



John Hamer's Journalism

John Hamer spent more than 50 years in and around journalism. Most recently, he was President of the Washington News Council, an independent forum for media ethics that he ran from 1998 to 2015, when he retired. Hamer was formerly Associate Editorial-Page Editor at *The Seattle Times*. In 1984, The Times sent him on a trip to the Soviet Union to do a Travel section story on cross-country skiing in Russia. But he acted as an “undercover” reporter and also did stories about Soviet Refuseniks and the Communist system. After leaving *The Times*, Hamer became Senior Fellow at Discovery Institute and wrote a report on how to make Seattle a more internationally competitive city. He later became Vice President of the Washington Institute for Policy Studies, a statewide think tank, where he was co-editor of *CounterPoint*, a monthly media-critique newsletter. He also co-authored the "Watchdogs" media column in *Seattle Weekly* and *Eastsideweek*. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and has a Master's Degree in journalism from Stanford University. He lives on East Mercer Way right across the street from the JCC, and comes over to work out and/or “shvitz” regularly.

Soviet anti-Semitism tarnishes glasnost

John Hamer
Associate editorial-page editor

THE cartoon is crude, grim and offensive. It depicts a grotesque figure crawling out of a star of David. A stern-faced soldier is poised to stab the person in the head with a bayonet.

"Brothers! Let's fight together with our enemy," the caption reads.

"Who is this trouble-maker? It says: 'Do you know him? This is a Jew!'"

"Jews bring bloodshed all over," the caption continues. "They make preparations to put all Russians in slavery."

An accompanying article states: "Jews try to make all Russians alcoholics. They cause the food shortage. They use Christian children's blood for magic."

The cartoon and article ran in January in *Truth*, the Soviet trade unions' newspaper.

Call it the dark side of glasnost: In the Soviet Union today, public anti-Semitism is increasing at a disturbing rate.

Mikhail Gorbachev's new policy of openness, which permits much greater freedom of expression, has unleashed a violent anti-Jewish element in Soviet society.

A few more examples:

"Kikes! Fozh! the list of all Moscow's kikes is completed. We have tolerated you for a long time but we do not want to see your ugly kike mugs any longer. Get out! Consider this your first warning. Beware! Your lives and the lives of your cars (stolen children) are in danger."

That's an excerpt from a leaflet distributed in Moscow by the "Union of Liberation of Russia from Kikes." It was brought out by a Soviet emigre who arrived in the United States last month.

"Clap off the tentacles of the Zionist octopus" was the headline on a recent article in the Soviet monthly *"Molodaya gvardiya."* Hardly a fringe publication, it's put out by Komsomol, the Soviet Communist Party youth organization.

"Jews and their relations should be forbidden to submit theses, to acquire academic degrees and knowledge. Join the Soviet Communist Party, to be elected to the soviet (government councils), and to be named to leading positions in the party, the state and elsewhere." So declared an underground pamphlet published by Moscow's Energy Institute.



growing. Last year, a total of 71,196 Soviet Jews emigrated to the United States, 12,814 went to Israel. That compares to 1988 figures of only 914 to the U.S., 220 to Israel.

"The demand for visas by Soviet Jews is just skyrocketing as the anti-Semitism level is rising," said Liz Goren, a spokeswoman for the Federation. "They're being threatened by nationalists. They're just dying to get out."

"Overall, the escalation of this kind of message is really getting through to individual Jews," added Judy Miller, chairperson of Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry. "We are seeing the results of the climate, which are really a mass exodus. People who felt themselves relatively comfortable in their society two or three years ago are all feeling this. That's what's so disturbing. No Jew can really feel comfortable in the Soviet Union."

Some Soviet emigrés here confirm that things have gotten worse in many ways in the Soviet Union, even though official anti-Semitism has decreased and emigration restrictions have been relaxed.

Pavel Burysky, who emigrated in 1987 and now works for a local company involved in U.S.-Soviet trade, said "Anti-Semitism, which is a Russian tradition, is now much more apparent than it was under the repressive regimes of former Soviet leaders. It used to be like that all the time in history, but now you can see it more."

Wladimir Silverstovs, who emigrated here in 1979 but was able to bring his mother over from Leningrad only last year, said "Jews were never welcome in Russia. I clearly remember about that. We are dealing with a history of persecution of Jews that is at least 400 years old. Even the word pogrom comes from the Russian language."

With the economic situation in Russia getting worse, traditionally, it is times like that, all kinds of hate and violence against ethnic minorities come to the surface.

With the pending unification of Germany, much concern has been focused on potential anti-Semitism in that country. Clearly more attention is due to the real anti-Semitism that is a fact of life in the Soviet Union.

Now that Mikhail Gorbachev has broadened the powers of his presidency, he should consider this persistent scourge. Americans who want to encourage closer U.S.-Soviet ties must do so. To ignore the problem suggests that it is tolerable.

John Hamer's column appears Thursday on The Times editorial page.

The leading anti-Semitic group in the Soviet Union is Pamyat (Memory), an aggressive, chauvinistic, Russian nationalist organization. It distributes anti-Semitic literature and holds demonstrations blaming Jews for many of the U.S.S.R.'s problems — including the nuclear accident at Chernobyl.

Encouragingly, last month criminal prosecutors in Moscow announced that they were beginning an investigation of Pamyat for possible violation of the Soviet law against "incitement to hatred and to national and racial conflict."

But it's unclear how hard Soviet authorities will come down on Pamyat. When the group disrupted a meeting of the Russian Writers Union recently, police arrested them inside the building — then released them outside, saying the writers had provoked the confrontation.

Such reports are of great concern to many members of Seattle's Jewish community. The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, an umbrella group of nearly three dozen different community organizations, is working to ensure that Soviet anti-Semitism is not overlooked in the glow of the Goodwill Games, Seattle-Tankers sister-city activities and other Seattle-Soviet contacts.

About 250 Soviet Jews now emigrate to the Seattle area each year, and the numbers are

Hamer, John. "Soviet anti-Semitism tarnishes glasnost." The Seattle Times, April 22, 1984, sec. A

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Soviet Jews lack freedom to worship

IN THIS religious season, as Christians celebrate Easter and Jews observe Passover, people of all faiths who are allowed to worship freely might stop and think about those who do not have such freedom.

As John Hamer's article on "The Refuseniks" in today's Issues section reminds us, Russian Jews who have applied for emigration suffer severe repercussions in the Soviet Union today — including loss of jobs, social sanctions, and even imprisonment.

Soviet Jews comprise the third largest surviving Jewish community in the world, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and are fighting to maintain their religion and culture in the face of oppressive restrictions.

Jews in the Soviet Union are harassed and persecuted. Nearly all synagogues and Jewish schools have been closed. The teaching of Hebrew has been banned, and Jewish publications and religious materials have been destroyed. Anti-Semitic literature is distributed by major publishers, and anti-Jewish articles appear frequently in the press.

Refuseniks often have their mail screened, their telephones bugged, their apartments searched, and their movements watched. Even so, they welcome visits from Americans, believing that attention focused on their plight will help protect their freedom.

The Helsinki Accords, ratified by the Soviet Union in 1975, guarantee the basic human right of any individual to leave any country, including his own. Yet the U.S.S.R. has continuously violated that right. Emigration of Soviet Jews has slowed to a trickle — although as many as 400,000 would like to emigrate, according to some estimates.

All Americans, who sometimes take for granted the freedom to worship as they choose, should do everything possible to help ensure that other people in the world are not punished for seeking the same freedom. For suggestions on what you can do, contact Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry at 622-8211, or the National Conference on Soviet Jewry at (212) 679-8122.

Hamer, John. "Soviet Jews lack freedom to worship." The Seattle Times, April 22, 1984, sec. A

A LIFE-CHANGING VISIT WITH SOVIET JEWS

Almost 35 years ago, I spent several hours with a family of Jewish refuseniks at their apartment in Moscow. That visit changed my life — and, hopefully, some other lives as well.

I went to the Soviet Union on assignment from The Seattle Times to do a Travel section story on "Cross-Country Skiing in the U.S.S.R." The sponsor was the Citizens Exchange Council, whose goal was to promote people-to-people connections between Americans and Russians.

But this was 1984, and the Soviet Union was still a totalitarian state controlled by a hard-core Communist government that subjugated many of its citizens. Ronald Reagan was right to call it an "evil empire."

Our group of skiers was treated fairly well. Still, our Russian guides almost never left our sides. We had been warned that they'd watch us constantly and discourage any meetings with average Russians — especially dissidents or refuseniks.

But as an editorial writer and columnist for The Seattle Times, I was determined to learn more about the Soviet system. One Jewish man in our group arranged a meeting with a refusenik family and asked me to go with him. The story I wrote "The Refuseniks," chronicles that evening with the Margolin family.

Although I was aware of the long history of Russian anti-Semitism, I did not have much personal knowledge about the plight of Soviet Jews. As we talked, I learned how the family had all been persecuted since they first applied to emigrate.

At one point, there was a knock on their door. We all froze, because even in 1984 there was fear that Soviet authorities might punish anyone who met with visiting Americans surreptitiously. The KGB was still powerful. Had we been followed to the apartment, we wondered?

Fortunately, at the door were two friends of the family: Benjamin and Tatiana Bogolmolny. He was known as "the most patient refusenik" in the U.S.S.R. because he had been waiting 17 years to emigrate. He and his wife were especially knowledgeable about Soviet society and how Jews suffered.

Later, when our ski group went to Leningrad, I had another life-changing meeting. I knew a young Russian woman in Seattle who had married a Jewish man several years earlier. They had been allowed to emigrate and moved to the U.S. But after they left, her parents had been punished by Soviet authorities. Her father was fired from his job as a university professor. "If you can't teach your own daughter, you can't be trusted to teach other students," he was told.

When their daughter learned I would be visiting Leningrad, she asked me to take some small gifts to her parents. Since she and her husband could not visit the U.S.S.R., and her parents were not allowed to travel, she thought she would see them again.

On my last night in the Soviet Union, I spent the evening with them. The article I wrote, "A Mission to Leningrad," tells that story. I gave them the gifts: a gold watch for him and a gold necklace for her. They both cried, missing her so much.

When I returned to Seattle, I began thinking of ways to help refuseniks and others suffering from religious or political discrimination. With the help of my friend Judy Balint, I started the "Lifeline Letters" project at The Seattle Times, in which we urged readers to write letters on behalf of those who were imprisoned in the Gulag or elsewhere. The series ran regularly for 3 years.

As far as I know, no other newspaper in the United States ever did anything like the "Lifeline Letters" project. Did we help some prisoners eventually be freed and/or refuseniks be allowed to emigrate? It's hard to know for sure, but several people later told us that letters were essential to letting the Soviet authorities know that people outside of the U.S.S.R. knew and cared. That was, in the end, my hope.

CROSS-COUNTRY JOURNEY

Skiing into the heart of Russia

John Hamer/Times Editorial Writer



LAST month, I was starting out on a VDT when the Times' assistant managing editor for news walked up to me and asked, "How would you like to go to Russia?"

"Do you want to get rid of me for good, I thought."

"No," he said. "I'm taking you to cross-country ski." (Very clever, I thought: a trans-Siberian assignment from which I'll never return.)

"Uh, sort of," I lied. (I'd do it once, 10 years ago.)

"Are you a good shape?" He looked at me skeptically.

"Sure," I lied. "I've been jumping rope almost every day for five years." (That'll fit them, I smirked: They'll never send a fanny rope-dancer to Russia. I'd probably get arrested and create an international incident.)

"Great," he smiled. "The Travel editor and I are looking for someone to go on a cross-country ski trip to the Soviet Union, take pictures, and write travel stories. Think it over and let us know what you decide."

So that wasn't a pit of a joke, after all; they were serious. I thought I'd over-carefully for a good 3 1/2 months.

"March 18," he replied.

"Be sure to bring four weeks away. How can I get ready for a cross-country ski trip to Russia in such a short time?"

How indeed? I've been reading lots of books

and articles, talking to people who've been there before, and taking a crash course (sometimes free!) in cross-country skiing. People keep asking me if I'm ready. Frankly, I'm not sure.

Is anyone ever "ready" for a first-time visit to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? To most Americans, the U.S.S.R. is not just another playing ground, wearing our flags and banners, waiting to come out on top, trying to prove we're "better" than they are.

That seems a simplistic analogy. But let's be realistic: How many of us don't have an occasional burst of tribal animosity, "us versus them" thinking about the Russians?

As Thomas Powers writes in a perceptive article about the U.S.-Soviet arms race ("What Is It About?," The Atlantic Monthly, January 1984): "The problem at its heart is an elemental one: It is not nations that make us draw lines in the earth and grince when anyone approaches in strange garb."

But this is serious business, with high stakes. America and the Soviet Union are armed with enough nuclear weapons to wipe each other off the face of the earth — if not to wipe the face of the earth off the face of the earth. We seem caught in a permanent web of tension, antagonism and fear that we can't break out of.

After all, the Russians are those nasty guys walked out of the arms-control talks, invaded Afghanistan, keep the Eastern European countries under their thumb, won't let Jews emigrate, and keep thousands of dissidents in prison in the Gulag.

Oh, sure, we also have some romantic notions about the Russian countryside being harsh yet beautiful ("Dr. Zhivago," "Baba" and the Russian people being good at heart

when they open up over a bottle of vodka. But how much do we really know about the people we could end up fighting World War III against? When you come right down to it, for most of us the answer is: not much.

Is it possible, even on a three-week trip to the Soviet Union, to meet Russians face to face, to talk, make friends, and break down those kind of myth-laden monoliths. It's a vast, somewhat frightening, little-understood plain where we don't like and whose people we don't trust.

We're not unlike cross-town rival high schools that compete against each other year after year. We're usually polite, but there's a definite coolness in all our encounters. We're always playing games, wearing our flags and banners, waiting to come out on top, trying to prove we're "better" than they are.

Soviet authorities raise many obstacles to normal, easy, open contacts between Russians and foreigners," wrote Hendrick Smith in his 1978 bestseller, "The Russians," widely regarded as the best recent general book about the U.S.S.R. "Those who travel to Russia for brief visits are usually escorted about in delegations and tour groups to official meetings or tourist sites, and are kept occupied with group activities from morning to night."

Some local experts said much the same thing. "People are very hesitant to talk to reporters, especially," warned Willis Knoske, a professor of Russian at the University of Washington who visits the Soviet Union regularly. "They're afraid of repercussions. If you do write about anyone, be sure to change their names to protect them."

My trip is sponsored by the Citizen Exchange Council, a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, New York-based organization that has been promoting "person to person" meetings between Americans and Russians for almost 30 years. The council organizes trips around various hobbies or occupations, and tries to bring together Americans and Russians who share similar interests.

I'm hoping we'll be able to ski off into the countryside and get to know some fellow Russian skiers, have lunch with them, perhaps even be invited to their homes. If you have any questions you'd like me to ask a Russian — about the arms race, day-to-day life, skiing, or anything — call me at the office (464-2222), or hurry, because my legs are itched.

Hamer, John. "Skiing into the Heart of Russia." The Seattle Times, March 15, 1984, sec. A

A Footnote: Five years later, after Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet premier, my Russian friend's parents were finally allowed to come visit their daughter and son-in-law in Seattle. They met their granddaughter for the first time. The world had indeed finally changed for the better.

Another Footnote: As for the Margolin family, I do not know what became of them. But on a visit to Israel in 2013, I met again with Benjamin Bogolmolny, who had finally been allowed to emigrate and lived in Jerusalem. The most patient refusenik was free at last.

John Hamer, a retired journalist, has been a member of the SJCC since the year 2000. He lives on East Mercer Way and works out regularly at the J.

Issues

RUSSIAN NOTEBOOK — PART 1

MISSION ENIGMA

Worlds apart, daughter, parents reunited by visitor

John Hamer visited the Soviet Union recently on a tour sponsored by the Citizen Exchange Council, a private, non-profit, non-partisan New York organization that encourages people-to-people contact. The Times paid all of his expenses.

John Hamer
Times Issues Editor

LENINGRAD — The taxi drops you off in the cold, grey twilight mist and pulls away, leaving you alone on the dirty, snow-en-crusted sidewalk.

You're standing in front of a brownish stone building that looks like dozens of others on the same block. You've come halfway around the world to find this place.

You're on a seemingly simple mission: delivering small gifts and words of love from a daughter who emigrated to the United States to her Russian parents — whom she'll never be permitted to see again.

Somehow, after more than two weeks in the Soviet Union — seeing the longing of many people for more contact with the West, sensing the cruelty of a government that won't let its citizens leave, even to be reunited with their families — this visit has become terribly important to you. It has come to represent something vital and basic about friendship, humanity and love.

Lacking a phone number, you couldn't call ahead. Incredibly, it's almost impossible to find a telephone book in the Soviet Union, and there's no directory assistance. You simply handed the taxi driver an address scrawled in Russian on a slip of paper. You pray he's brought you to the right place, and that somebody's home.

It's your last evening in Leningrad, your last night in the Soviet Union. You don't want to fail.

Just down the street, a man in a dark coat and black fur hat stops walking and eyes you suspiciously. You feel the same surge of paranoia that has plagued you so often during your visit to the Soviet Union (and has sometimes proved justified). But this time you attribute it to your Western clothes and camera. London Fog trenchcoats and Nikons still can draw stares even in sophisticated Leningrad.

You pull the tarnished brass handle on one of the tall wooden double doors that opens onto a dark, narrow stairwell. There's no lobby, just a filthy foyer, pockmarked concrete steps, a shabby wooden banister and a bare lightbulb on every other floor. Once again you're struck by the lack of cleanliness, the inadequate lighting, the indifference to repair that seem to characterize most Russian buildings you've seen.

Passing a man struggling down stairs with two toddlers and a baby stroller, you climb four stories to the top floor. But the apartment number you're seeking isn't there. Heart sinking with disappointment, you return to the sidewalk and search the buildings on either side for the right number. No luck.

Then you notice the narrow arch over a driveway, barely wide enough for a car to squeeze through, that leads to what appears to be a courtyard in the middle of the block. You walk through the dark passage and see another building, directly behind the one you've just left.

A thin strip of dark blue metal alongside the door, barely readable in the fading evening light, lists apartments in white numbers. Yes, it's there.

Flashed with excitement, you sprint up the dingy stairs to the top floor. You knock. There's a long pause. You put your ear to the door and hear the faint sound of a TV or radio.

Suddenly, there's a voice behind the door. You speak a name, and the door opens. A handsome, dark-haired, middle-aged man in a green sports shirt and purple pajama bottoms grin broadly at you and thrusts out his hand. Yes, it's there.



A woman in Seattle, who cannot be identified for fear of further reprisals against her family in Leningrad, looks at a book that John Hamer delivered from her parents, whom she may never be allowed to see again.

cern — a message from their daughter got through. But they clearly didn't know when or how or whether you'd actually come.

You quickly learn that their English is as limited as your Russian. Fortunately, you've brought a Berlitz Russian phrase book and a Russian-English dictionary — which prove indispensable. It is an evening of broken English, fractured Russian, pointing at words in dictionaries and much energetic gesturing. But the emotion is so strong that somehow you communicate effectively.

In their small living room, you're given what is obviously his favorite, most comfortable chair. A TV set is blaring a program about the Soviet-Indian space mission. The volume is turned down, but not off — and you can't help wondering if it's to hide the noise of your conversation from neighbors.

Not that you talk of government, politics or dissent. Rather, your conversation revolves around a daughter's new life in America, and two proud parents' love and longing. They miss her enormously, it's clear.

When the daughter and her husband, then in their early 20s, decided to emigrate to the United States several years ago, seeking more opportunity and a freer life, every thing went smoothly. The young couple's emigration application was approved with little difficulty.

But as soon as they had left the Soviet Union, her father was fired from his job as a respected university professor. He was told, "If you can't teach your own daughter correctly, how can you teach other students?"

He suffered other repercussions and loss of privileges as well. He now works as a "technician," he says — which you suspect means "mechanic." He'll never teach again.

Hearing a complete change of government in the Soviet Union, your daughter never will be allowed to visit them in Russia — and they never will be allowed to visit her in the United States.

Shortly, your host offers you a small glass of delicious, dark-orange liquor flavored with "hainain grass," or so the dictionary says. He pours from a bottle that's almost empty, giving you by far the largest share. Your hostess serves three green apples in a small plate.

for her. You wore them through Soviet customs as if they were your own, and took the risk of not listing them on your customs declaration so you could leave them in Russia.

The watch fits her perfectly; he seems very pleased. She fastens the chain around her neck, finds the word for "gold-plated" in the phrase book and looks at you with questioning eyes. No, you shake your head, and point to the word for "gold." She sighs with a mixture of amusement and maternal pride.

From another room, she brings gifts for you to take to their daughter — a bolt of silk cloth, a book on Russian — and wraps them carefully in butcher paper tied with nylon string. Yes, you nod, you'll make sure they're delivered safely.

Soon you're looking at old photographs of the little Russian girl their daughter used to be, smiling and giggling for the camera. The snapshots are torn, yellowed, handworn. A few recent ones, sent from America, are shown off with a special reverence.

"You will come to America someday?" you ask, already knowing the answer.

They smile sadly and shake their heads. "Probl.EMS," he says, accenting the second syllable of the word.

"You've given a brief tour of the apartment — a small kitchen with a gas stove, a tiny bathroom, a neat study with a large bookcase. In a well-lit bedroom with rose-colored, hot-rod wallpaper, there's a wood-framed double bed and a matching vanity.

On the vanity sits a large photograph of the daughter who is so far away. As the mother holds it up proudly, the photo slips halfway out of its frame. She catches it and tenderly replaces it.

Later, you ask if you can take some photographs to show their daughter. "Mon.ENT," they say, disappearing into the bedroom. In a few minutes he returns, wearing his best dark blue suit, white shirt and necktie. A little while later, she emerges in a bright, black cocktail dress and matching jacket, and begins to primp in front of the hall mirror.

Again suspecting that you know the answer, you ask if you could publish their photographs in your newspaper. At first, they don't seem to understand. "Gazeta" (newspaper), you say, while pointing to the camera.

Then he understands. Again the word "Ah, yes," he shakes his head. "Probl.EMS," he adds.

Then, too soon, it is time to go. You'd planned to take it taxi back to your hotel, but he puts on his hat and coat before you do. He insists on taking you back by bus — whether because there are few taxis at that hour (just midnight), whether to save you money, or simply because he just wants to make sure you get back safely, you're not sure.

You board a bus and ride — mostly in silence without your dictionaries in front of you — until the lights of your hotel — the "Pribludskaya" (Near the Baltic) are visible a few blocks off the bus route.

You're churning with thoughts of a daughter in Seattle who is free, a father in Leningrad who is not — and the enormous gulf of time, distance and politics between them.

For a brief time, in a small way, you've helped bridge that chasm. So why do you feel so frustrated, helpless and angry?

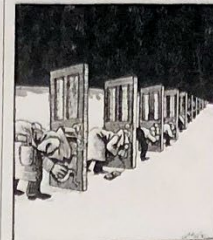
Between a father and mother and their daughter, an occasional secretary is not nearly enough. But it's all they've got, maybe all they'll ever have.

You're at the door of your hotel. You shake hands, back into each other's eyes, hesitant to part.

"Spasibo," you say, in his language. "Thank you," he repeats, in yours. "Good-bye," he echoes.

SCIENTIFIC SPIES

PEEPING TOMS



Penny-pinching by U.S. gives others the edge

Daniel S. Greenberg
Words by Wire

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Reagan administration's hardliners complain that our scientific research is open to foreign peeping toms, while we derive little benefit from laboratory work in other countries.

Are they correct? To a large extent, yes. Yet, contrary to what the Pentagon suggests, the imbalance isn't caused by wily foreign exploitation of naive American generosity. The problem rises instead mainly from our obsolete notions about the preeminence of American science, along with foolish penny-pinching by the U.S. government.

There's plenty of evidence for that diagnosis, including some eye-opening congressional testimony recently by scientists from universities, government and industry.

The gist of that testimony was plain and consistent: After long years of postwar scientific leadership, the American scientific community has become so inward-looking that it often ignores easily available opportunities for keeping abreast of foreign research — but even those opportunities have been shrinking.

The reason is that the administration, in yet another of its penny-worshipping budget restrictions, has cut by two-thirds the modest \$200M that the federal government spends annually to collect and translate the scientific papers resulting from billions of dollars worth of foreign research.

Our ignorance of Japanese science doesn't come from the policies of that country, the House Science and Technology Committee was told by D. Eleanor Westney, She's acting director of a Massachusetts Institute of Technology exchange program with Japan that places American scientists and engineers in temporary posts in Japanese laboratories.

To try to red any lingering suspicions that part of the problem lies with Japanese "secretiveness," she testified, "I should say that we have more offers from Japanese companies to accommodate qualified individuals than we have qualified candidates."

Though Japan is now our leading industrial competitor and the world's third-largest scientific power, U.S. corporations have far fewer people who can function as technology scanners in Japan than Japanese corporations have in this country," she said. Noting that Japanese corporations regularly send staff members to MIT to obtain advanced degrees, she asked, "How many U.S. corporations are willing to send their people to a Japanese university, even for a summer?" Few indeed, it appears.

The National Technical Information Service (NTIS), the government agency responsible for collecting and translating important foreign scientific literature, has become a paragon of economicness, but at the cost of collection and translation. Four years ago, following studies that pinpointed our neglect of foreign literature, the NTIS was budgeted \$70,000 to correct this. The Reagan administration has since cut that to \$20,000 a year, with a program that's intended to be self-sustaining from sales. The service has budgeted about \$2,000 for keeping in touch with Japan's \$26-billion-a-year research-and-development enterprise. The folly of that neglect is so apparent that a one-year \$500,000 government study is underway this year to examine better ways of monitoring Japanese research.

The problem, however, runs deeper than scanty collection and translation. David B. Shoyko, the acting director of the NTIS office of International Affairs, told the House committee that American scientists and engineers show little interest in the translated Japanese literature that is available. Sales average about 12 copies per document.

There was no harm in American neglect of foreign science to our industrial competitiveness in the first half of this century, but many years have passed since they took their place in the mainstream of modern science. Now Western Europe and Japan have rebuilt to the point where their laboratories produce well over half of the world's scientific output.

It's easy to put on a crybaby routine about imbalances in the flow of valuable scientific knowledge. But it would be far more useful to recognize the problem in its large part of our own making, and then do something about it.

Daniel S. Greenberg is the editor of Science & Government Report, an independent Washington, D.C.-based newsletter.

Issues

RUSSIAN NOTEBOOK — PART 2

THE REFUSEES

Efforts to emigrate brand them as the 'untouchables' of Soviet society

John Hamer visited the Soviet Union recently on a tour sponsored by the Citizen Exchange Council, a private, non-profit, non-partisan New York organization that encourages people-to-people contact between U.S. and Soviet citizens. The Times paid all of his expenses.

John Hamer
Times Issues Editor

MOSCOW — "Meet me by the first car at the last stop of the Moscow subway at 7:30 p.m.," he'd said on the telephone. He offered no description of himself. "I'll recognize you," he insisted. There were two of us, Americans in the Soviet Union for the first time, eager to meet some "refuseniks" — Russian Jews who want to emigrate from the U.S.S.R. to Israel or the United States but have been refused permission to leave by the Soviet government.

We arrived a few minutes early and stood self-consciously on the subway platform, uncertain if the "first car" was the one that had led the train out of the city or the one at the opposite end that would lead the train to its return.

But before long, a bearded, dark-eyed young man wearing a black fur hat, a bright red scarf, a leather jacket and blue jeans suddenly stepped up beside us. He grinned, nodded, and started walking up the steps toward the exit. We followed hurriedly, trying to hide our excitement and act inconspicuously. We both felt a bit foolish about the check-and-dagger nature of our rendezvous, but we didn't want to do anything to compromise our contact's security.

As we walked up the steps, the young man said in excellent English, "We'll go to my brother's apartment. It's not far from here. We can talk there."

We walked several blocks through the cold Moscow night, speaking in hushed voices, falling silent when someone passed us on the sidewalk.

His name was Grigori Margolin, he said, but we should call him "Grisha."

At a several-story apartment building on a dark, narrow street, we entered a dirty living and got on one of the tiny elevators that seem ubiquitous in Moscow. Three of us fit comfortably, four would have been tight, five impossible in a plastic lighting panel on the ceiling was a rare example of Russian graffiti: a red heart with an arrow through it and the words (in English), "Love is all you need."

The apartment door opened and we were welcomed into a flood of light and friendly greetings in the entry hall. There was Grisha's brother, Alexei, their mother, Olga, and Alexei's wife, Nara. The young couple's baby boy, Devon, whose picture we were proudly shown, was asleep in the other room. (Grisha's wife, Polina, was at home with their baby, Alice.)

It was clear that our visit with this family was a big event — any contact with America, with the West, with free people, was very important to them. They all spoke good English, and obviously were very happy to have company from the United States.

17 YEARS OF 'NYET'

AT one point in our evening with the refusenik family, the doorbell rang. Everyone in the room suddenly tensed. I watched their faces carefully, not knowing what to expect, but prepared for the worst. Nara rose and went to the entryway, shutting the door to the living room behind her. "It's our mother visiting," said Olga. "When the bell rings, we are frightened." She was smiling, but her eyes betrayed her tension. She remembered the Stalin years, when a knock on the door in the night often meant death or exile to Siberia. But as voices from the hall were heard, everyone relaxed. It was Benji and Tanya, another refusenik couple whom my colleague had met the night before. They had said they might join us later that evening, and they had come as promised.

Benjamin "Benji" Bogomolny, 38 — Benji is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "most patient refusenik" in the Soviet Union. He applied for emigration in 1968, and has been turned down every year since. He recently threw a party to observe the 17th anniversary of his first application. Dozens of his friends and well-wishers from the United States and other countries sent telegrams — but only one arrived. "Mail is a great problem," said Benji. "Most of it



The refusenik family in their Moscow apartment. Back row: Olga Levenson, Grigori Margolin, Alexei Margolin. Middle row: Devon Margolin, Alice Trilesnik. Front row: Polina Trilesnik, Naraine Gulistan.

'HELP ME.'

The following statement was written by Alexey Margolin in his apartment in Moscow on March 23, 1984, and given to two American visitors.

My name is Alexey Margolin. I was born Jan. 2, 1953. In 1975 I graduated from the chemistry department of the university. Since 1975 up to now I have been working at the A.N. Belozersky Laboratory of Molecular Biology and Biorganic Chemistry at Moscow State University. In 1979 I defended my thesis and became a Ph.D. I am a specialist in the field of enzyme kinetics, enzyme and cell immobilization. I am author of more than 20 articles, some of them published in such journals as Biophysical Acta, Biotechnological Engineering, and Enzyme Microbial Technology.

In July 1982 my family applied for emigration to Israel. In April 1983 we received a refusal to emigrate.

Nowadays, there is trouble with my work. My director, Vladimir P. Skulichev, has forbidden me to do any scientific work and to publish anything. They say that they will fire me in some weeks.

I only ask one thing: Give me the possibility to do scientific work and to publish the articles. Please contact my director, Help me.

ADDRESS: Vladimir P. Skulichev, Director Department of Biokinetics, A.N. Belozersky Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Moscow State University, Moscow 117234, U.S.S.R.

I asked if I could take notes, mentioning that I worked for a newspaper and might want to write a story about them. "Fine," Grisha grinned. "But please identify us as Jews, not as Russians. We are all Russians, it's true, but there's a big difference." Like most refuseniks, they said, they want all the publicity and exposure in the Western media they can get. It helps provide a form of protection for them — the more that people in the West know about their plight, the less likely they'll suffer repercussions from the Soviet authorities, they believe. Although we'd already eaten a light



Benji and Tanya Bogomolny

dinner, they soon served us another meal — and it was obvious that we'd be disappointing them greatly if we didn't. We were served a large, deep-dish cabbage pie, baked fish covered with onions and spices, salad greens mixed with sour cream, thick slices of dark bread, a plate of sliced cheese and salami, and a bottle of what they described as "the best Armenian cognac." As we talked, we gradually got to know a little bit about each member of this brave, hopeful family, although the two sons did most of the talking. To supplement his income, "We live on blue jeans," he said. Like other refuseniks, he has written dozens of letters to Soviet officials appealing for approval of his application. When he wrote to Brezhnev and Andropov, he included a copy of the Guinness Book of World Records item about him. The letter to Brezhnev was answered — negatively. The letter to Andropov wasn't answered at all. He hasn't written to Chernenko yet. We asked the refuseniks how they felt about Ronald Reagan. They were unanimous in their support of the Reagan administration. "I was in flower. I even so, they said, they much prefer the strong and decisive Reagan to the weak and vacillating Carter. They believe that Soviet Jews are being used as pawns in a kind of international political chess game, in which the Soviet government is trying to win concessions from the United States. The United States should continue to show a firm hand, they insisted. "They respect Reagan in the Politburo," Benji said. "They respect strength."

Tatiana "Tanya" Bogomolny, late 30s — Tanya is a literate, well-read woman who speaks fluent English. A former tourist guide, she is now unemployed. All tourist guides, she said, are instructed to try to keep American tourists from meeting average Soviet citizens. They are also told to find out what our group members do with their free time, and to write reports on their activities. Tanya told us how we could learn something about our group's guide. "At the end of your trip, give her a large gift of considerable value. If she accepts it, that means she is a member of the KGB, and immune from criticism or punishment. If she doesn't accept it, then she's not." Tanya later asked if our guide had traveled abroad. Yes, we said: to Paris and London. "Then she related and said she would accept them. But by the time we got to the Leningrad railway station where she would put us on the train to Helsinki, she'd changed her mind again. In the end, she didn't accept them." Tanya peppered us with questions about current American authors and novels. We were embarrassed that she had read more contemporary American fiction and poetry than we had — even though most of these books had to be smuggled in by visitors. Few Western news magazines are available to average Soviet citizens, either, she said. Some scientific and technical magazines, such as Science and Nature, are available — but heavily censored. As for newspapers, Tanya said that Soviet libraries often have a list of American newspapers that they supposedly carry — but access is severely restricted. A friend of Tanya's went to a Moscow library and asked to see The Boston Globe, which was on a list of available publications. "Why do you want to see it?" the librarian asked. "For my own purposes," my friend replied. "I'll ask my supervisor," the librarian said. "Please give me your name and address." The woman decided not to take the risk and left. "These who dare to say, 'We don't want this paradise,' are the bravest children," Tanya said. "But they suffer for it."

Like her husband, she is a trained biochemist, but lost her job after she applied to emigrate. A quiet woman, she now spends her days at home with their year-old son. When people ask her why she wants to emigrate, Nara said, "I tell them that my husband wants to." The family began to laugh again. Olga said, "And I tell them that my sons want to." Alex and Grisha chimed in: "And we tell them that our mother wants to."

Olga (Margolin) Levenson, mid-50s — Olga works as an autopsy specialist in a hospital. She is one of only three trained doctors out of 14 staff members, and knows the job well — that's why she hasn't been fired, she said.

"Many of my coworkers are sympathetic to my situation," she said. "They know my sons want to leave, and that I just want to go with them."

Olga and her family have written dozens of letters to many Soviet officials and agencies asking that their application be approved. "We write and we write and we write," said Olga — to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Committee for Soviet Women, the International Committee for Peace and Prevention of Nuclear War, many others.

All those letters, they get only one response: from vice president of the "Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet People" — to whom they hadn't even written.

"Dear Comrade: We are advising you that the decision about your emigration is out of our jurisdiction," the letter said.

Grigori "Grisha" Margolin, 26 — He quit his job as a teacher before he applied for emigration, for fear that his colleagues would suffer repercussions. At one school, he said, a single teacher applied and the entire department was fired. Emigration applicants, he explained, cannot hold "ideological" jobs such as teaching, because their actions are considered "amoral" behavior which is unfit for the Soviet state.

In the past four years, Grisha has worked as an insurance agent and as an aide in a children's psychiatric hospital. The day of our visit, he had begun a new job as personal secretary to a scientist.

He has two jobs because of his application, and most tentatively "work the system" to remain employed.

"If I am without a job for more than three months, it is very dangerous for me," he said. "I can be thrown in jail."

Grisha said, "When they speak of the creation of a 'new Soviet man,' they really mean it. But it's a terrible new man. His behavior is marked by horror."

"There's an old criminal's saying, used in prisons — 'May you die today, and I tomorrow' — that sums up people's behavior here."

"It is a special Soviet behavior. You drink vodka and tell stories about the government with friends one night — and the next day they cheer our leaders at rallies. It's very dangerous and it's very debilitating for the human person."

AT that point in the conversation, I looked at Grisha's mother, Olga. She had tears in her eyes. She looked at me and uttered three words: "Run, rabbit, run."

Later, as we were about to leave, I asked Alex and Nara where they would go in Israel or the United States if they finally were allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

"We don't know," they said, adding as one voice: "We go from, not where." It's another refusenik credo, we were told: They go from, not where.

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STORY

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All words by John Hamer:

Almost 35 years ago, I spent several hours with a family of Jewish refuseniks at their apartment in Moscow. That visit changed my life—and, hopefully, some other lives as well.

I went to the Soviet Union on assignment from The Seattle Times to do a Travel section story on “Cross-Country Skiing in the U.S.S.R.” The sponsor was the Citizens Exchange Council, whose goal was to promote people-to-people connections between Americans and Russians.

But this was 1984, and the Soviet Union was still a totalitarian state controlled by a hard-core Communist government that subjugated many of its citizens. Ronald Reagan was right to call it an “evil empire.”

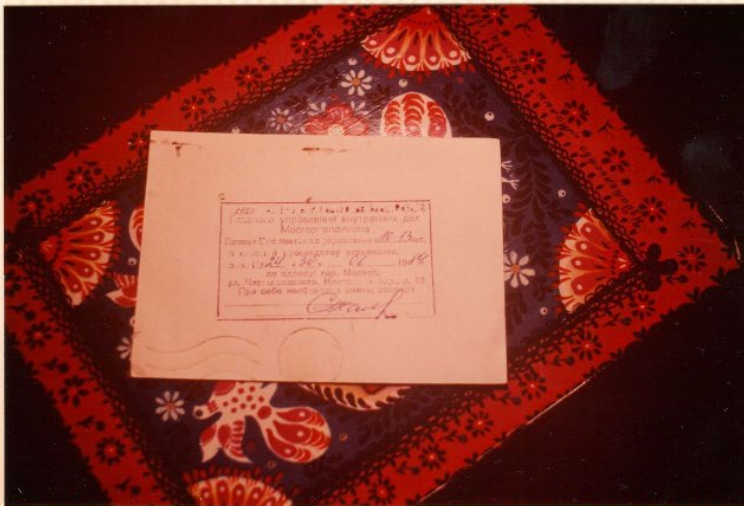
Our group of skiers was treated fairly well. Still, our Russian guides almost never left our sides. We had been warned that they’d watch us constantly and discourage any meetings with average Russians—especially dissidents or Refuseniks.

Scan from Hamer's scrapbook, showing the dinner with the Margolin family



The Refuseniks
in their Moscow
apartment after
dinner, drinking
"the best" cognac
from Armenia

Nara Gulstian
(Alexei's wife),
Grigori "Grisha"
Margolin,
Olga Levenson
(their mother),
Alexei Margolin



Summons from
the KGB
for Grisha
to appear at
Lubianka Prison
for interrogation

But as an editorial writer and columnist for The Seattle Times, I was determined to learn more about the Soviet system. One Jewish man in our group arranged a meeting with a refusenik family and asked me to go with him. The story I wrote “The Refuseniks,” chronicles that evening with the Margolin family.

Although I was aware of the long history of Russian anti-Semitism, I did not have much personal knowledge about the plight of Soviet Jews. As we talked, I learned how the family had all been persecuted since they first applied to emigrate.

At one point, there was a knock on their door. We all froze, because even in 1984 there was fear that Soviet authorities might punish anyone who met with visiting Americans surreptitiously. The KGB was still powerful. Had we been followed to the apartment, we wondered?

Fortunately, at the door were two friends of the family: Benjamin and Tatiana Bogolmolny. He was known as “the most patient refusenik” in the U.S.S.R. because he had been waiting 17 years to emigrate. He and his wife were especially knowledgeable about Soviet society and how Jews suffered

Scan from Hamer's scrapbook showing Benjamin and Tanya



Benjamin "Benji" & Tanya Bogolmolny



Benji is in Guinness Book of World Records as "Most Patient Refusenik in U.S.S.R." He applied to emigrate in 1966.

Issues

LIFELINE LETTERS

THE Times' Lifeline Letters project began during Easter and Passover season a year ago. Its purpose is to encourage readers to write to those in the U.S.S.R. who are being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Hundreds of Times readers have been writing letters, either as individuals or as members of a church or synagogue. The Soviet Christians and Jews whose names and addresses we publish all believe that letters from the West will help alleviate their plight. On the second Sunday of each month, The Times will publish information about another prisoner or refusenik. Because Soviet mail censorship, relatively few letters are answered, we ask that anyone who receives a reply send us a copy so we may share it with readers. (For copies of the original Lifeline Letters pages, call 464-3223.)



Keep writing if there's no reply

David Ziomek/Special to The Times

"WE NEVER thought that anyone would care about us! These are the unforgettable words of a young Christian woman named Zoya whom I met in the Soviet Union a few years ago. With tears in her eyes, she described what it was like to receive an unexpected letter of encouragement from a fellow believer in the United States.

"The emotion created by her words is still fresh in my mind today. This is an outstanding example of the great moral support that a single letter from the West can bring to a beleaguered believer in the U.S.S.R.

"A member of an unregistered Pentecostal community, Zoya is one of an estimated 30,000 Soviet Pentecostals who have unsuccessfully sought to emigrate to find freedom to practice their faith. Leaders of this movement have been sentenced to labor camps and committed to psychiatric hospitals. Although probably no more than 10 percent of Soviet Pentecostals are involved in this campaign, it is still surprising how few Christians in the U.S. are aware of their struggle.

"A Christian couple in Virginia, after learning about the plight of Soviet Pentecostals, began to write and pray for Zoya and her family. After sending three letters to the Soviet Union and receiving no reply, the couple gave up and stopped writing.

"But of the three letters sent from Virginia to Northern Russia, the last one reached its destination. Zoya excitedly told me how she shared the letter with her small Christian community. An entire congregation of believers learned that they were not alone in their time of need.

"Till this brother and sister to continue writing," was the message I was told to bring back home. "Ask them to send me a picture of themselves, if they can," Zoya beamed. "And let them know that it is more difficult for us to send letters out to them."

"I trust that this anecdote will encourage everyone who has participated in The Seattle Times' Lifeline Letters project. Perhaps you haven't received a response from the prisoner you wrote to — at least not yet.

"As The Times celebrates the first anniversary of the Lifeline project, it seems appropriate to recall three basic reasons why sending letters to the U.S.S.R. can indeed help those being persecuted for their faith:

- Letters and cards are a source of tremendous encouragement to both prisoners and their families. Although Nijde Sadunite, a Lithuanian Catholic, never received even one of the more than 300 letters sent to her at the labor camp where she was interned, she was informed that they had arrived, which boosted her morale.
- Letters from the West can bring about improvement in the condition of prisoners and their families. Galina Vichanskaya, a Baptist who served two sentences, said the reason she walked out of camp alive was that letters had stayed the hand of the authorities.
- Viktor Davidov, an emigre who spent several years in Soviet psychiatric hospitals, has emphasized that to prisoners of conscience who are held in enforced psychiatric confinement can help win an earlier release date.
- No one is more aware of the value of publicity than Soviet believers themselves. Father Glib Yakimin, a Russian Orthodox priest imprisoned for his human rights activities, has pointed out that publicity about the persecution of the church is the only way to help alleviate it.

"Why then has there been so little public support from the Church in the West?" Among other things, what is needed in the Christian community is more patience and persistence.

"The Soviet government is keenly aware of any lack of follow-through on human rights issues. Iosif Terlyba, the imprisoned leader in the campaign for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, once reported what a KGB official told him: "We will destroy you one by one; in the West they'll make a little noise and that will be the end of it."

"David Ziomek is executive secretary of Keston College, U.S.A., the Society for the Study of Religion under Communism."

Religious prisoners 1 year later: Where, and how, are they now?

Christian prisoners and detainees

Circumstances: Poresh was released unexpectedly in late February after being transferred to a labor camp in Siberia north of the Mongolian and Chinese borders.

ADDRESS: 194223 Leningrad, pr. Morisa Torosa 33/55



Vladimir Poresh

Circumstances: In 1985, Ogorodnikov was due to end a six-year sentence in a strict-regime labor camp and begin five years of internal exile. But he was rearrested for "violation of camp discipline" and sentenced to two more years in camp.

CAMP ADDRESS: 618801 Permakaya obl. Chuvovaloi raion st. Polovinka uchr. VS-389/37 RFSFR, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Ogorodnikov

Circumstances: Completed his two-year sentence and was released in early May.

HOME ADDRESS: pr. Erustuzoi 23/3/258 Leningrad, U.S.S.R.



Sergei Timokhin

Circumstances: Sentenced in 1984 to 2 1/2 years in a labor camp. Barinov has conducted several hunger strikes. Last June he was placed in the camp's punishment cell, where he became extremely ill with acute abdominal pains and eczema over his entire body.

CAMP ADDRESS: uchr. OS-34/27-4 pos. Nizhni Domnik g. Ukha 168418 Komi ASSR, U.S.S.R.



Valeri Barinov

Circumstances: Still serving two-year sentence in strict-regime labor camp. His health is stable after two major heart attacks. His wife, also imprisoned, is in poor health and has been termed disabled.

CAMP ADDRESS: 618810 Parnskaya oblast. Chuvovaloi raion, st. Vasyevskaya uchr. VS-389/35 U.S.S.R.



Vasili Barata

Circumstances: Riga was sentenced in 1984 to indefinite detention in a psychiatric hospital, and is now being held in the Amur region of Siberia.

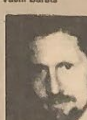
HOME ADDRESS: 675007 Amurskaya oblast, g. Blagovishchensk, pr. Seryanevsky 55, uchr. U2-2/1 SPS, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Riga

Circumstances: After serving almost half of a three-year sentence, Edelshtein suffered a severe leg fracture from a fall. His injury requires surgery and may cause permanent disability.

PRISON ADDRESS: Pervy Otyrad Pos. Vozvosto OY-94/4 Kipanski Rayon Bul'yatinskaya ASSR 67111, U.S.S.R.



Yuli Edelshtein

Circumstances: Released from a Tallinn prison in February, Kholmansky is back with his family in Moscow, but there is no indication of when they will receive an "out."

HOME ADDRESS: Generala Belova St. 33 Korp. 11, Apt. 58 Moscow 115563, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Kholmansky

Circumstances: Zurnshein, who suffers from hepatitis, is in a prison camp near Irkutsk. When his wife, Tanya, traveled there last fall from her home in Riga for one of two annual visits she is allowed, their reunion was interrupted after 10 minutes.

PRISON ADDRESS: Institution UK-27-40, Boori Ekrib-Bulgatski district Irkutsk region, U.S.S.R.



Zachar Zurnshein

Circumstances: No change in his family's refusenik status. His wife was hospitalized last fall for severe parotitis problems.

NEW ADDRESS: Cherkizovskaya Bolskaya 1/2 kv. 50, Moscow 107061, RFSFR, U.S.S.R.



Viktor Braliovsky

Circumstances: No change in his family's refusenik status. His wife was hospitalized last fall for severe parotitis problems.

NEW ADDRESS: Cherkizovskaya Bolskaya 1/2 kv. 50, Moscow 107061, RFSFR, U.S.S.R.



Viktor Yelistratov

Circumstances: Received permission to leave the U.S.S.R. in February, and emigrated to New York with his wife and children.

HOME ADDRESS: pr. Verudskoy 99, Korp. 1, Apt. 128 Moscow 117526, U.S.S.R.



Yakov Mesh

Despite risk, believers persist

Alan Mittelman/Special to The Times

SOVIET Jews and Christians need our help. Despite almost 70 years of Soviet rule, their deep religiosity has not been crushed.

Although the Soviet state, since its inception, has had a track record of hostility, coercion — and, in some cases, outright persecution — of religious communities, religious life continues.

Religion endures within the cramped confines of officially sanctioned churches. It endures in illegal churches, prayer and study groups underground, where adherents face arrest, imprisonment, exile or banishment. Religion endures in the hearts of many Soviet citizens, including the younger generations, who are afraid to risk second-class status as society by open participation.

Although the Soviet constitution guarantees the rights of religious believers, those who speak out for a bona fide opportunity to practice their rights often face severe treatment. Hundreds of Jews and Christians languish today in Soviet prisons, labor camps and psychiatric institutions. Soviet policy against religious activists — in flagrant defiance of their own constitution and of international agreements such as the Helsinki accords — cuts across ethnic and denominational lines.

On the Christian side, many Baptists, Ukrainian Catholics, Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and others are in prison or exile. Their "crimes" include teaching religion to children, performing rituals deemed harmful by the state, printing and distributing religious materials, documenting human rights abuses, meeting in homes or rural areas outside of the officially sanctioned (and infiltrated) churches or simply belonging to denominations not recognized by the state.

On the Jewish side, fewer than 60 synagogues still exist to serve the country's 2.5 million Jews. During the 1970s era of détente, 20,000 Jews were allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. After 1979, when almost 60,000 Jews left, the gates closed.

Now only about 1,000 are permitted to leave each year. Thousands of Jews who applied to leave have been refused. These "refuseniks" live in a limbo of joblessness, harassment and discrimination.

What can we do to help? We in the United States can speak out strongly on behalf of Soviet Jews and Christians. We can educate ourselves and counter the flow of sophisticated "disinformation" with which the Soviets mask their activities. By telling our political leaders that this is a deep concern of the American people, we can ensure that our own government continues to insist on the necessity of human rights compliance. Public advocacy heard here is also heard in Moscow.

To speak up for human rights and to speak out against religious persecution does not mean standing in the way of measures designed to lessen tensions, such as cultural exchanges and arms-control negotiations. Any bilateral forum gives the West an opportunity to teach the Soviets the simple lesson that the U.S.S.R. only hurts itself by abusing its own citizens.

It damages its own credibility and destroys international confidence in the Soviet Union's ability to keep its word. If the Soviets do not live up to their solemn promises to allow freedom of religion and other human rights to which they committed themselves at Helsinki, how can they be trusted not to violate other agreements?

Beyond this, each of us can do something more direct and personal. The Lifeline Letters project enables us to enter directly into the lives of persecuted Soviet Jews and Christians.

By writing, we let them know that they are not alone. We also let the Soviet government know that it is being watched and cannot maltreat our correspondents with impunity. Writing letters is a small but significant act. It is a potent, humane gesture which helps to breach the walls of isolation that the Soviet government erects around its own citizens.

Alan Mittelman is program associate for interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee and executive coordinator of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE

Event: "Culture and Community: The Struggle for Religious Liberty in the U.S.S.R.," a hearing on religious freedom in the Soviet Union.

Sponsor: Seattle Interreligious Task Force on Religious Freedom

Time: Tues., 9 a.m.-noon, Westin Hotel

Agenda: Speakers include Sister Ann Gillen, National Interreligious Task Force; Kent Hill, Seattle Pacific University; Judy Balint, Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry; Irena Barinoff, Seattle's Russian Orthodox community.

Information: Call Barbara Hurst, Greater Seattle Chapter, American Jewish Committee, 622-6315

Issues

W YOU CAN HELP



Seattle group working for human rights

Barbara Hurst
Special to The Times

AT THIS season of the year, we are singularly mindful that this country guarantees to its citizens a freedom — that of professing and practicing one's religion unhindered by government structure and prohibition.

Behind the Iron Curtain, despite constitutional guarantees and a host of international agreements signed by the Soviet Union, that basic right is denied.

Those who choose to practice their religion in the U.S.S.R. do so at fearful cost to themselves and their families. Viewed as subversives and separatists, they suffer harassment, persecution, imprisonment, confinement to psychiatric hospitals and internal exile.

Others are subjected to systematic discrimination in education and employment.

In recognition of the religious persecution and oppression of Jews and Christians behind the Iron Curtain, and out of a need to speak out in protest and offer support to co-religionists, the Seattle Interreligious Task Force on Religious Freedom in the Soviet Union was born some 18 months ago.

Coordinated by the American Jewish Committee, the task force is composed of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, the International Christian Embassy, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry, the Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Our goal is to raise awareness of the plight of religious minorities in the Soviet Union and to initiate activities on their behalf. Our first project was

gathering signatures on a petition condemning the absence of religious freedom in the Soviet Union, and calling on Soviet officials to correct human-rights violations and permit freedom of religious expression for all citizens. The petition also calls for the right to emigrate, guaranteed by the Helsinki Accords.

Over 1,000 Seattleites signed the petition, which became a quarter-page ad in The Seattle Times/Post-Intelligencer.

Today, some 18 months after the founding of the Seattle task force and 13 years after the signing of the Helsinki Accords, we find that, tragically, it is still necessary to protest the denial of human and religious rights. We need to remind the Soviet Union that the eyes of the world are upon them and that freedom must prevail.

Join in this effort. Across the country people are writing their names on petitions, participating in marches and enlisting the aid of elected officials, including mayors, legislators and congressmen.

You can make a difference. This is one of those rare opportunities to touch somebody's life that needs touching.

Barbara Hurst is Washington state director of the American Jewish Committee and coordinator of the Seattle Interreligious Task Force.

Letters can give hope and strength

Sister Ann Gillen
Special to The Times

FOR persons concerned about the plight of Jews and Christians in the U.S.S.R., "Life-Line Letters" can be a lifesaver or life preserver.

Persons who try to claim their human rights in the Soviet Union are in danger. These people, under severely repressive conditions, seek only to practice their religion or to emigrate.

We, borne along rather easily in the ship of Western freedom, have the choice of conscience: to respond to their appeal for help with a letter or to plead a weak excuse not to write.

They may be near drowning in a sea of repression or prison-

al despair. Your letters can give them hope and the strength to hang on.

Recently this message was sent out by the wives of Soviet prisoners:

Imagine that you are constantly facing the threat of a sudden and groundless arrest and transfer to the hell of the Gulag. Imagine that every night, while saying "goodnight" before going to bed, you also say "goodbye" in your mind, since in the morning you might be awakened by a sharp knock on the door — and they won't let you say goodbye then. Imagine that you have to destroy carefully every bit of paper on which you have written some kind of note for yourself. It also goes without saying that it would be best for you to write nothing except letters.

Wild imaginings? Groundless fears? A few statistics from the January 1983 report of the U.S. Commission on Security Cooperation in Europe:

Arrests. There were nearly 130 arrests of Soviet human-rights activists in 1984.

Trials. There were 41 trials with the average sentence being three years.

Deaths. Seven prisoners of conscience died as a result of prison brutality and inhuman camp conditions.

Will your letters help? Yes, Soviet Jews and Christians tell us so. They are only afraid you will forget them. Your letters tell them they are not alone, someone knows of their plight.

Seattle is launching its Life-Line Letters project during Passover and Easter, a very appropriate season. Jews and Christians are remembering and celebrating ancient events, relying there by holy ritual and rhetoric.

In the U.S.S.R., both ritual and rhetoric are repressed. One religious reality remains with the struggles of Jews and Christians to regain or retain their religious identities.

And, in the measure that we reach out to them by prayer and trendy letters, our own religious identities will take on a new and stronger dimension.

Whose life will you help to save or preserve in 1985?

Sister Ann Gillen, a Roman Catholic nun, is executive director of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.



Source: Jewish Soviet Agency Report, National Conference on Soviet Jewry

DANGER OF SILENCE

'In keeping silent about evil, in burying it deep within us, so that it appears nowhere on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousandfold in the future.'

— Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "The Gulag Archipelago"

LETTERS TO INDIVIDUALS

Some dos and don'ts of writing to persecuted believers in the U.S.S.R.

- DO:**
 - Write or print legibly in English (unless you are fluent in Russian).
 - Send letters, notes or post-cards.
 - Be warm and personal, as if writing to a friend or relative; discuss your family, job, studies, hobbies, travels, etc.
 - If you wish, include family photographs and ask for photos in return.
 - If you can write in the name of your church, school, company or other group, use letterhead stationary or include a business card.
 - Address the envelope carefully by hand (don't type) and mark it AIR MAIL.
 - Use correct postage. 44 cents per half ounce. (Or you may register your letter and ask for a return receipt, which costs an additional \$4.25 and requires that the Soviet government send you a note signed by the recipient guaranteeing that delivery was made.)
 - Keep a record of your correspondence (and, if possible, copies of all your letters).
- Continue to write even if you don't receive an answer. (Prison or hospital rules may allow incoming mail but sharply restrict outgoing mail.)**
- Reply promptly if you do receive an answer.**
- DON'T:**
 - Criticize the political system of the U.S.S.R. or any East bloc countries.
 - Express hope that the person you're writing were freed or indicate that you are seeking his or her release.
 - Mention any religious organizations or faiths, or mention Israel in letters to Jewish refusniks.
 - Give up hope. You may be someone's only contact with the outside world.

P.S. — If you do write (and especially if you receive a reply), please consider ahead of time your letters with other readers. Send copies to Issues editor, The Seattle Times, P.O. Box 70, Seattle WA 98111.

LETTERS TO OFFICIALS

Letters to Soviet officials protesting repressive policies toward religious minorities in the U.S.S.R. might help. For further information, several local and national groups are working to help persecuted peoples behind the Iron Curtain:

- SOVIET OFFICIALS:** Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary, Communist Party, The Kremlin, Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.
- Victor M. Chebrikov**, Chairman, KGB, U. Dazhinsky 2, Moscow, 101102, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.
- Alexander Rekunov**, Prosecutor General, 1307 South Wabash, Chicago IL 60605 (312) 622-1883
- Anatoly Dobrynin**, Ambassador, Soviet Embassy, Washington, D.C. 20005
- Yury Zhukov**, Chairman, Soviet Peace Committee, Prospect Mira 36, Moscow, U.S.S.R.
- U.S. GROUPS:** Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry, 5208 South Morgan St., Seattle WA 98118 (206) 723-8097
- Seattle Interreligious Task Force on Religious Freedom**, 729 Joseph Vance Bldg., Seattle WA 98101 (206) 622-3315
- National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry**, 1307 South Wabash, Chicago IL 60605 (312) 622-1883
- Society for the Study of Religion Under Communism**, Keaton College, U.S.A., Box 1310, Franklinham, MA 01701 (617) 254-4789
- Union of Councils for Soviet Jews**, 1411 K St. NW, Suite 402, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 393-4117

CHRISTIAN PRISONERS AND DETAINEES



Vladimir Poresh
Age: 35
Charge: Poresh, a member of the unofficial "Christian Seminar" group in Leningrad, was sentenced in 1980 to five years in a strict-regime labor camp on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" for his religious activities.
Circumstances: Recently he became the first prisoner known to face charges of "malicious disobedience," a new law that allows inmates to be retried for violating camp rules. Poresh, married with two small daughters, was sentenced to three more years.
HOME ADDRESS: c/o Tatyana Poresh, 14223, Leningrad ul. M. Torenza 33/55 U.S.S.R.



Alexander Ogorodnikov
Age: 34
Charge: Ogorodnikov, founder of the "Christian Seminar" movement, was sentenced to six years in strict-regime labor camp and five years of internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."
Circumstances: Ogorodnikov's family got a telegram saying he was in a camp hospital. When his wife traveled to see him, she was told he would not be allowed any visits from relatives until the end of his sentence.
CAMP ADDRESS: c/o Tatyana Ogorodnikova, Chasovskoi raion st. Polovinsk, Vostochny 30/2/268 RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Sergel Timokhin, left, and Valeri Barinov
Age: 26
Charge: Timokhin, a Leningrad Baptist and member of the Christian rock group "Trumpet Call," was arrested along with Valeri Barinov and charged with attempting to cross the Soviet border illegally. Both were sentenced to two years in labor camp. Soviet news agency TASS claimed that Timokhin and Barinov had "maintained contacts with foreigners (and) representatives of anti-Soviet organizations abroad."
Circumstances: Similar to Barinov's, but in better health.
HOME ADDRESS: c/o Nina Timokhina, Leningrad pr. Kuznezhnikov 30/2/268 U.S.S.R.

Vasili Barats
Age: 40
Charge: Barinov, leader of the Christian rock group "Trumpet Call," was sentenced last year along with Timokhin. When arrested in Murmansk, both had return train tickets to Leningrad. The real reason for their arrest, sources say, was that they had conducted "religious propaganda" — writing and performing their music. Circumstances: Barinov has been held in prison in Leningrad, in a psychiatric hospital, and at KGB headquarters, he has conducted hunger strikes.
HOME ADDRESS: c/o Tatyana Barinova, Leningrad pr. Kuznezhnikov 9/2/74 U.S.S.R.

Alexander Rigas
Age: 38
Charge: Barats, a Pentecostal activist and former Communist Party member, is serving a five-year sentence in a labor camp for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." He co-founded the "Public Group for the Right to Emigrate from the U.S.S.R."
Circumstances: Barats recently suffered his second major heart attack in less than a year. His condition was exacerbated by lack of proper medical care. While ill, he was transported to the Ukraine for a brief round trip took two months.
CAMP ADDRESS: 618810 Permukaya oblast Chusovskoi raion ul. Vesyevskaya ulch. VS-389-35 U.S.S.R.

Alexander Rigas
Age: About 45
Charge: Rigas, a Moscow Catholic, was sentenced last August to indefinite detention, probably in a psychiatric hospital, after being found "not competent to stand trial."
Circumstances: Rigas, who became a Christian at the age of 30, helped organize a loose ecumenical community of Catholics, Baptists and Orthodox who held meetings to recite the Lord's Prayer, sing, study the Bible and pray together. The group worked with young people who wanted to become Christians, saving many from alcoholism and drug addiction. This opportunity was seen as a threat by Soviet authorities.
ADDRESS: Unknown

As far as I know, no other newspaper in the United States ever did anything like the “Lifeline Letters” project. Did we help some prisoners eventually be freed and/or refuseniks be allowed to emigrate? It’s hard to know for sure, but several people later told us that letters were essential to letting the Soviet authorities know that people outside of the U.S.S.R. knew and cared. That was, in the end, my hope.

A Footnote: Five years later, after Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet premier, my Russian friend’s parents were finally allowed to come visit their daughter and son-in-law in Seattle. They met their granddaughter for the first time. The world had indeed finally changed for the better.

Another Footnote: As for the Margolin family, I do not know what became of them. But on a visit to Israel in 2013, I met again with Benjamin Bogolmolny, who had finally been allowed to emigrate and lived in Jerusalem. The most patient Refusenik was free at last.

Issues

LIFELINE LETTERS



The Times' Lifeline Letters project began during Easter and Passover seasons two years ago. Its purpose is to encourage readers to write to those in the U.S.S.R.

who are being persecuted primarily for their religious beliefs. This page contains the latest information available on all those prisoners and refuseniks who have been featured in The Times since April 1985. On the second Sunday of each month, The Times publishes details about Soviet citizens who have been imprisoned or denied permission to emigrate (See A 2). Hundreds of Times readers have been writing letters, either as individuals or as members of a church or synagogue. Does this do any good? The Kremlin recently announced that many religious prisoners had been released and hinted that emigration restrictions would be loosened. Many experts believe that letter-writing campaigns and publicity in the West were partly responsible.

What is your opinion of the Lifeline Letters project? Are you writing letters? Have you received any replies? Should the project be dropped or expanded? Should it include religious prisoners, human-rights activists, and political dissidents in other countries? Please write and let us know what you think. Address: Lifeline Letters, The Times, P.O. Box 70, Seattle WA 98111.

IMPRISONED OR IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL



Anatoli Runov
Baptist pastor. Imprisoned in psychiatric hospital near Leningrad since 1983. Forced drug treatments have caused heart problems, high blood pressure.
ADDRESS: 195108 G. Leningrad K-108 Uchr. US-20/ST-5, U.S.S.R.



Mart Nikkus
Estonian Lutheran. Serving 10-year labor-camp sentence. Transferred last fall to special KGB prison for "re-education," later moved to Tallinn.
ADDRESS: c/o Elfriede Niskanen (mother) g. Turu, Viikerkare 25 202400 ESSR, U.S.S.R.



Yuli Edelshstein
Jewish. Serving 3-year prison sentence. Suffered serious injuries from a fall; repeated appeals for medical clemency denied.
ADDRESS: c/o Tanya Edelshstein (wife) Leningradskaia Prospekt 33, korp. 6, kv. 505 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Riggs
Catholic. Still serving indefinite sentence in psychiatric hospital for organizing ecumenical group that worked with youth.
ADDRESS: 675007 Amurskaya oblast g. Blagoveshchensk pr. Serezhovskiy 55 Uchr. IZ-23/1 SPB, U.S.S.R.



Anna Chertkova
Evangelical Baptist. Transferred from special psychiatric hospital in Tashkent to another one near Kazan.
ADDRESS: Uchr. UE 148/st. 6-140id g. Kazan, ul. Ershova 49 420002 Tatarskaya ASSR, U.S.S.R.



Morab Kostava
Georgian Orthodox Christian. Imprisoned since 1974. Suffering from tuberculosis; recently transferred from prison hospital in Tashkent to another one near Tbilisi.
ADDRESS: Unknown

INFORMATION SOURCES: Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry, 510 Securities Building, Seattle WA 98101 (206) 622-4211. Keston College USA, Box 1310, Framingham, MA 01701 (617) 229-7254.

Released

Zoya Krakhmalnikova, Russian Orthodox Christian. Serving five years of internal exile in remote Siberian village.
ADDRESS: do vostrebovaniya pos. Ust-Koksa Gorno-Altayskaya AO 650760 Altayskiy kraj, U.S.S.R.



Ivan Fedotov, Pentecostal Christian. Released last year after 18 years in labor camps.
ADDRESS: ul. Zelenaya 7A Kaluzhskaya oblast g. Maloyaroslavets, U.S.S.R.



Harri Rotnik, Estonian Lutheran pastor. Released in March 1986, after "reconciliation," which he later said was made under duress. Now working as cleaner in old-people's home.
ADDRESS: Unknown.



Valeri Barinov, Baptist. Released last September. Now working to form religious group called "Church of Free Christians."
ADDRESS: pr. Khudozhnikov 9-2-74 194295 Leningrad, U.S.S.R.



Sergel Timokhin, Baptist. With Barinov, founder of Christian rock group. Released last year after completing two-year sentence in labor camp.
ADDRESS: Unknown.



Janis Rozinska, Latvian Christian. Released to emigrate denied.
ADDRESS: Riga, Kuldigas iela 14-7 225007 Latvian SSR, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Ogorednikov, unofficial Christian. Released from labor camp in February. Having problems registering for residence in Moscow. Staying with various friends.
ADDRESS: Unknown.



Vladimir Poresh, unofficial Christian. Released from labor camp last year.
ADDRESS: ul. M. Torozova 33-55 194223 Leningrad, U.S.S.R.



Vasil Barata, Pentecostal Christian. Released in February from labor camp. Home in Moscow taken away after arrest.
ADDRESS: Unknown.



Larissa Chukayeva, Russian Orthodox Christian. Released from labor camp last December after serving partial sentence.
ADDRESS: Unknown.



Allowed to emigrate

Irina Babushnaya, Russian Orthodox Christian. Released from labor camp in 1985. Allowed to leave U.S.S.R. for medical treatment. Now living in England.



Zachar Zushelov, Jewish. Released from prison camp last month after serving 3-year sentence. He and wife received exit visas and emigrated. Now living in Israel.



Yakov Mesh, Jewish. Released from prison last year and allowed to emigrate to United States with wife and children. Now living in New York.



'May your voices never be silenced by oppression'

Alexander Ogorednikov, a Russian Orthodox Christian who was recently released after eight years in Soviet labor camps and prisons, issued the following statement last month to those who campaigned on his behalf in the West: "It is in the concentration camps which are scattered over the vast expanse of Russia, behind tall fences of barbed wire and high-voltage cables, to the accompaniment of the frenzied howling of guard dogs, you are turned in the tomb-like twilight of solitary punishment cells.

"When the oppressive silence of

faceless days turns time itself into an instrument of torture, when the heart begins to fail and your tongue cleaves to the roof of your mouth in a senseless babble of misery, when hunger gnaws your belly, the cold numbs your flesh and desperation courses through your blood — then, it seems that an indifferent world has already consigned you to the grave, that the scrap of sky visible through the small window grating has closed over you, that you feel totally alone and abandoned, and despair washes over you like a tide.

"But it was in these terrible moments in key cells that I physically felt the warmth of your prayers and compassion, a force linking us by a stream of spiritual energy generated by mutual experience of faith and the mysterious bonds of fraternal unity. "It was like the warm touch of a brotherly hand, which had moved aside the strands of barbed wire and penet-

rated through gloomy walls. The strength of your love and compassion turned my despair into indeluctable hope, my cries into prayers, and the edge of madness into enlightenment.

"Your interest in persecuted Christians and all prisoners of conscience awakens the moral consciousness of the world before the face of hatred, bears witness to the dignity and value of every living being as the image and likeness of God. It is living confirmation of the unity of the mother church, and brings us to the realization of the truth that we are all members of the body of Christ, and if one member feels pain, then the whole body suffers. In your selfless defense of the faith against the forces of evil, you have given a selfish world an impressive object lesson in love and in compassion and unity. And the all-seeing God heard your prayer, accepted your sacrifice, and paid heed to your voice of witness

and denunciation of the persecutors. "He opened the doors of the dungeons, and set the prisoners free. So we are living witnesses of how your love, faith and deeds are changing the course of history. In addressing these inadequate words of thanks to you for your concern with our bonds, I am painfully aware of my inability to express the extent of the gratitude which filled my heart toward you during the long 89 months of my imprisonment.

"May the Lord sustain you in your great task of intercession for the persecuted, the humiliated and the oppressed. May your voice never be silenced before the face of the persecutors, a voice which bears witness to our savior Jesus Christ, a voice which defends the persecuted from the attempts of evil to seize souls and vanquish freedom, and which sirs an indifferent world to compassion for the driven."

Jewish refuseniks



Ida Taratuta
Requests to emigrate denied. Recently told visitors: "Publicly from the West is the most helpful assistance."
ADDRESS: Pr. Kosmonautov 27/1/71 Leningrad 196211 RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Vladimir Prestin
No change in status. Requests to emigrate have been denied since first exit-visa application in 1970.
ADDRESS: c/o Leah Prestina "Kropotkinskaya 33, kv. 55 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Grigory Feldsher
Still living in "closed city." Requests to emigrate denied since 1978.
ADDRESS: Obodst 52/27 Nizhny Tagil Sverdlovskaya Oblast RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Ida Hudei
Requests to emigrate denied. Told recent visitors: "I am tired of being a symbol. I want to be a person."
ADDRESS: Ul. Sovetskaya 69, kv. 2 Bendery 278100 Moldavian SSR, U.S.S.R.



Iarosl Avkhilayev
Requests to emigrate denied, possibly to discourage other Tashkent Jews from applying. Reapplies every six months.
ADDRESS: Sergeli 3, korp. 22, kv. 45 Tashkent 700012 Uzbek SSR, U.S.S.R.



Yosef Borensheln
Released from prison last month. Requests to emigrate denied since 1979.
ADDRESS: Ul. Entuziastov 35-147 Kiev, Ukrainian SSR, 252147 U.S.S.R.



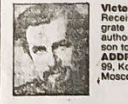
Yevgeny Yekir
Requests to emigrate denied since first exit-visa application in 1973. Son's request also denied.
ADDRESS: Protosuznaya 100, korp. 5, kv. 35 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Victor Vailstratov
Request to emigrate with his wife denied for more than 10 years.
ADDRESS: Cherkizovskiy Botskaya 1/2 kv. 50, Moscow 107061 RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Roald Zolichenek
Released from labor camp last February. Granted residence permit in Leningrad. Still unemployed, thus subject to arrest for "parasitism."
ADDRESS: Naberezhnaya Reki Karpovki Apt. 55, Leningrad 197022 RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Victor Brallovsky
Received permission to emigrate with his wife, but Soviet authorities won't allow their son to leave with his parents.
ADDRESS: Pr. Vernadskop 99, Korp 1, Apt. 128 Moscow 117536, U.S.S.R.



Vera and Mark Moshborsky
Request to emigrate denied since 1981.
ADDRESS: 15-ya Parkovaya 24/2, Apt. 215 Moscow E-484, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Khelmlaneky
Released from prison in February 1986. Requests to emigrate with wife and daughter denied.
ADDRESS: Generala Belova St. 33 Korp 11, Apt. 98 Moscow 115663, U.S.S.R.



Yudit and Leonid Bilaly
Requests to emigrate denied since 1978.
ADDRESS: ul. Buterova 24, kv. 41 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Freda and Vladimir Melamed
Requests to emigrate denied since 1981.
ADDRESS: Uchibova 12, Apt. 23 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Marina and Yevgeny Alzenberg
Yevgeny released from prison in March 1986. Request to emigrate denied.
ADDRESS: ul. Dzerzhinskogo 97, kv. 57 Kharkov, Ukrainian SSR, U.S.S.R.

Issues

PERSECUTION

S Christians celebrate Easter and Jews observe Pass-over, we often forget that many people are deprived of the religious freedom Americans take for granted. The Times' Lifetime Letters project asks citizens to write to those in the U.S.S.R. being persecuted for their religious beliefs, or to Soviet officials responsible for repressive policies. Will your letters help? Vladimir Slepak, a Moscow Jew, was taken to KGB headquarters and shown a stack of mail addressed to him. The KGB agent said: "When those letters stop coming in from the West, Slepak, you are done for." Countless Slepaks — a few of whom are pictured and described below — exist. Perhaps you can help them.

'We do care, and we have not forgotten...'

Helien M. Jackson Special to The Times



TODAY Soviet leaders are agonistically espousing anti-Semitism as state policy. Political rights and religious liberty are denied to Jews and restricted for whole categories of the Soviet citizenry. Meanwhile, Moscow has virtually shut down Jewish emigration and reduced the departure of others to a mere trickle. Several thousand "refuseniks" are treated as outcasts from Soviet society and wait indefinitely, without assurance, to be reunited with their relatives abroad. Over 120 families have been waiting more than 10 years. Selected "refuseniks" are serving terms of imprisonment or exile on trumped-up charges. Soviet leaders pursue this cruel, prejudicial policy for their own reasons. But one contributing cause may be that those in the Kremlin think they can get away with it — that the free world no longer cares, that public opinion no longer focuses on human rights. I want to help keep the record straight. We do care, and we have not forgotten. It is impossible not to be moved by the bravery and the persistence of the Jews and other freedom-loving men and women in Russia. We cannot be sure what steps may at any point be most helpful to those striving for their basic freedoms. But, as Scoop used to say, we know they will not be helped by the silence of free peoples or by the neglect of free governments. Of all the individual liberties

affirmed in the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, Scoop considered none more fundamental than Article 13: the right to emigrate. He particularly championed that elementary right because of the inhumanity of all human rights — the thousands of Jews and others — for the victims of intolerable discrimination and oppression. In fact, the right to emigrate provides a certain support for other human freedoms. As long as a government honors this right it must show some respect for other basic liberties or its citizens will leave the country. Scoop always emphasized that the obligation to respect the right to emigrate has been freely and formally agreed to by Soviet leaders in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Pact and other international agreements. To urge a nation to live up to its freely assumed commitments," he would say, "is not intervention in their internal affairs. It is serving in the name of the voluntarily accepted obligation of a nation under international law that we ask it to respect the freedom to emigrate."

Over the years, there have been some great successes in this struggle. We can rejoice that in the 1970s tens of thousands of people — Jews, Christians, and others — escaped captivity due in no small part to the Jackson-Vanik amendment. That amendment for the first time linked U.S. trade benefits and credit concessions to the Soviet Union with significant and steady movement on freer emigration. And we can rejoice that the Jackson-Vanik amendment is still the law of the land — indispensable leverage in the ongoing bargaining with Moscow and other capitals for the liberty to emigrate. I am fortunate to have served as co-chairman of Congressional Wives for Soviet Jew-



Vladimir Slepak

ry. Recently, we joined parliamentary wives from England, Canada, Israel, and the Netherlands in pressing our national leaders to give the future of Soviet Jewry and other persecuted peoples a prominent place on the agenda of their meetings with Soviet officials. Surely, if Western governments can talk with Moscow about freer trade, they can also talk about freer emigration. I am proud that the Henry M. Jackson Foundation will continue in the tradition set by Scoop. Together with many of his friends and colleagues, I have established the Foundation as a living memorial. Headquarters here in Seattle, the Foundation will fund a variety of projects to further causes which Scoop pursued throughout his years of public service. Our efforts will be guided in particular by his profound commitment to the cause of international human rights. The struggle for basic human rights is a long-term contest in which each particular skirmish is a small part. Victory depends on resolve and perseverance. The unfinished work must be carried forward. I salute The Seattle Times for its contribution to this historic undertaking.

Helien M. Jackson is chairman of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation.

THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA Since the Russian Revolution in 1917, Soviets have tightly controlled religion

VISITORS to the Soviet Union are often asked by customs officials whether they "carry religious or propaganda literature" to distribute. If so, it is usually considered a capital offense. Soviet authorities rank religion — along with sexual deviance. Many recent American visitors to the U.S.S.R., such as the Rev. Billy Graham and members of the National Council of Churches' delegation, have sometimes gained the impression that all 270 million Soviet citizens are generally free to worship as they choose. Actually, since the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Soviet state has progressively restricted religious activities. Even the Russian Orthodox Church — the largest denomination and the only non-communist institution of its size to be officially recognized by the state — is tightly controlled. No parish can be organized, no church opened, and no priest appointed without permission of government authorities. A priest cannot proselytize, conduct Sunday school or hold catechism classes. He cannot distribute religious literature. He cannot criticize state or party policies, or reply to anti-church propaganda. He cannot appear outside the church in distinctive dress, or perform rites in the home of any parishioner without official permission. He is not allowed to do social or charitable work, even for sick or aged members. In short, the priest is rigidly confined to being a conductor of rites. No church-related cultural activities are permitted. Concerts of sacred music or literary readings are specifically forbidden. Churches may not maintain libraries or keep any books except those used in worship services such as prayer books or hymnals. Religious instruction of the young is illegal, although atheistic education in schools is mandatory. In the Soviet Constitution, atheistic propaganda is specifically permitted, while religious propaganda is implicitly prohibited.

A HISTORY OF REPRESSION

Following is a list of major denominations in the U.S.S.R. and how they have fared over the past several decades.

- **Armenian Apostolic Church:** Approximately 4 million Armenians are believers, but number of parishes has been reduced from 1,620 in 1917 to about 30 today.
- **Baptists, Pentecostals and Evangelical Christians:** About 500,000 members are scattered in more than 3,000 congregations, of these at least 150,000, many under arrest as dissidents, belong to 7,000 unofficial congregations.
- **Buddhists:** About 4,000 worshippers near Mongolian border have only one major temple and a few monks.
- **Evangelical Lutheran Church:** Membership, legal only in Latvia and Estonia, is about 600,000 in 350 congregations; 288 pastors in 1916 have dwindled to only about 100 today.
- **Georgian Orthodox Church:** About 5 million members exist, but 2,000 churches before the revolution have declined to about 200 today.
- **Jews:** About 2,115,000 Jews live in the Soviet Union, but only 200,000 are able to practice their faith; of 6,000 synagogues open in 1917, only 57 remain.
- **Muslims:** About 44 million Soviet citizens belong to traditionally Muslim ethnic groups, but of 26,000 mosques in 1917, only about 200 function today.
- **Roman Catholic Church:** About 1 million members, most in Lithuania, have only 628 churches and fewer than 700 priests.
- **Russian Orthodox Church:** About 30 million believers, but churches have declined from 84,000 in 1914 to 8,200 today; priests from 21,000 to less than 10,000; seminaries from 57 to 3.
- **Ukrainian Catholic Church:** Had 4 million members and 4,119 churches in 1920, but only an underground church exists today; of 25,000 priests, only about 320 remain.

WORDS VS. DEEDS

'Citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited.'

Article 52, Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

JEWISH PRISONERS AND REFUSENIKS



Yuli Edelstein
Age: 26
Charge: Sentenced last December to three years in prison for "illegal drug trafficking" after KGB agents allegedly found drugs (which sources say were planted) during a search of his home. Agents also confiscated Hebrew books (Edelstein is a Hebrew teacher) and other items supposedly left by foreign visitors, whom they accused of "corrupting Jewish youth with medieval and mystical drug rituals."
Circumstances: Edelstein and his wife, Tatiana, have applied for an emigration visa.
HOME ADDRESS: Yaroslavskaya Shosse 34, Korp. 1, Apt. 43, Moscow, U.S.S.R.



Alexander Kholmiansky
Age: 34
Charge: Arrested last July on charges of "aggravated hooliganism" and "malicious tampering." KGB agents entered his apartment, which he shares with his parents, and allegedly found a loaded gun and bullets (sources say these were planted during the search).
Circumstances: Kholmiansky, a computer engineer who applied for permission to emigrate six years ago, has been on a hunger strike in a Tallinn prison since last fall and is being forced. He is not permitted visit from his family.
HOME ADDRESS: Generata Belova St. 33, Korp. 11, Apt. 86, Moscow 115563, U.S.S.R.



Zachar Zushnein
Age: 34
Charge: Sentenced in June 1984 to three years in a labor camp for "anti-Soviet slander." Prosecution's only evidence: Zushnein's letters to the Soviet emigration authority asking permission to emigrate.
Circumstances: Last December Zushnein was put in solitary confinement because of hunger strikes. In January he was sentenced to six months in the camp's internal prison. He reportedly has been beaten severely. The camp has 2,000 prisoners and only 400 beds.
PRISON ADDRESS: U. Ch. 272/40, Pospelok Oktyabrsky Chumsk.1, Chnovskiy Rayon, Trkutskaya Oblast, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.



Victor Brailovsky
Age: 50
Circumstances: Applied for exit visa with family in 1972 and was immediately freed from job at Moscow Institute of Computers. Wife, Irina, was freed from her position at Moscow State University. Years of harassment, threats and arrests followed. Their telephone was cut off, their mail tampered with, and their apartment put under police surveillance. Finally, a Soviet court ruled that Brailovsky could emigrate — but without his wife and two children. He has refused to leave his family.
HOME ADDRESS: Pt. Vernadskogo 99, Korp. 1, Apt. 128, Moscow 117526 U.S.S.R.



Viktor Yelistratov
Age: 45
Circumstances: Yelistratov and wife, Bashva, have been trying to emigrate for more than 10 years. They have been fired from their jobs, harassed and forced to work as mental laborers. In a letter to friends in the West, Yelistratov wrote: "I know that to help a person who is in trouble always means to enrich one's life. We were unfortunate to be born in this country. You were born in the world of free choice (you won't jeopardize your freedom by rather evading it if you help us out)."
HOME ADDRESS: 1, Ulitsa Bolshaya, Tcherkizovskaya Korp. 2, Apt. 50, Moscow 107061 U.S.S.R.



Yakov Mesh
Age: 33
Charge: In 1984, Mesh, a former boxer, was arrested and held in custody for 10 policemen outside the movie theater in Odessa where he worked. Mesh shouted to bystanders: "I am not resisting the police. I am not resisting arrest and refusing to testify."
Circumstances: Now in prison, Mesh is suffering from liver atrophy and hepatitis. He applied for exit visas in 1977 with his wife Maria, now 28, and son Marat, now 3.
HOME ADDRESS: Ploshchad Martynovskogo 3/4, Apt. 71, Odessa Centre, Ukrainian S.S.R., U.S.S.R.

Photos and information from Seattle Action for Soviet Jews

Issues

LETTERS

THE Times' Lifeline Letters project will broaden its perspective in 1988. Instead of focusing on religious prisoners and refusniks in the Soviet Union, it will include prisoners of conscience from many other countries around the world.

The project urges readers to write letters on behalf of those whose basic human rights have been violated because of their beliefs. Since the project began in 1985, hundreds of Times readers have been writing letters to the U.S.S.R. Many of the individuals featured in the Lifeline Letters columns have been released from Soviet prisons, labor camps or psychiatric hospitals. In addition, many Jewish refusniks have been allowed to emigrate. (The Soviet Union granted exit visas to 8,183 Jews in 1987, the highest annual total since 1981 and a nine-fold increase over the 914 released in 1985.)

Most experts believe that letter-writing campaigns and other publicity in the West were partly responsible — and that similar campaigns can have the same effect in other countries where people are being persecuted. (See John Harner's column, A 16.)



Kent Barton / Graphic Impressions

Thousands worldwide are now free, thanks to letter-writing campaigns

David Hinkley
Special to The Times

In every corner of the world, men, women and sometimes children are suffering unjust imprisonment and often torture for no other crime than their beliefs.

Half the world's governments hold such prisoners, many for indefinite periods without trial or after trials that are a mockery of international standards for fair trial.

A third of the world's governments torture prisoners as a systematic practice for obtaining confessions and information about other dissidents.

Readers of the Seattle Times' Lifeline Letters column on prisoners of conscience are asked to take the time to write cross-country worded letters to government officials on behalf of these people.

A cursory look at stories of human rights abuse in countries of every ideology is enough to show the urgent need for such humanitarian intercession.

But readers have a right to know something more than that a critical need exists for their personal investment of time and effort in this cause: Does it work?

Amnesty International was founded 26 years ago, precisely to organize such appeals. Half a million members in 140 countries contribute time, energy and money to see that no prisoner of conscience is ever neglected or forgotten.

Thousands of local Amnesty groups, including several in the Puget Sound area, "adopt" prisoners of conscience. They send monthly to the member's home to discuss the case, then maintain a persistent and ever-increasing stream of appeals to the offending government and all those who may be able to exert influence on those who hold the keys to the jail cells and torture chambers.

Over the quarter century Amnesty International has secured, tens of thousands of prisoners whose behalf members have written have been freed. Their own testimony is the clearest

evidence of the importance and effectiveness of international outcry on even the most hardened regimes.

Three letters received by Amnesty members from former prisoners of conscience will serve to represent so many others. A released prisoner from Paraguay writes:

"For years I was held in a tiny cell. My only human contact was with my torturers. My only company were the cockroaches and mice. . . . On Christmas Eve the door to my cell opened and the guard tossed in a crumpled piece of paper. It said, 'Take heart. The world

knows you're alive. We're with you. Regards, Monica, Amnesty International.' That letter saved my life."

Another released prisoner, from Vietnam, told us:

"We could always tell when international protests were taking place. . . . The food rations increased and the beatings were fewer. Letters from abroad were translated and passed around from cell to cell, but when the letters stopped, the dirty food and repression started again."

And from the Dominican Republic:

"When the first 200 letters came, the

guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next 200 letters came, and the prison doctor came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming: 3,000 of them. The president was informed. The letters still kept arriving, and the president called the prison and told them to let me go."

Amnesty International works on behalf of some 8,000 prisoners of conscience every year. The organization has grown rapidly, especially in the decade since it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

But despite the concerted efforts of

this growing, organized constituency, hundreds of prisoners adopted by Amnesty for long periods, some over 20 years, still languish in prisons from Beijing to Pretoria. In such cases especially, or in cases where a surge of public pressure has a good chance of tipping the scale in a prisoner's favor, the possibilities afforded by columns in important metropolitan papers may prove vital. Such calls for help can mobilize hundreds, even thousands of letters in a short period.

For about a year, radio station KCRW in Santa Monica, Calif., has carried a monthly broadcast on urgent cases. October's case was Anna Chertkova of Tashkent, imprisoned since 1972 in Soviet psychiatric-detention centers because of her open practice of her Baptist faith. Not long before, she had been a featured case in the Seattle Times' own Lifeline Letters column.

Between these two special efforts, hundreds of letters and telegrams were generated from at least two states. Last month, without explanation, Anna Chertkova was freed by Soviet officials.

Though many dissidents have benefited from the releases which have accompanied glasnost, almost none were Christian or Evangelical religionists who have been imprisoned and persecuted for decades. Anna's release therefore strongly suggests the special power of concerted public appeals to move even an apparently intractable regime to a concession.

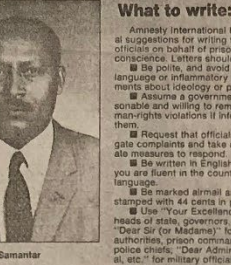
However small it may seem to the world, it means that Anna Chertkova, rather than suffering in cramped quarters with the criminally insane, in fear of her neglected health, the use of psychotropic drugs and the advent of despair, instead spent Christmas with her family.

With a few moments of time and attention from the readers, more prisoners who will never know their benefactors by name will feel the hope such kindness brings, and may taste the freedom they can dream of now — and which we take for granted every day.

David Hinkley is Western regional director for Amnesty International U.S.A.

POLITICAL PRISONER IN SOMALIA

Yusuf Osman Samantar, 56, has been imprisoned for most of the past 19 years. A lawyer, he was a founder of the Somali Democratic Union and was a member of parliament. But when the present government of Somalia took power in a 1969 coup, President Mohamed Siad Barre suspended parliament and banned all political parties. Samantar was arrested and detained without charge or trial because of his opposition to Barre and his refusal to join the ruling Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party — the nation's only legal party. Samantar has been held under an administrative detention law that does not allow independent reviews or legal appeal. He is being kept in solitary confinement in Labaan Jirou maximum-security prison near Balidoo. He suffers from several chronic health problems, but receives inadequate medical treatment. He is not allowed family visits or correspondence, nor is he permitted any reading material.



Yusuf Osman Samantar
Somali Democratic Republic
People's Palace
Mogadishu, Somalia. AFP/ICA

Letters appealing for his release should be sent to:
His Excellency the President
Mohamed Siad Barre

What to write:

Amnesty International has several suggestions for writing to foreign officials on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Letters should:

- Be polite, and avoid offensive language or inflammatory statements about ideology or politics.
- Assume a government is reasonable and willing to remedy human rights violations if informed of them.
- Request that officials investigate complaints and take appropriate measures to respond.
- Be written in English unless you are fluent in the country's language.
- Be marked airmail and stamped with 44 cents in postage.
- Use "Your Excellency" for all heads of state, governors, ministers, "Dear Sir" (or Madam) for local authorities, prison commanders, or police chiefs, "Dear Admiral, General," etc., for military officials.
- Be written in a professional capacity if desired. For instance, if the prisoner is a teacher, letters from other teachers may be very helpful.

Not a single Third World country can boast a free press

Umendra Singh
Special to The Times

WORKING on an American newspaper for five months was a shock. Not a cultural shock, not a social or an economic shock — but a shock of realizing that there is virtually no free press in the Third World. Journalists from Third World countries are a proud breed. Generally, they believe that they are a hard-working lot toiling "freely" to provide independent information to their readers.

A few months working in the American media changes all that. They come to realize that the certain "responsibilities" imposed on them at home and which they come to accept as part of "free and responsible reporting" are in fact measures taken by their governments to control the press.

There is virtually not a single Third World or developing country which can truly boast a free press. The governments in these countries do not openly clamp down on the press in the crude manner that South Africa does. But they impose certain restrictions to ensure "responsible

reporting."

In Fiji, journalists are arrested and put in sewer tanks if they report on the military regime. The two national dailies were twice shut down, once last May and again in September. They are now operating under strict censorship.

Similar tactics, with slight variations, are applied in developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

In Singapore, a symbol of Western affluence and success achieved through freedom, the press has never been free. The Singaporean Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, controls the press more tightly than he controls that country's finances. He does not allow any criticism against his government. Newspapers, both local and foreign, have to pay huge bonds in advance. If a report does not please Lee, the bond is lost.

In India, recent government-orchestrated raids by tax officials against the Daily Express provide another example. The raid came after the newspaper carried an expose on government corruption.

The press in Pakistan is also heavily controlled and manipulated. Masood Hussain Sayed, editor of the Muslim, an English-language daily, was forced to resign last March following the publication of an interview which quoted the director of Pakistan's nuclear-fuel-enrichment plant, Abdul Qadeer Khan, as saying that

his country had developed a nuclear bomb.

In Kenya, a 41-year-old journalist, Paul Amma, was picked up by police on last August while covering a court case that was embarrassing to the government. He has not been seen since. For two weeks police denied any knowledge of him, and the three local dailies did not report the detention although it received international coverage.

Three other journalists were arrested and jailed for sedition and treason in Kenya for publishing reports against the government and 11 others are in jail on charges of sedition in connection with the Preservation of Public Security Act, according to a recent issue of the newsletter of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

Israel and Lebanon are continuing also with their tradition of arresting journalists and banning newspapers. The fate of the "free press" in South Africa, Malaysia, and Laos and Zambia is well known. And the list goes on.

The saddest part is that many reporters in the Third World seem to believe that they are "free and independent" when in fact their independence is heavily compromised.

Working on an American paper for five months changes a Third World journalist's view of that. A taste of the First Amendment and one gets a different perspective of what press

freedom is all about.

Programs such as the Alfred Friendly Press Fellowship are playing a very important role in giving Third World journalists an opportunity to learn what press freedom is really all about. The AFPF has an added advantage as it selects fellows on merit without any government interference. Other programs with government connections are usually handicapped by the fact that merit is rarely a factor; fellowships in many cases are given to relatives of government officials and journalists who write only to please their governments.

American newspapers have their own problems. They are very naive about the world outside of the American continent. As a result many readers know very little about the rest of the world. For example, a lot of West Coast papers have a "New Rim" section but they focus primarily on countries such as Japan and South Korea, and neglect the smaller countries.

They rely a lot on the three major wire services — Reuters, Associated Press and United Press International. And from personal experience, I know that these wire services often get their facts mixed up. Maybe they think so in the United States but challenge their "facts" on a distant part of the world.

I had a very frustrating time as the three kept on making

mistakes in their reports about Fiji and refused to make corrections. This is how a conversation between myself and a New York AP editor went after a particularly bad mistake in a report about Fiji by that wire service.

Editor: "How do you know that it is a mistake?"
Umendra: "Because I am from Fiji."
Editor: "Oh. And do you work for AFP?"
Umendra: "No."
Editor: "Then I don't have time to talk to you."
Umendra: "Will you put me in a correction?"
Editor: "Maybe."
Umendra: "What does that mean?"
Editor: "We will not correct it."
And she slammed the phone down. After this incident, I decided that it was useless trying to correct mistakes by big wire services.

On the other hand, the American press does not have to lose the government line. They are really independent — even in their mistakes.

The American papers and television stations emphasize a lot on the "human angle" in news stories and sometimes they get carried away. They virtually manufacture a hero in every story that is not a human story.

An example is Oliver North. The Iran-contra story had no

heroes, so the press manufactured one. It converted a man who had broken his country's laws into an American folk hero.

The American television networks and newspapers desire for the American public who is going to be the final run for America's presidency and who is going to sit on the Supreme Court.

Anyone who falls foul of the U.S. media is bound off the stage in no uncertain manner. Nowhere else in the world would the press be able to get away with this.

For someone wanting to study the power of the American press, there can be no better place than the five months I spent in the Third World.

The Seattle Times is a good example of one of the more progressive American papers. It has a very comprehensive local news section and gives good coverage of happenings in the Puget Sound area.

It was a pleasure working as a truly independent journalist on an American newspaper. It is an experience that will influence my career a great deal in future.

Umendra Singh, who worked at The Times from July-December 1987 as a visiting international journalist in the Alfred Friendly Fellowship Program, will soon return to Fiji, where he is chief reporter for the Fiji Times.