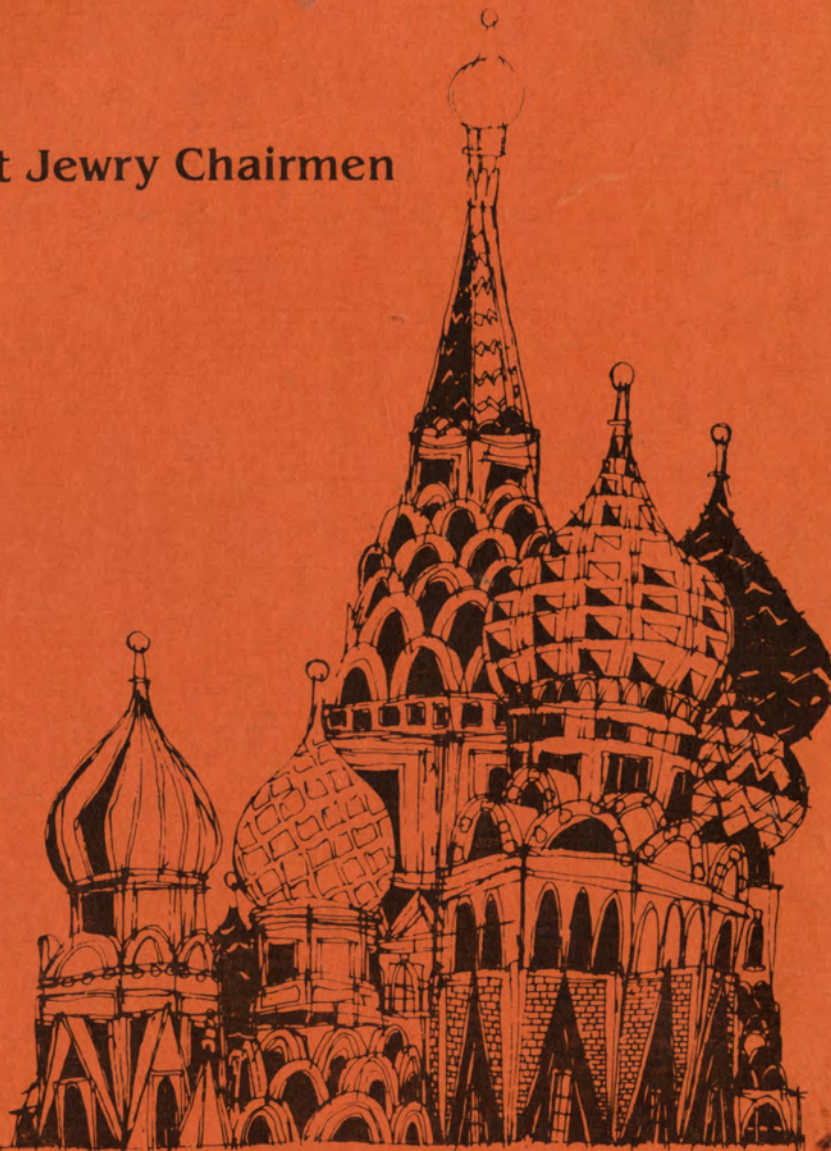


# BEFORE THE DOORS CLOSE...

## A Guide Book for Soviet Jewry Chairmen

prepared for  
Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry  
by  
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**CHICAGO ACTION FOR  
SOVIET JEWRY**



Fall 1979



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### INTRODUCTION

Of the 14 million Jews in the world today, approximately 3 million live in the USSR. Jews are identified by the word "Ivrei" (Jew) on their internal passport. Jews, discriminated against brutally first by the Czars, then again by Stalin, -- Jews who want to live as Jews--have an uphill battle in the USSR.

In the Soviet Union today:

- All rabbinical schools are closed.
- The manufacture of religious articles is prohibited.
- No Jewish Bibles are printed.
- Religious education is illegal.
- From 450 synagogues in 1956, there now are 64.
- There is no Hebrew printing.
- No Jewish communal activities are allowed.
- Anti-semitism is officially sanctioned by the government.
- 22 Prisoners of Conscience are in Soviet labor camps and exile stemming from their desire to emigrate to Israel.
- Not even the dead are spared: Jewish cemeteries are desecrated and bulldozed.

Out of this intolerable situation an upsurge of yearning to be Jewish has developed. Jews who have lived for more than 60 years under Soviet domination are seeking to learn Jewish language and culture. Unofficial Hebrew classes and seminars on Jewish history and culture have emerged. Despite official interference at various and unpredictable times, the seminars continue. Moscow alone has 50 Hebrew teachers and 500 students. The leaders of these seminars and many of their students are fervent, devout Zionists, motivated by their own newly found national identity to impart Jewish culture to other Soviet Jews in order to help direct their emigration to Israel. Most astonishing is that most of the participants and teachers are young people with little or no Jewish background. Because they are considered aliens in the country of their birth and because of pressure from the free world, the door has opened a crack for them. For Jews...for now...There is a chance of being granted visas to join relatives in Israel.

### INTRODUCTION - Page 2

150,000 Jews have been allowed to leave the Soviet Union since Boris Kochybyefsky applied in 1967. 1600 Jews are permitted to leave a month at present. At least 200,000 more applications are backed up -- people willing to face loss of jobs, dismissals from universities, anti-semitic jibes, house searches and possible arrests to leave.

Refuseniks and Soviet Jewish activists are today's heroes. They know what a long, hard road Jews must travel to obtain permission to leave. For no apparent reason, the Soviets arbitrarily refuse some applicants. These Refuseniks are harassed and persecuted to discourage others from applying.

Refuseniks feel that without the support and intervention of the free world, they could not go on. Our intervention provides them with protection by demonstrating to Soviet authorities that they are not isolated from the concern and interest of the free world. Activities on their behalf reassure them that they are not alone.

If the Refuseniks are willing to suffer persecution, separated families, imprisonment, and exile, we, as Synagogue and organization leaders, can do no less than join them in their historic effort.

THINGS CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY! WE KNOW HOW TO DO THEM!  
This book provides all essential information your Synagogue/organization needs to ACT NOW.

It is not difficult to become an activist Synagogue or organization. In the range of activities suggested, you will find something--or everything--for your group.

The time to form your committee is TODAY. The time to work is TODAY. The time to adopt--and help save--a Soviet Jewish family is TODAY.

THE TIME IS TODAY...BEFORE THE DOORS CLOSE



# HOW TO SET UP YOUR SOVIET JEWRY COMMITTEE

1. Secure full co-operation from your Rabbi. Ask him to talk about the plight of Soviet Jews in a sermon. Ask him to include prayers for Soviet Jews in services. Ask his help in setting up a committee. He can be your key person.
2. Put together a committee. You only need 5 to 10 members depending on the size of your congregation, or if you stand relatively alone at first, don't be discouraged!
3. Send a letter to your members asking for volunteers. Review your membership list with your Rabbi for suggestions on members who might be willing to help and call them. Make it clear that being on the committee does not require a lot of time.
4. Ask for a Social Action or Soviet Jewry budget.
5. Have your synagogue adopt a Soviet Jewish Refusenik family. (See page 6.) This is a family, usually "chosen" at random by the Soviets to be repeatedly refused a visa to Israel. By harassing and at times physically abusing the Refusenik the Soviets hope to discourage other Soviet Jews from applying to emigrate. You can get the name of a family and the story of their plight from Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry.
6. Ask for pulpit time to tell the congregation about your family. Ask for space in your bulletin or send a news letter about them with instructions about writing to them and to government officials on their behalf. (See sample, pp. 8, 9, 11 & 12).
7. Have Soviet Jewry Write-Ins as often as possible at your synagogue. Many members who will not take the time to write at home will join a Write-In at the synagogue. On page 14 see how to do this most efficiently.
8. Have a speaker on Soviet Jewry come to your synagogue. Show a film. Chicago Action has effective speakers and films. (See page 24.)
9. Ask your religious school director to include a unit on Soviet Jewry; your youth group to hear a speaker, and your Adult Education Committee to offer a unit. A superb 5-lesson study kit for 6th and 7th graders--but good for youths and adults too--has been prepared by the Montreal Committee for Soviet Jewry. "Natasha's Dream", a paper book about a 9-year-old girl's odyssey from Moscow to Israel, and what American children can do to help Refusenik children, is outstanding. (See Resources, p. 24, for how-to-order).

## HOW TO SET UP YOUR SOVIET JEWRY COMMITTEE - Page 2

What an opportunity for your synagogue to educate and to develop a sense of community!

10. Set up a Soviet Jewry bulletin board. Display a picture of your adopted family. Post clippings regarding Soviet Jewry.
11. Set up a Telegram Bank. On page 18, you will find a sample Telegram Bank application to be sent to all members of your congregation. You may need permission from your Board of Directors. Point out that no telegrams are sent in the name of the synagogue, but only in the names of the people who sign up.
12. Put a Soviet Jewry section in your library. Suggested books are on page 25.
13. Become members of Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry and receive the monthly newsletter, "Refusenik" which will provide you and your committee with swift, accurate reportage of current Soviet Jewish activities inside the USSR and indicates where protests can be directed.



# ADOPT-A-FAMILY: HOW TO DO IT

Soviet Jews who apply for visas face many hardships:

Loss of jobs.  
Harassment from police, neighbors, co-workers, former  
"friends".  
Possible arrest and jail on trumped-up charges.  
Indefinite delays--perhaps forever--before receiving papers.

When your synagogue takes a Refusenik family into your congregational family you are touching two bases:

1. Your family knows Western Jews are aware of their situation and that we care.
2. The Soviets know that the family has contacts in the West, is in touch with them, and that their friends will make others aware if anything happens to them.

Contact with the West makes hardship easier to bear, Refuseniks say, and protects them against harassment during this critical period. Soviet officials measure American interest by letters you send and perhaps phone calls you make. Your contact with your family may literally SAVE THEIR LIVES.

\* \* \* \* \*

Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry has names and addresses of Soviet Jewish Refusenik families. All have given their names with the express desire for communication.

After your request, your synagogue or organization will get the name and background of a specific family. You then write the life-giving letters and send the holiday cards. With little effort you do a lot...touch your family, warn off the Soviets, provide encouragement to other Soviet Jews building the courage to apply too.

Call: Carole Boron at C.A.S.J. - (312) 433-0144  
Pamela Cohen  
Marillyn Tallman

\* \* \* \* \*

You will be helped every step of the way to help your family and your people.

# LETTERS TO YOUR FAMILY: WHAT TO WRITE

1. Be warm, encouraging, and friendly. Indicate in the first letter that you received his name from a mutual friend. Type if you can.
2. Tell about yourself, your family, your work, your city.
3. NEVER make remarks that attack the Soviet system or politics. In your first letter avoid direct references to emigration or Israel. Later you can take the cue from them on this. Ask your adoptee to write about himself, but understand his inability to write freely on sensitive matters.
4. You may wish to ask for a family photo and include one of yours.
5. Establishing a tie may take time. When you get an answer share it. Your writers might each mention a mutual name (not the synagogue) so that the family will know a group is working for them.
6. When you get an answer, reply promptly. You are their link.
7. In time you might ask if it would be easier for your family to respond to one person, the co-ordinator. Life is hard for a Refusenik; postage money scarce. On the other hand, writing may be a comfort for them.
8. Airmail envelopes are OK, but whenever possible send a letter "REGISTERED, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED" (a pink form.) Cost in 1979 is \$2.73. Save white receipt.  
  
In 30 days you should get your pink slip back, signed by your family. That is the return receipt. If the letter comes back, call Chicago Action. If neither is returned in 2 months, file a tracer form 542 at the post office. If you still get no response file for the insurance. - The USSR will be \$15.75 poorer.
9. In case anyone asks, you don't get a Refusenik "in trouble" by writing. Adoptees say this is their life.
10. Call or send copies of letters to CHICAGO ACTION FOR SOVIET JEWRY to report contents of mail. Seemingly insignificant letters may carry important messages to the free world. All correspondence from the Soviet Union must be shared with activists throughout the free world.



SAMPLE FIRST LETTER TO YOUR FAMILY

Dear Dina and Yosef:

Good friends gave me your address and I would like to correspond with you. My name is Anne and I live in Washington. I would like to hear from you, to know how you and your family are and what you are doing.

I teach music and my husband is an engineer. Our two sons, Danny and Adam, are 10 and 6. Our good friends told us that your children are about the same ages. Perhaps our children can be pen pals. I have friends who will translate your letter for me if you wish to write in Russian.

We all wish you a happy Chanukah and hope that we'll meet sometime in the near future. I hope we will hear from you soon.

Best wishes to you and your family,

SAMPLE LETTER TO A SOVIET JEWISH FAMILY  
WRITTEN BY AN AMERICAN JEW

Dear Anatoli:

We have been very busy recently with our move, though it was not far. We are still in metropolitan Washington. Now we have a larger house and are enjoying the space, especially the children.

We think of you often and hope to hear from you more frequently. All is well with the Shterns we know here. I am enjoying my new job as school librarian and the children are having a good year in school. We shall send you a photograph as soon as possible. Debra is learning to read Hebrew in Kindergarten this year and Naava was selected president of her fifth grade class. Avital is as cute as can be in her new hair style. Hope all is well with you.

Best regards,

Ruth

SAMPLE POST CARDS TO USSR

Shalom!

Those of us in America who know of your difficulty, and there are many, are watching and waiting. You have many friends who will not fail you. Keep up hope and know that we will do our part on your behalf.

Your fellow Jews,

Allan and Rachel Zuckerman

Dear Volvovsky Family,

I'm happy to have this opportunity to write you. There are so many people here who care for you and are concerned about you.

Wishing you good health.



SAMPLE LETTER INTRODUCING  
YOUR ADOPTED FAMILY TO THE CONGREGATION

Dear Congregant:

On May 1, 1973 Aba and Ida Taratuta and their son Mikhail applied for exit visas from the Soviet Union. They want to emigrate to Israel. Their applications were refused and they became what is known as Soviet Jewish Refuseniks. Aba was immediately forced to give up his academic career as a mathematician. He has repeatedly been denied professional work and is working as an elevator operator to support his family. Ida worked as a translator of English and American scientific articles into Russian. She was also fired. Their son was placed in a school that is very anti-Jewish and anti-Israel. Next year Mikhail will be eligible for the draft. No one is allowed to leave the Soviet Union for years after they have been in the army. Therefore, this family must get out immediately.

In January 1978, Temple Jeremiah "adopted" this Refusenik family. The adoption was actually a commitment to do all we can to help them secure their visas. We have held several Sunday morning Write-Ins for this family with many members of Temple Jeremiah participating. Some members are writing from home on a regular basis. But we must do more! The Taratutas are constantly harassed and isolated. They need contact with the free world to remind them that we are working for them . . . to remind them that we understand their problems . . . to remind them that they are not alone! Even though the Soviets often interfere with delivery of our mail, Soviet Jews need our letters. Even when not delivered, this mail is LIFE INSURANCE . . . it is inspected by the KGB who realize that these people are known and supported in the West.

The Social Action Committee is asking each member of Temple Jeremiah to write a letter to the Taratutas this week. Can you imagine the impact of 465 letters for one family? Please help us make this project a success. Write a simple, friendly letter. Discuss your family, the weather, items of general interest . . . nothing political, religious, pro-Israel or anti-Soviet. We have enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope for your convenience. The cost of the stamps has been generously donated by a member of our congregation who wishes to remain anonymous. Please make a copy of the Taratutas address and continue to write to this gallant family.

Thank you,

Social Action Committee

NOTE: USE LIGHT-WEIGHT AIR-MAIL ENVELOPE. HAND ADDRESS.

SAMPLE LETTER #1 TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN

Dear Senator (Name)

Mikhail Mager, (Address and date of application) 31, a Soviet Jew living in Vinnitsa in the Ukraine, has been waiting for three and one-half years to join his family. His wife, parents and brother, as well as his wife's entire family, are all living in Israel and he has not seen them since they left three and one-half years ago. When they left, the Soviet officials promised that he would soon follow. Mikhail's situation is particularly serious since he lives in a small town, virtually isolated from others in the emigration movement who lend support and assistance to one another. There is also fear of a possible arrest, since he has been constantly threatened with this by the KGB.

Mikhail's wife, Jeannette, has been in this country trying to get support for the release of her husband. I met her recently at my synagogue and was impressed with the seriousness of her husband's situation and of her determination to get him out. Her feeling is that letters to Soviet officials with copies to the local OVIR Chief of Vinnitsa might be helpful. Anything you could do to assist this beleaguered young woman would be most appreciated.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this matter. I will be awaiting your response.

Sincerely,

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Type if possible. Give your personal opinion. Include specific incidents.
2. Threats will only antagonize.
3. Do not send a carbon to a second Senator. Write individually. Carbons should be sent to CASJ.
4. Request an answer.
5. Include Refusenik name, address and specific and accurate biographical data.
6. Ask for a specific request. (Intervene on behalf of family with Soviet Ambassador.)



SAMPLE LETTER #2 TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As a U. S. citizen, I am very concerned with the fate of the Grigori family of Moscow, USSR (Butlerova 2, Corp. 1, Apt. 69). They applied to leave the Soviet Union in 1973 and have been repeatedly refused. This family is now the subject of harassment by the Soviet Authorities and under constant threat of imprisonment for their activities directed towards their right to emigrate.

I appeal to you to intervene on their behalf and to express the concern of the American Government for their welfare. As you are aware, under the terms of the Helsinki agreement, the USSR undertook to permit reunion of families, and that U. S. as a signatory, has every right to insure that the Soviet Government lives up to its commitments.

Together, all of us who are concerned with Human Rights can bring about the release of the Grigori family, whose only desire is to be re-united with their family, in their homeland, Israel.

I hope that you will be able to assist us in this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

SAMPLE LETTER TO A SOVIET OFFICIAL

Dear Ambassador Dobrynin:

For the past four years the family of Leonid Volvovsky (1st Zborovsky Periulag 15, Apt. 2, Moscow, USSR) has appealed to emigrate to Israel, a right totally affirmed by the Kremlin in the International Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Accords.

In keeping with these international agreements, and to allow our friends and their 12-year-old daughter to join their relatives waiting for them in Israel, we appeal to you to intervene on their behalf.

We are most concerned that their lives are at a standstill at this point.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Be courteous, yet firm.
2. Give the name, address and situation of your family.
3. Mention Helsinki Accord, 1975, that permits emigration to reunite separated families. (Your family has been formally invited by an Israeli relative to join him.) Also valid to mention: "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" and "The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".
4. If you have a letter of response from an American official, enclose a carbon. American opinion makers are important to the Soviets.
5. Have a Write-In to the OVIR. (See pages 14 and 16.) OK to mimeograph form letters and envelopes.



# SUGGESTIONS FOR SOVIET JEWRY WRITE-INS

1. Buy a supply of pens and stationery. Bring a container for the postage money you will collect. Bring change.
2. Bring postcards or form letters to Soviet officials asking for the granting of a visa for your family. Be sure to include the address and city of your family.
3. Make a sample letter to President Carter and to your Senator for your members to use. (See pages 11 and 12). It is not a good idea to use form letters to our government officials.
4. Make a sample letter to your family. (See page 8). Some synagogues have a rubber stamp made with their family's address...those Russian streets have long names! Write nothing anti-Soviet and do not mention yourselves as members of a Temple group or organization.
5. Some synagogues have had packs of 500 post cards printed with the refuseniks' picture on the front. A local "speedy print shop" can do this. It could be addressed to the family or to an OVIR authority.
6. Have announcements made at services prior to the write-in asking members to take a few minutes to participate.
7. Set up a table for each type of letter--one for letters to the family, one for letters to our government officials and one for letters to Soviet Officials. Have a helper at each table. Urge people to write at least one letter at each table.
8. Collect the letters and the money for postage. Postcards to the Soviet Union are 21¢; letters are 31¢. You might want to check the rates as there might be a change soon. Charge extra if you want to cover the cost of the stationery. Do not encourage people to take the letters home as more than likely they won't get mailed.
9. Take the letters to the post office yourself. If you have extra postage money, use it to register some of the letters to your family. If you register a letter, request a return receipt, a signed pink slip you will get after delivery, indicating that the letter did indeed reach your family.
10. You might want to announce the number of pieces of mail collected in your bulletin. Ask people to send any replies they get to you for your files. You can Xerox copies of replies from our government officials and send them to the proper Soviet official.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR SOVIET JEWRY WRITE-INS - Page 2

11. Avoid using aerograms. When Soviet censors open them the writing is torn.
12. Send each member an addressed envelope in the next synagogue mailing. Ask professional people to write on stationery with their official letterhead.
13. It's important to remember that letter writing campaigns should appear spontaneous - not sponsored by organizations or synagogue. Do not indicate a sponsored action.



ADDRESSES TO KNOWU.S. Officials (Form Letters are not read!)

President Jimmy Carter  
White House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Your Congressman  
House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Your Senator  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Soviet Officials (Use regular overseas stamp: 31¢)

President Leonid Brezhnev  
The Kremlin  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Mr. Ovchinnikov  
Head of All-Union OVIR  
Ogarev 6  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Pres. of the Soviet Academy of  
Sciences Alexandrov  
Leninsky Prospect 4  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR  
V-71

First Deputy of the Supreme  
Soviet Kuznetsov  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Procurator General Roman Rudenko  
Pushkinskaya 15a  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Executive Committee of the Red Cross  
and the Red Crescent  
Chermushkinsky Proyezd 5  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR  
(should receive complaints about emigration)

Head of Moscow OVIR Fadeer  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Minister of Defense Dimitry Ustinov  
6 Ogarev Street  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

## SOVIET OFFICIALS - Page 2

Chairman of Religious Affairs  
Vladimir Al. Kuroedov  
Smolenskii Bulvar 11/2  
Moscow, RSFSR, USSR

Head of OVIR, Leningrad, Bokov  
Zhelyabovz St. 26  
Leningrad, RSFSR, USSR

Procurator Okuchenev  
Sr. Assistant to the Procurator of Lithuania  
Vilnius, Lithuanian, SSR, USSR

SOVIET OFFICIALS IN THE U.S.

Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin  
Embassy of the USSR  
1125 16th Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky  
Soviet Mission to the U.N.  
136 East 67th Street  
New York, New York 10021



### TELEGRAM BANK

Many synagogues and other groups have established Telegram Banks and they have proven extremely effective.

In these times situations frequently arise which necessitate instant communication with our government and Soviet government officials. The trial and sentencing of Anatoly Sharansky is a prime example.

Many of us have opinions which we would like to express but frequently do not because we don't know to whom or where to write or we just don't take the time to sit and compose a letter.

Telegram Banks have been an excellent answer to these needs. Telegrams sent out under a "Bank" do not go out under the name of the synagogue. Telegrams are sent out only for those individuals who sign up for the bank. The authorization form allows the Bank Chairman to send out a certain number of telegrams per year. Usually 3 people from the synagogue are empowered to activate the bank. They usually include the Social Action Chairman, a Board member and sometimes the Rabbi.

The expense for the Telegrams are charged to the individual telephone bills.

### MODEL FORM

#### TELEGRAM BANK AUTHORIZATION FORM

I authorize the Telegram Bank Committee to send up to 3 telegrams a year to public officials in my name.

I understand that the telegram will be charged to my telephone number. I will receive notification when a telegram is sent in my name.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Congressional Dist. No. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

If you are interested in being part of our Telegram Bank, please fill out this form and send it to the Social Action Chairman, c/o the Synagogue.

### PLACING A MESSENGER CALL TO THE USSR

As international calls should never be made directly to a Refusenik, messenger calls are placed. Through this arrangement, the Refusenik will be notified of the call in advance and will go to a local post office where the connection will be made. At times, Soviet authorities harass Refuseniks by preventing the completion of messenger calls; your persistence and repeated attempts are an excellent form of protest and they signal strong support of the Refusenik to Soviet authorities. Call CASJ before the call is to go through so that we can provide you with up-to-date information and questions.

- 1) Dial "0". Ask to be switched to the overseas operator for the USSR. Cost: About \$3.00 per minute.
- 2) Order your messenger call for a specific time and date at least 3 days in advance. In summer, most Russian cities are 8 hours ahead of Chicago time; in winter 9 hours.
- 3) The operator will ask you the name and address of the party to be called. Make sure all information is accurate and complete. Give your name and phone number.
- 4) The Russian operators may not cooperate and may deny the existence of such an address, but be firm.
- 5) If you encounter difficulties, you might wire your party notifying him of your next messenger call, the time and date.
- 6) When the Refusenik is brought to the Post Office, the international operator will call you. If you are not called, you can call the international operator and make inquiry. If the Moscow operator informs you that the party did not arrive to take the call, it is possible that he was not called by messenger in the first place, that the connection was not made and the Refusenik is waiting at the Post Office for a call that will not be permitted, or that the messenger could not locate the party. In any case, order another call!
- 7) Unless you have made contact first by letter, your party won't know you the first time. Identify yourself, mention a mutual friend if possible, give regards from those with you, and tell where you are calling from.



## PLACING A MESSENGER CALL TO THE USSR - Page 2

- 8) Ask what his family situation is. Indicate your community concern for their welfare, but do not discuss political activities or Israel (in a direct manner). Ask questions and ask for messages and new information. Take your cues from the Refusenik: let him direct the nature of the call.
- 9) It is critical that all information be directed to Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry.
- 10) If possible, arrange for a future call.
- 11) End on a strong, positive note. If you have a group, sing a Hebrew song. ("Am Yisrael Chai" perhaps).
- 12) You may want to tape record a call. Use a standard cassette. Get a standard "telephone pickup coil" (about \$3.00). Plug one end into the microphone outlet and place the suction cup on the ear-piece of the receiver. Use only one phone, picking up extensions weakens volume.
- 13) For a call your whole congregation can hear, get a telephone amplifier at an electronic supply store so that both ends of the conversation can be amplified.

"I will never forget getting a phone call late in the day. A voice said, 'This is Edna Bond calling from Chicago. We have not forgotten you.'"

.....Hana Levin, formerly of Sverdlovsk, USSR, now of Kiron, Israel

JEWISH PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

"I want to leave a country where much is inimical and alien to me despite the fact that I was born and have lived in it to this day. Alien because I regard only Israel as my spiritual homeland and because the people among whom I live consider me an alien element."

...Sylva Zalmonson, Potma Labor Camp: 1970-74,  
now Tel Aviv. Husband, Eduard  
Kuznetsov, sentenced 1970 to Potma,  
was recently released to Israel.

More than 70 Soviet Jews--many of them still in labor camps--have been singled out by the Soviets as particularly active and been tried and sentenced to from 3 to 15 years in order to break the spirit of the Emigration Movement.

They are Jewish men and women who persisted in their attempt to emigrate and helped other Jews to do so. These are the heroes...those who have courageously fought for their human rights and opened the door for 150,000 others.

They have been tried on trumped up charges and shipped off to prison and labor camps. Convictions have been for "parasitism" (being out of work after having been fired after an application to emigrate), "owning anti-Soviet materials" (Hebrew primers and Siddurs) and 15 years for "anti-Soviet agitation" (peaceful demonstrations, picketing, sit-ins).

Jewish prisoners are persecuted by both administrators and other inmates. Some have been housed with Nazi political prisoners. They do hard physical labor on less-than-subsistence diets. Communication with relatives is often curtailed. Surroundings are unsanitary; medical assistance insufficient.

## FOR THE FUTURE...

Realistically, it is very difficult to fight successfully for Soviet Jews once they have been sentenced. We must act immediately when a Soviet Jew is arrested, protesting loudly. This is where your TELEGRAM BANK (see p. 18) COUNTS. If we have enough telegram banks, action can be quick and strong. We may save some years of a man's life!

## FOR NOW...

Often, after serving his or her term, the prisoner is allowed to emigrate. We can give the moral support that former prisoners tell us has given them strength to go on.



### ADOPT A PRISONER

We will send you information and perhaps a photo of the prisoner, with the name and address of his labor camp and of his family.

1. The more letters sent to a POC the more chance he has of receiving them.
2. You might want to include picture postcards. The 3-D cards, often with children's scenes, are especially good. At times they can be used for barter within the camp. Call CASJ to order these cards.
3. Send birthday wishes to the POC's.
4. Mail letters the same way you do to your adopted family. (See p. 6). Again registered letters, requesting the return receipt are best. If your letter is returned, phone us.
5. For some reason, prisoners often get their mail.
6. Write to his or her family as well.
7. It helps to write regularly - bi-monthly or weekly.
8. Display his photo in the synagogue.

### ...A FEW MORE WAYS TO HELP YOUR FAMILY

1. Interest your friends in working with you. The more letters written, the better chance your family has of being permitted to leave the USSR.
2. Organize a monthly or now-and-then gathering of friends to write letters on a regular basis. Bridge clubs, couples clubs, young mothers who are "at home" with small children looking for something meaningful to do, teenagers--all of these people can write letters to your family, or to American and Soviet officials.
3. Try to interest friends and relatives from other parts of the country. The impact of numbers of letters from various cities all asking intervention for the same Soviet Jewish family would be very strong. Send a copy of this book to people in other parts of U.S.A.
4. Send a large number of greeting cards to your family on Jewish holidays.
5. Write on behalf of the family to USSR officials, American public officials, scientific organizations and other professional groups and businessmen who trade with the USSR.
6. Follow the case in your synagogue bulletin.
7. Know anyone who is planning a trip to the Soviet Union? Have them get in touch with Soviet Action For Soviet Jewry.



# RESOURCES

CHICAGO ACTION FOR SOVIET JEWRY is a member of the UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS, a nationwide confederation of local, grass-roots groups concerned solely with the plight of Soviet Jews. We are dedicated to action, education and political activities to further the struggle for human rights and free emigration for all Soviet Jews.

- 1) Speakers and Program.
- 2) Up-to-date, effective films.
- 3) Printed materials for your members.
- 4) "Refusenik Newsletter", Linda Oppen, Editor.
- 5) Posters
- 6) Soviet Jewry School Kit: A series of five lessons for 6th graders. Easily adapted for older students. Includes lesson plans, maps, historical outlines, background data. OUTSTANDING.
- 7) Natasha's Dream: Children's Handbook on Russian Jews and What We Can Do. 19-page paperbound book with drawings, poetry and true story of odyssey of Natasha Korenfeld, 13, from Moscow to Israel. Includes photos and current addresses of Refusenik children ages 8-14.
- 8) Tribute Cards:
 

Hetty De Leeuwe  
1528 Sheridan Road  
Highland Park, Illinois 60035  
(312) 433-6557
- 9) 3D postcards for prisoners.

We are here to help you help Soviet Jews. Join through your synagogue or take out your own membership. Call Chicago Action (312) 433-0144 about being placed on the mailing list.

# SOVIET JEWRY BOOKS FOR YOUR LIBRARY

- BETWEEN HAMMER & SICKLE - Eliav, Arie L.
- THE JEWISH PROBLEM IN THE SOVIET UNION - Goldberg, Ben Zion
- NEVER AGAIN - Kahane, Meir
- BABI YAR - Kuznetsov, Anatoly
- WHILE SIX MILLION DIED - Morse, Arthur
- THE JEWS OF SILENCE - Weisel, Elie
- LET MY PEOPLE GO - Cohen, Richard
- THE LAST EXODUS - Schroeter, Leonard
- PRISON DIARIES - Kuznetsov, Edward (Stein & Day)
- THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO - Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr
- THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT TO AID SOVIET JEWS - Orbach, William W.
- SO HELP ME GOD! - Tarr, Rabbi Herbert
- TO BUILD A CASTLE - Bukovsky, Vladimir
- MY TESTIMONY - Marchenko, Anatoly (Dell Publishing Co.)
- THE SOVIET CAGE - Korey, William (Viking Press)
- Senate Judiciary Committee booklet, U.S.S.R. LABOR CAMPS (hearings of Feb. 1st & 2nd, 1973).
- WHITE NIGHTS: THE STORY OF A PRISONER IN RUSSIA - Begin, Menachem (Harper & Row)
- PSYCHIATRIC TERROR - Block, Sidney and Reddaway, Peter (Basic Books)
- COURTS OF TERROR - Taylor, Talford



# SENDING ART BOOKS TO THE USSR

Soviet Jews can both enjoy and use art books. Artists of the Impressionist Period are the most valuable and the reproductions should be clear.

Place the book in a box, wrap in brown paper with paper sealing tape, not adhesive. The book store will probably be glad to do it. Use stick-on Parcel Post Mailing Labels for clarity.

AIR MAIL: All books weighing under 2 pounds enjoy a special registered air mail rate called "Other Articles." Sample price for a book sent "other article" would be:

\$7.16	postage
3.00	registration
.45	Return Receipt Requested
<u>\$10.61</u>	

As you register your book you get a pink card (form 2865) to fill out. The postal clerk fills out a white form (3806), which is your receipt. Keep it. Within 45 days your pink card should be returned to you, indicating that your book was received.

Green stickers are available at the Post Office on which you write "art book," check "gift" and ALWAYS VALUE at \$10.00 or LESS regardless of cost.

If your pink card doesn't come back in 45 days, bring your white receipt to the Post Office and file Tracer Form 542. If there's no delivery after 6 months, file Form 565 (Claim for Indemnification). Again bring your white receipt plus the date your tracer was filed. Claim \$15.76, the legal pay-back for non-delivery of mail. Although you will get a U.S. Treasury check, the Soviet have paid for it in the end.

BY SEA: Heavier books should be sent by sea, although they often face long delays. These must be tied with string four ways across. (Air Mail books don't need string). Leave a little extra at the center for typing on customs labels you'll get at the Post Office.

Insure the books and keep your receipt. Books by sea can't be registered. After 3 months if you do not receive a response, bring your insured receipt and file a claim for insured sea books.

# THE POEM OF MY LAND

At Passover there is matza  
In every Jewish home.  
There are in my Israel,  
Fortresses and palaces.

There are schools, stadiums,  
Automobiles, homes....  
This is my beloved country.

Matza is what our forefathers ate.  
They were baked in the sun, in the hot desert.  
They were going home, relieved from slavery.

And a miracle happened.  
Moses went up the mountain  
And brought down the Ten Commandments  
For the people of Israel.

He accomplished his mission,  
He brought his people home.  
But Moses did not live to see his native land.

Oh Israel! I promise you  
That I shall come to you  
But not now; we have to wait until  
God will hear our prayers.

--Natasha Korenfeld, 1973, age 10  
Moscow

1976: Korenfelds arrive in Israel



adapted from:

IF YOU WERE A RUSSIAN JEW AND BURNED TO GET OUT...

by Abraham S. Karlikow  
Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

....you would run the gauntlet of red tape again and again, be frustrated and still try again.

Let us say your family name is Kagan and you are a Riga Jew. The principle on which the Soviet Union permits Jews to emigrate--when it does--is to reunite families. You need a relative abroad. So you write to your relatives. It is they who must take the first step and send you a vyzov, (invitation).

With your vyzov you go to the local administration office known as OVIR (Office for Visas and Permits) where you fill out a form and start making rounds to get a vast number of supporting documents.

First hurdles...

You need a karakteristika, a reference from your place of work, to be signed by the director, the local Communist Party representative and the relevant trade union representative.

Most Soviet Jews, merely on applications, have been demoted. Others have been fired, sometimes at a humiliating office or workshop meeting, at which one is publicly "excommunicated" by former colleagues.

You must get karakteristikas for your children in school or university as well. Things may become difficult for them... cruelty from classmates, failing, rejection from college, cancellation of graduation.

The local committee that supervises the house in which you live must furnish a slip. You need a birth certificate for each family member, a marriage certificate, and where parents or a spouse are dead, a death certificate.

Each member of the family has to present an autobiography, 6 photographs, and copies of diplomas.

If parents or a spouse are being left behind, you need a certified letter stating the attitude of your relative who is not applying to the fact that you are asking for a visa.

IF YOU WERE A RUSSIAN JEW AND BURNED TO GET OUT - Page 2

Such are some of your problems before you even have the slightest intimation of whether you will ever get permission to leave.

Filing the application...

Back at OVIR you pay 40 rubles (about \$45) for each family member as a filing fee, turn in all the documents. You then wait about 6 months.

The OVIR automatically turns down whole categories: those in "sensitive" jobs or ideological or military posts. Others, perhaps apolitical, non-religious, or even old and sick, are rejected for no apparent reason, just to keep Soviet Jews "in line".

An appeal is possible. Within three months you get an answer. If it is still "no", you wait a full year before you can re-apply and then six months after each subsequent rejection. Some emigrants have applied 13 times before they finally succeeded.

Moving on...

You are lucky! The OVIR said you can go! You have your razrewenia, your license. And you have a time limit: 10-25 days. A race against time:

Now, Mr. and Mrs. Kagan, you do the following and get receipts proving that you have:

1. Quit your job (if you still have one).
2. Called in a man who told you how much it would cost to do any repairs to your flat. Paid him.
3. Withdrawn from schools (with copies of diplomas).
4. Turned in your passport, work-book, Army Registration card.
5. Paid 900 rubles (\$1,000) for each member of your family going. Jews have gone hat in hand to friends for this.

Moscow for Exit Visas...

Now you must set out for Moscow though you live in Riga. There is no other city where you can get exit papers. At the Dutch Embassy there, which represents Israel, you get the treasured paper, pink and white.



## The Deadline...

You must go to the Austrian Embassy for a travel visa and the Hungarian and Polish Embassies as well if you are going by train. These are readily given, but it all takes time, which is getting short.

You buy crates and start packing. You may take out 90 rubles (\$100) per person, no more. A diamond of not more than one caret may be taken. Also furniture, though not antiques. Usually nothing is left to start your new life.

You go by train, Kagans, and all your bags and crates are entirely reopened and checked at the border. At last, however, you reach Vienna where you are taken in hand by the Jewish Agency.

## But What...

But what would happen if, after you have lost your job, notified your childrens' school, been voted out of your housing, suffered the pain of your relatives, cringed to see former friends turn from you on the street, if after all this, Kagan, you are one of those the OVIR office does not approve. You re-apply in a year and are not approved; in six more months and are not approved...

"I didn't count the Polish border. They were cruel to us there and made jokes. But as we rolled closer and closer to Austria, to Vienna, that was such happiness. The greatest happiness of our lives..."

--former Refusenik

A MODERN FAIRY TALE

from "Natasha's Dream"

They are our Soviet Jewish cousins! Many of our grandparents and great-grandparents (or those of our friends) lived in the country that we now call the Soviet Union. When they lived there it was called Russia and they had a wicked king called a Czar.

Life was very difficult for them because the Russian people did not like Jews. Our Jewish cousins often were not allowed to study in the schools, could not live where they wanted to, or have jobs that they chose. When the Russians had a holiday, they would sometimes celebrate by killing Jews or burning down houses and synagogues. Many Jews left Russia. But many stayed behind hoping that things would change. There are now about 3 million Jews living in the Soviet Union.

About 60 years ago there was a change. The Russian people got rid of the wicked Czar and made new laws so that life would be better. One law said that no one was allowed to harm Jews--that they were equal to all citizens of the Soviet Union and should be treated equally. All the Jews who stayed in Russia were very happy. They thought that finally life would be better for them and for their children.

But life was not really better. The Russian government didn't obey its own laws and told our cousins that they must forget about being Jews and stop going to the Synagogue. Yet other peoples were allowed to keep their language and culture. The government told the Jews that only when they gave up being Jews would they be treated like everyone else.

The Jews kept going to synagogue anyway, so the government closed almost all of them. They closed all the Jewish schools so our cousins could not learn what it meant to be Jewish. The Jews were not allowed to print Hebrew books, calendars or newspapers, they were not permitted to train people who wanted to be rabbis and they were not even allowed to bake matzah for Passover. The Russians thought that if the children did not learn Hebrew, Jewish history and Jewish songs and dances they would forget that they were Jews.

WHAT DID OUR COUSINS IN THE SOVIET UNION DO?

For a long time we thought they really had forgotten that they were Jews. But finally our cousins stopped being silent.



They started to think about the fact that their identification cards were stamped with the word JEW. "What does it mean to be a Jew?" they asked.

Older Jews told them that they had once celebrated beautiful holidays and had learned a special language of their own--Hebrew. They learned that there was a Jewish country--Israel--that was home for all Jews who wish to go there.

In 1967, after the Six-Day War, they became very proud to be Jews and yearned to go to Israel, where no one could tell them that they must forget they were Jewish. To them, Israel was their true home.

Very secretly, so that the police would not find out, one man began to teach Hebrew. Since there were so few books left, those who wanted to learn had to copy the books. Soon, there were many secret Hebrew classes.

When Jewish holidays came, Jews gathered near the synagogue to dance. They did not hide now.

Soon they began asking the Soviet government for permission to leave, to go to Israel. The Soviet government became very angry. They said that if you want to leave you must pay us \$1,000. Then they took away their jobs, threw their children out of school and sometimes even sent them to prison.

THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT BEHAVED JUST LIKE THE WICKED CZARS! They did not obey their own laws.

Our Jewish cousins told the Russians: "We want to leave! We want to join the Jewish people in Israel. Let our people go!"

#### WHAT DID THE JEWS OF THE WORLD DO?

When the Jews in other lands heard the cries of the Jews who wanted to leave the Soviet Union, they cried out, too. They had demonstrations. They wrote letters to their governments asking for help. They wrote letters to the Jews of Russia which said "We have not forgotten you." They wrote letters to the Soviet government which said: "LET OUR PEOPLE GO!"

#### WHAT DID THE SOVIETS DO THEN?

They got even angrier, just like Pharoah did in Egypt long ago, and began being more and more cruel to the Jews. At the same time, however, they were worried about what the world was saying about them, and they began letting some of our cousins out. Over 148,000 Jews have been able to leave the Soviet Union in the past few years, but several hundred thousand still wish to leave.

HOW MANY WILL GET THE CHANCE TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER?...



# HISTORY OF JEWS IN RUSSIA

When dealing with Jews the USSR is still Russia. And for the first 900 years of its existence as a nation-state, Russia was by government policy "Judenrein"--no Jews allowed. During the 200 years in which Jews have been under Russian rule the government just has not known what to do.

100 C.E. First Jewish settlements in Russia, north shore of Black Sea.

8th Century: Khazars of central Russia adopt Judaism.

980: Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, adopts Greek Orthodoxy as the official religion of the new nation-state. One of the basic tenants of the more primitive Orthodoxy (as compared to western Christianity) in the 9th and 10th centuries: Jews as "Christ killers doomed to wander the earth".

1550: Feeling against Jews still strong. Czar Ivan orders that all Jews who refused to be baptized will be drowned.

1610: Remaining Jews forbidden to enter Moscow.

1654: Massacres of hundreds of thousands of Jews by Bogdan Chmielnicki.

1682: Peter the Great, a secular ruler, Russia's first reformer, visits the West. Invites open settlement from all foreigners "kromye Yevreiev" (except Jews).

1727: Jews formally banished.

1772: Russia annexes part of Poland. Catherine the Great expells its 200,000 Jews.

1795: Poland falls. Russia annexes one-third of the nation. Now rules one million Polish Jews, largest concentration of Jews in the world. Prussia and Austria will not accept them.

1796: Jewish Pale of Settlement. Jews restricted by Catherine to residence in the former Polish section. Forbidden in interior.

# HISTORY OF JEWS IN RUSSIA - Page 2

pre-

1860: Alexander I offers free secular education to Jewish children. Offers free land outside Pale to Jews who converted. Few takers.

Nicholas I heavily taxes kosher meat, ritual items. Conscripts Jewish boys at age 12 (instead of the usual 18) for 26 years military service. Many lose their Judaism. Communities split into rich vs. poor when filling quotas given.

1860: Decree that Jews with University education can move to interior, technicians needed for industrialization. Jews flood universities, which are already centers of radical agitation.

1881: Alexander II assassinated by revolutionaries.

1881: Pogroms, mass attacks by peasants on Jews, in S. Russia.

According to Prof. Allen Pollack, Yeshiva University, the 1881 pogroms mark the first time in history a government uses anti-semitism as a political tactic to divert citizens from demanding economic or social reform. With central control and planning, attacks could be on an unprecedented scale. The use of anti-semitism as a diversion in a political battle culminated in the Holocaust, believes Pollack.

1881-1914: Emigration Movement from Russia. Two million Jews to the U.S. and Canada; 200,000 to the United Kingdom; 60,000 to Palestine.

1911: Blood-libel charge of Mendel Beilis.

1917: Russian Revolution. Communist Party in power. Lenin is chairman. Legal equality declared for Jews. Pale abolished. Pogroms made a capital offense. Pro-Communist Jewish cultural institutions encouraged.

1920: Jews active in Party hierarchy, government, trade unions, co-ops, and education.

1924: Lenin dies. Of the troika that succeeds him, Joseph Stalin takes leadership. Emphasizes Jewish background of the other two and of his rival Leon Trotsky.



## HISTORY OF JEWS IN RUSSIA - Page 3

"While revolutionizing the nature of the Russian system, he (Stalin) sought various means to restore old traditions... to ease the shock of change, to establish the legitimacy of his regime and ensure support... Anti-Semitism was once more legitimated by the regime. Much of the opposition to Stalin within the party was composed of Jews; Stalin never forgot nor forgave them.

"Beginning in the 1930's, continuing into the 1940s (with a brief respite during World War II), and culminating in the years preceding his death, Stalin purged the Jews from most positions of importance, destroying whatever remained of Jewish cultural institutions and reviving the... anti-Semitism so endemic."

--Prof. Allen Pollack

1941- World War II. 500,000 Jews in Red Army. 200,000  
1945: Jews killed in action.

1941: Nazis invade Pale of Settlement with its 3 million Jews. In two years only 250,000 were not murdered by the Germans or killed in Concentration Camps.

100,000 were killed later in camps.

September 29: Babi-Yar, near Kiev. 100,000 Jews massacred by the Nazis in TWO days.

1951: Prague Trials. Jews forced to admit to worldwide Zionist conspiracy. Prominent Czech Jewish leaders sentenced to death.

1952: 24 leading Jewish writers and poets executed for being "enemies of the USSR, agents of American Imperialism and bourgeois nationalist Zionism..."

1953: Group of Jewish Kremlin doctors imprisoned and tortured for a "plot to assassinate" high-ranking Soviet officials. "Pravda", the official newspaper, uncovers "Jewish conspirators" throughout the USSR.

Stalin dies.

## HISTORY OF JEWS IN RUSSIA - Page 4

1965: Eli Wiesel visits Russia. Writes The Jews of Silence. Creates public awareness that Jews in the USSR wish to maintain their Jewish identity.

1967: Six-Day War. Intense anti-Semitic campaign in Soviet press. Via western media and tourists the image of "Israel" and "Jew" becomes positive for some Soviet Jews.

Boris Kochubyefsky is the first Soviet Jew to apply to emigrate to Israel.

1970: Leningrad Trials. Eleven Jews attempt to hijack a Soviet plane to draw world attention to their "imprisonment". Mark Dymshitz and Eduard Kuznetsov are sentenced to death, but with Western protest, their sentences commuted to 15 years.

1974: Jackson-Vanik links trade to S.J. immigration.

1978: Show trials re-emerge - Scharansky, Begun, Slepak, Nudel. Crackdown on Jewish emigration activists.

1979: 200,000 Soviet Jews have applications in process to emigrate from the Soviet Union.

Soviets refuse to restore freedoms taken away in '20s and '30s. Deny Jewish claims of problems in the USSR.

...THE DOOR IS STILL OPEN...A CRACK...FOR NOW.



## GLOSSARY

- Refusenik - A Soviet Jew who has been denied permission to emigrate.
- Long-Term Refusenik - A Soviet Jew who has been living in a state of refusal for a period of 4 to 11 years or longer.
- Aliya Activist - A Refusenik who is involved in the Jewish National Movement: repatriation to Israel.
- Jewish Culturalist - Usually an Aliya Activist who is raising Jewish consciousness through the study and teaching of Hebrew language, Jewish history, literature or religion.
- Dissident - One whose thinking is in opposition with the existing system and whose goal is to remain in the Soviet Union to change that system. Refuseniks are not dissidents, although the U.S. media often misuse this term.
- Vysov - The invitation, or affidavit from relatives in Israel, required to apply to OVIR for permission to emigrate.
- OVIR - Office in each city and/or district where applications are processed and permissions and refusals given.
- Gan - Unofficial Jewish kindergarten organized and supervised by activists to teach Jewish culture to Refusenik children.
- Ulpans - Israeli styled Hebrew classes conducted in homes by Aliya Activists.
- KGB - Soviet secret police.
- Helsinki Accords - Agreements resulting from the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki to which the USSR is a signatory.
- Basket III of the Final Act of Helsinki Accord - The section specifically stating that emigration be permitted to reunite families, that freedom be granted with regard to religion and thought, and that rights of minority groups be equally respected.

## GLOSSARY - Page 2

- Helsinki Watch Groups, Helsinki Monitoring Committees - Unofficial groups set up to monitor Soviet non-compliance of the Helsinki accords. A large percentage of the monitors, like Sharan-sky, Slepak are now in prison or exile.
- Jewish Samizdat - Underground literature, used to disseminate Jewish culture by the Refusenik movement.
- Jackson - Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Bill - Makes MFN (Most Favored Nation Status) contingent on liberalized emigration policies.
- Jewish Prisoners Of Conscience (Prisoners of Zion) - Jews, who have been sentenced to labor camps or exile on a variety of formal charges as a consequence of their desire to emigrate to Israel.
- Exile - Described by X-Prisoners Of Conscience as being worse than in Soviet labor camps. Jews are forced to live and work in isolated, remote regions of Siberia, surrounded by hostile, anti-semitic criminal population under extremely primitive living conditions.