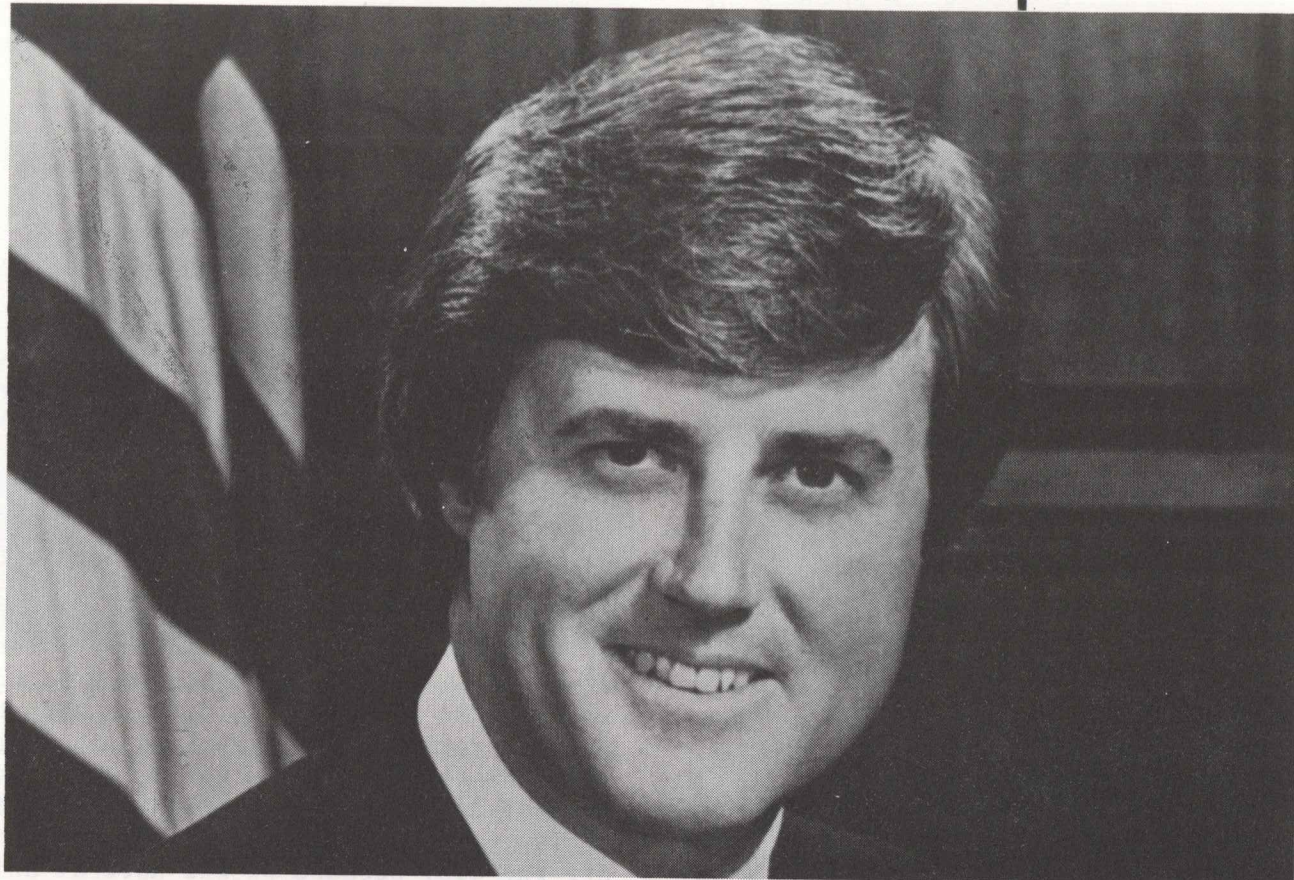
McGRATH: If there were an international science committee for Soviet Jewry, they would have more impact than the U.S. Congress. The Congress, in concert with the British Parliament and various other parliaments throughout the world, would lend greater pressure on the political front. It is very easy for the Soviets to turn off the U.S. because of the natural animosity there. But it is difficult to turn off everybody.

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Back Row: Trish Hanower; UCSJ Associate Director Judith Slovin; Grigory Genusov. Front Row: Rep. McGrath; Pavel Astrakhan; Leah Shapiro; and Evgeny Lein, who served a prison sentence in Siberia.

"McGrath on USCJ Trip"



"...KEEPING THE FOCUS ON SOME OF THESE REFUSENIKS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF KEEPING SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ALIVE."



Vladimir Feldman with Rep. McGrath in Moscow.



Back Row: Sasha & Misha Ratner; Rep. McGrath. Front Row: UCSJ Associate Director Judith Slovin & Judith Ratner.

Mr. Shcharansky Will Soon Be Halfway Home

by Suzanne Garment

Sometimes I write about the Afghan fighters who are trying to wrest their country from its Soviet occupiers. As a result I am acquainted with an American woman who is in charge of shepherding visiting Afghan guerrillas about this country. Every so often a new bunch of Afghans shows up in town. This woman calls and asks me to meet them. I say I would be delighted. Then she asks me to write about them as well. I say I probably will not. After all, I explain, how many people want to read yet another story of rebels bravely trekking over the mountains with their insufficient arms? Can't she come up with a new angle?

That is somewhat the way it is with the case of Anatoly Shcharansky. The Soviets arrested him on March 15, 1977, and accused him of being a CIA spy. A Soviet court sentenced him to 13 years of detention. He will have served half his sentence Sept. 15, a large part of it in solitary confinement. His wife, Avital, is now in this country as she has been many times, trying to ensure that his fate remains a public issue. But what fresh piece of news do we have to mark the grim halfway point?

Well, it turns out that there have indeed been new developments in the Shcharansky case. They began to take shape this past January when new Soviet boss Yuri Andropov wrote a letter to French Communist leader Georges Marchais hinting at Soviet willingness to release Mr. Shcharansky. Around the same time U.S. officials got signals of the same willingness; the State Department, for instance, received word of it from the Soviet Embassy in Washington. A similar message appeared in Tass.

Moreover, around this time the KGB started acting nice toward Mr. Shcharansky's mother. They invited her to headquarters for little chats. Their tone was pleasant. They denied knowledge of various indignities she had suffered in her quest to stay in touch with her son throughout his ordeal.

Finally, when Mr. Shcharansky's mother wrote a letter during this period asking Yuri Andropov for her son's release, he answered and instructed her to write to the Supreme Soviet. She did so, and received a "no" answer—but not from the Supreme Soviet itself, only from a subordinate body. The authorities had left the door open.

As they transmitted all these happy signals, the Soviets made clear that they wanted one tiny thing in return—a letter from the prisoner declaring that he was asking for clemency because his health was bad. They wanted, in other words, an indirect admission of guilt.

People told Avital Shcharansky her husband should produce the letter. It would be so much harder to negotiate with the Soviets for his release if he refused to fulfill the Russians' main condition. Besides, it was such a small matter. Couldn't he simply disavow the letter after he was free, saying that the Soviets had gotten it from him under duress?

From the beginning, Mrs. Shcharansky thought the proposed deal dubious. She knew that in the past when the Soviets had decided it was in their interest to release a prisoner, there had been none of this coy offering of conditions. But her worries proved academic. When his mother asked Mr. Shcharansky in prison whether he would give the Soviets their letter, he answered that he would not lie for them.

He wrote to his family explaining why. He reminded them of the story of the scientist Galileo Galilei, who adhered to the monumental truth that the Earth moved around the sun but allowed himself to succumb to pressure from the Inquisition and renounce his stand. At the very end of his life it is said that he tried to take back his lie by uttering his famous words, "And yet it moves!" Many have used the example of Galileo's accommodation to authority. Mr. Shcharansky said, to justify their lives of concealment and fear.

"In addition to Newton's law on the universal gravity of objects," Mr. Shcharansky continued, "there is also a law of the universal gravity of souls, of the bond between them, and the influence of one soul on the other. And it operates in this manner, such that with each word that we speak, and with each step that we take, we touch other souls and have an impact upon them."

"So why should I put this sin on my soul? If I already succeeded once in breaking with the difficult two-faced approach called for by this intolerable situation, closing the gap between thought and word, how is it now possible to take even one step backwards towards the previous status?"

In his words we can see the quality of this man who has resisted the lie for so long. Perhaps the chief harm a totalitarian system does is to make its subjects into liars, to others and to themselves. This is the evil in which Mr. Shcharansky refuses to participate and the evil that his captors so relentlessly strive to enforce upon him. It is a grim pity that most people must live under totalitarianism to learn that this struggle is no less than the central battle for the human soul.

The Reagan administration now has two choices. Knowing that Mr. Andropov may have his own reasons for allowing Mr. Shcharansky's release, U.S. officials can ignore the talk about conditions and step up the private and public pressures to spring the prisoner. Or they can say that Mr. Shcharansky's refusal to produce the letter has hopelessly complicated matters. They can insist that they have larger fish to fry with the Soviets—world peace, you know—and let the Shcharansky matter wait until later. They can, in other words, answer the prisoner's courage with their own timidity.

Soon we will know which side we should have put our money on. And in the process, we will have learned something about the quality of our leaders.

REP. GILMAN RENEWS HEARINGS

On October 4, the House Post Office and Civil Service Subcommittee on Operations held the first of a series of hearings on Soviet Postal Interference, the last hearings of which were held five years ago.

Representative Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), who sits on the full committee and serves on the Subcommittee on Investigations, has been the principal Congressional force in renewing attention on this issue.

UCSJ Vice-President Ruth Newman testified on Soviet abrogation of international communication agreements, mail delivery interference to and from Soviet Jews, and the frequent breakdown of telephone communications.

"In recent times the practice of interruption and non-delivery of mail has grown ominously as authorities seek to further isolate Soviet Jews from their friends and relatives in the West," stated Newman.

"A Leningrad refusenik told an American friend that when she went to the post office to purchase stamps, a clerk showed her a sizable pile of return receipts which had been attached to her mail but never given to her to sign. Others tell of never receiving any mail...There is a sufficient body of evidence to demonstrate

Featured Speaker

Born in Moscow in 1950, Alexander Shipov graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of the Moscow State University in 1972.

Shipov, his wife and two daughters received their emigration permit in April 1981. For two years prior to their arrival in Israel, Shipov was active in the underground Jewish kindergarten where his daughter Anna attended. Additionally, Shipov was active in the preparation of collective petitions to be submitted by Jews to the Soviet authorities.

Since his arrival in Israel, Shipov maintains contacts with Jewish activists in Moscow.

that the Soviets maintain lists of their citizens who are never to receive mail, and who mail is not to be sent out to the West," Newman asserted.

Newman also testified on the growing difficulty in placing and completing telephone calls to the USSR.

"There is no direct dialing into the Soviet Union. Calls to Moscow must be booked exactly one week in advance and frequently are not completed...(Ironically), on Yom Kippur weekend this year, callers trying to reach Odessa were told their calls could not be completed "because no Jews answer their telephones over the High Holidays," Newman reported to the Congressional panel.

Also presenting testimony at the October 4 Congressional hearing was former leading Soviet Jewish activist Alexander Shipov, now living in Israel. Shipov will remain in Washington, D.C. to attend the UCSJ Annual Meeting October 14-17.

###

Simchat Torah in Moscow

During last year's Simchat Torah festivities, over 10,000 Soviet Jews flooded the vicinity of the Moscow synagogue. The numbers were as large this year. As the thousands crowd into Arkhipova Street to celebrate the holiday, their exhilaration is coupled with the knowledge that for Soviet Jews, Torah cannot be taught and cannot be learned.

Simchat Torah is the holiday that epitomizes their struggle. While Jews throughout the world affirmed their love of the Torah, Soviet Jews were reminded that it is their love of the Torah and their commitment to being Jews that provokes the unwarranted attacks against them.

Moscow's most prominent Hebrew teacher, IOSEF BEGUN committed this crime--promoting Jewish culture. The Israel Embassy in London recently reported that Begun's trial will not take place this week as previously expected.

###

Simchat Torah: LARGEST S.F. RALLY

On Sunday, October 2, demonstrators linked arms around the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco, while at all four corners of the city block, a shofar was sounded--"tumbling down the walls of oppression," stated David Waksberg, Executive Director of the Bay Area Council on Soviet Jewry, adding "the Jews of the Soviet Union are not forgotten."

Coinciding with the holiday of Simchat Torah--a joyous celebration when young and old dance and sing in the streets and delight in the study of the Torah--the Jewish community of the San Francisco Bay Area joined together in a rally and street fair to call attention to the new emergencies facing Soviet Jews.

Morey Schapira, BACJS Vice-President, noted that the rally held outside the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco was the "largest demonstration for Soviet Jews in Northern California history--with 4,000 people in attendance."

Attracting thousands of Northern California residents prior to the rally, the street fair highlighted an exhibit of underground Soviet Jewish art, a photo exhibit of Prisoners of Conscience, and a "guided tour" of Soviet Jewish communities. The "tour" comprised of oversized photographs, was led by a local rabbi and minister who recently returned from a visit to the Soviet Union last Spring.

During the rally, local Congresswoman Barbara Boxer (D-Marin County) reiterated the need to compensate the 269 families affected by the KAL 007 incident. Boxer proposed that the Soviet government, as a "gesture of good will" release 269 Prisoners of Conscience and long-term refuseniks--one for each passenger who died. Boxer, who nominated Anatoly Shcharansky last January for the upcoming Nobel Peace Prize, cried out to the throng of Bay Area residents: "The voice of freedom cannot be silenced."

Boxer's message rings true, especially for former leading Soviet Jewish activist Yuri Shtern, who was attending the street fair and rally. Emigrating to Israel in 1981,



Shtern is now an active spokesman on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Shtern will travel to Washington, D.C. for the UCSJ Annual Meeting October 14-17.

Featured Speaker

Born in 1949, Yuri Shtern is a former leading Jewish activist in Moscow who emigrated to Israel in 1981. While in Moscow, he received his PhD in Economics from Moscow State University, and worked as an economist with the Soviet government.

Shtern organized and led seminars on Israel, Hebrew, and other Jewish topics. He was also instrumental in working in an underground Jewish gan (kindergarten).

Today Shtern is a leading voice in Israel on behalf of Soviet Jews, particularly those who are survivors of the Holocaust. He is married and has two children.

###

COL. WOLF VILENSKI, holder of the Hero of the Soviet's highest award--and other high Soviet honors, arrived in Israel with his wife yesterday. They had been trying to obtain exit visas from the Soviet Union for the past 10 years.

They received their papers last week and took the train from Vilna, where they had been living since Vilenski had served as a senior officer in the Lithuanian division in World War II, to Vienna.

The couple were met in Vienna by their daughter, Dr. Lila Singer, who had flown from her home in Israel to meet them, and by Maj. Arye Vilenski, their son, who, as an officer in the IDF is continuing his father's military career.

Col. Vilenski was among the 144 Jews who received the Hero of the Soviet Union Medal during the war, and the second of four Jews in the Lithuanian division so awarded to come to Israel. Sgt. Kalman Shorr arrived in Israel in 1979. (JTA, 9/27/83)

OKLA. CONGRESSMAN REACHES ELBERT FAMILY

Seventy-eight members of the Oklahoma Commission on Soviet Jews (OCSJ) anxiously anticipated the latest news about Lev Elbert, as Congressman Mike Synar (R-Oklahoma) successfully reached the home of Elbert by telephone September 6.

Synar, seated among his active Tulsa constituents and OCSJ members, spoke with Lev's wife Inna Elbert, and Elbert's brother Michael.

Synar noted that "international pressure may indeed lead to early release (of Jewish prisoners of conscience)."

Speaking with Michael Elbert, Synar conveyed that "the U.S. Congress is deeply interested in Lev's condition. Let her (Inna) know to tell the authorities that U.S. Congressmen throughout this country are going to be following the actions of the (Soviet) authorities and their treatment of Lev within the prison."

135 JEWS LEFT THE USSR IN SEPTEMBER



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The **Alert** is published by the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, an organization dedicated to helping the Jews of the Soviet Union, especially those desiring to leave.

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