

SPEECH FOR HARVARD HILLEL
Feb. 3, 1979
SENATOR PAUL TSONGAS

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY.

IT IS APPARENT THAT THE MOVEMENT FOR SOVIET JEWRY IS ALIVE AND WELL IN MASSACHUSETTS. HAVING THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE UNION OF COUNCILS OF SOVIET JEWRY HERE IN MASSACHUSETTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GIVE ME VALUABLE ASSISTANCE OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS.

I AM HERE TODAY TO DISCUSS THE NEW CONGRESS AND THE ISSUE OF SOVIET JEWS. BEFORE I ZERO IN ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON RIGHT-NOW, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY FEELINGS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OUR FOREIGN POLICY. THIS IS A SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY WHICH WILL BE DEBATED IN THE CURRENT CONGRESS. IT RELATES TO YOUR BEING HERE TODAY -- AND YOUR APPARENT DESIRE TO HEAR MY VIEWS.

FOR A POLITICIAN TO TALK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SPECIFICALLY SOVIET JEWS, BRINGS HIM BACK INTO THE REAL WORLD. WASHINGTON CAN BE A PRETTY ETHEREAL PLACE, ESPECIALLY TO SOMEONE WHOSE BAPTISM IN FOREIGN RELATIONS WAS AS A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER. HEAVY DISCUSSIONS OF GLOBAL POLITICS, DETENTE, EAST-WEST CONFRONTATIONS, STRATEGIC ARMS CONTROL, TOO OFTEN FORGET PEOPLE. WASHINGTON TALK BECOMES ABSORBED IN STRATEGIES AND ANALYSES. WE DETACH OURSELVES FROM OUR PURPOSE IN BEING HERE -- MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE.

HUMAN RIGHTS, AN ISSUE WHICH I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH FOR MANY YEARS, LINKS PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD. A CONCERN FOR THE PLIGHT OF SOVIET JEWS CANNOT BE PERCEIVED AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PROBLEMS OF GREEK REFUGEES ON CYPRUS: REPRESSION OF THE BLACK MAJORITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA; THE MASSACRE OF CAMBODIANS OR THE TORTURE OF CHILEAN LEFTISTS. AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE IN THE SOVIET UNION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS ALL OVER THE WORLD.

IN PREPARING THESE REMARKS TO YOU, I WAS REMINDED OF ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY, WHO CELEBRATED HIS 31ST BIRTHDAY ON JANUARY 20 IN A PRISON CELL IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA. IN A WORLD WITH FEW HEROES, SHCHARANSKY IS ONE OF THEM. SICK AND WITHOUT PROPER MEDICAL CARE, DENIED THE VISIT OF HIS MOTHER AND BROTHER, SHCHARANSKY WILL SPEND 13 YEARS IN A SOVIET PRISON. HIS CRIME WAS TO SPEAK OUT ON BEHALF OF OTHER DISSIDENTS AND TO FORM A MONITORING GROUP FOR THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. SHCHARANSKY CHOSE PRISON OVER UNDERMINING THE JEWISH EMIGRATION MOVEMENT. ON THE DAY HE RECEIVED HIS SENTENCE, SHCHARANSKY TOLD THE WORLD THAT HE WAS HAPPY.

"FIVE YEARS AGO, I SUBMITTED MY APPLICATION FOR EXIT TO ISRAEL. NOW I AM FURTHER THAN EVER FROM THAT DREAM. IT WOULD SEEM TO BE CAUSE FOR REGRET, BUT IT IS ABSOLUTELY OTHERWISE. I AM HAPPY. I AM HAPPY THAT I LIVED HONESTLY, IN PEACE WITH MY CONSCIENCE. I NEVER COMPROMISED MY SOUL EVEN UNDER THE THREAT OF DEATH. I AM HAPPY THAT I HELPED PEOPLE."

SHCHARANSKY'S WORDS AND ACTIONS HAVE REVERBERATED AROUND THE WORLD. HE HAS NOT ONLY HELPED FREE HIS JEWISH BROTHERS AND SISTERS, HE HAS UNDOUBTEDLY FURTHERED THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL OF US, WHEREVER WE LIVE.

IN 1787, THOMAS JEFFERSON WROTE TO JAMES MADISON SAYING: "A BILL OF RIGHTS IS WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED TO AGAINST EVERY GOVERNMENT ON EARTH." JEFFERSON KNEW THAT IN 1787. IT TOOK THE NAZI HOLOCAUST AND THE MURDER OF SIX MILLION JEWS TO CONVINCING THE WORLD THAT AN INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS WAS APPROPRIATE. THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SIGNED BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1948 PRODUCED THAT BILL OF RIGHTS. THE HELSINKI ACCORD, WHICH 33 EUROPEAN NATIONS INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, AND CANADA AND THE U.S. SIGNED MORE RECENTLY, SPELLS OUT WHAT THESE FREEDOMS ARE.

THESE AGREEMENTS TAKE AWAY THE ARGUMENTS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS AS A CRITERIA IN FORIEGN POLICY IS INTERFERENCE IN ANOTHER NATION'S AFFAIRS. NO MEMBER OF THE U.N. CAN CLAIM THAT MISTREATMENT OF ITS CITIZENS IS NO ONE'S BUSINESS BUT ITS OWN. ALL MEMBERS HAVE A LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY MEMBER COUNTRIES.

GROWING UP IN OUR NATION OF IMMIGRATES, THE SON OF AN IMMIGRANT, I NEED NO EXPLANATION ABOUT WHY THE RIGHT TO EMIGRATE IS ONE OF OUR MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS CRITICAL FOR ALL OPPRESSED MINORITIES, DISSIDENT INTELLECTUALS AND DIVIDED FAMILIES. WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS, AND SO WE FEEL AN ESPECIAL EMPATHY FOR THE PLIGHT OF SOVIET JEWS.

I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WHAT WE ARE ASKING IS NOT TO CHANGE THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT OR ASK THEM TO ADOPT OUR WAY OF LIFE. THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT ALL CITIZENS HAVE THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND. WE ARE ASKING THAT THEY LIVE UP TO THEIR OWN LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS TO WHICH THEY ARE A PARTY.

THOSE OF US IN THE U.S. CONGRESS FACE THE QUESTION OF WHAT WE CAN DO TODAY TO PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF SOVIET JEWS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE MUST CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS. WE MUST CONTINUE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH REFUSENIKS AND DISSIDENTS: WE MUST CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE: WE MUST SEND TELEGRAMS TO BREZHNEV PROTESTING ARRESTS AND SENTENCING OF JEWS WITHOUT THE FOUNDATION OF LAW; WE CAN LEND OUR SUPPORT WHENEVER AND HOWEVER WE CAN TO YOUR DOGGED EFFORTS.

WE CANNOT SIT BACK AND CONGRATULATE OURSELVES, HOWEVER, WHEN SHCHARANASKY AND NUDEL AND OTHERS ARE IN PRISONS OR EXILE. THOUSANDS OF JEWS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR EXIT VISAS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVELIHOOD AND BASIC RIGHTS AS A RESULT. WITHOUT PRESSURE, AND PUBLIC ATTENTION, WE WOULD NOT HAVE THE

KATZ FAMILY IN MASSACHUSETTS, NOT WOULD WE HAVE THE RECENT UPSURGE IN EMIGRATION FIGURES.

YOU ARE PROBABLY AWARE OF THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION OVER THE PAST YEAR. NEARLY 30,000 JEWS LEFT IN 1978, COMPARED WITH 12,000 THE YEAR BEFORE. MOSCOW IS LETTING OUT MORE JEWS THAN IN ANY YEAR SINCE 1973.

THERE IS ALOT OF SPECULATION ABOUT THE RISE IN EMIGRATION FIGURES, BUT ~~NO ONE KNOWS FOR CERTAIN~~. SOME SAY IT IS THE SOVIET'S ATTEMPT TO GAIN OUR FAVOR IN ANTICIPATION OF A FIGHT OVER SALT. OTHERS SAY JACKSON-VANIK IS FINALLY WORKING. THE SOVIETS WANT TO EXPAND TRADE, AND ARE LIVERALIZING EMIGRATION FOR THAT PURPOSE. OTHERS SAY THE UPCOMING MOSCOW OLYMPICS HAS PROMPTED THE SOVIETS TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE IN THE WORLD, AND POSSIBLY RID THEMSELVES OF POTENTIAL TROUBLEMAKERS.

WHATEVER THE RATIONALE, WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THE FIGURES CAUTIOUSLY. WHILE MANY MORE JEWS HAVE LEFT, THERE HAS ALSO BEEN AN UPSURGE IN APPLICANTS, ^{probably} AS A RESULT OF THE PEACE MOVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND ~~A REPORTED INCREASE IN SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM~~. AT THE SAME TIME, THE HARD-CORE REFUSENIKS REMAIN. ONLY NEW APPLICANTS ARE GETTING OUT. WE CAN BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE NUMBERS, BUT WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE CARRIED AWAY BY THEM.

ANOTHER INTERESTING NOTE: THE INCREASE WAS MARKED AFTER OVERTURES BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND U.S. BECAME KNOWN. JEWISH EMIGRATION JUMPED FROM 1,900 PER MONTH TO 3,200 AFTER JULY REPORTS OF SERIOUS CHINESE - U.S. OVERTURES. WE KNOW THAT THE SOVIETS ARE EAGER FOR A SALT AGREEMENT. AND FOR INCREASED TRADE. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION SPENDS AS MUCH AS WE SPEND ON DEFENSE, AND THEIR ECONOMY IS HALF THE SIZE OF OURS. THEY WANT OUR TECHNOLOGY. THEY ALSO FEAR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHINESE.

PAUL E. TSONGAS
Speech for Harvard Hillel

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THERE IS A LOT OF TALK TODAY ON CAPITOL HILL AND WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION ABOUT FREEING UP TRADE WITH THE CHINESE. A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE IS IMMINENT. TREASURY SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL WILL GO TO PEKING LATER THIS MONTH TO DISCUSS SUCH AN AGREEMENT. THE ADMINISTRATION IS ADAMANT THAT FREER TRADE WITH THE CHINESE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SIMILAR AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE ADMINISTRATION SAYS WE CANNOT DISCRIMINATE IN FAVOR OF THE CHINESE AGAINST THE RUSSIANS. WE HAVE TO BE EVEN-HANDED AND LOOSEN TRADE RESTRICTIONS IN TANDEM.

UNDER JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT TO THE TRADE ACT, -- GRANTING MOST FAVORED NATION STATUS AND CREDITS -- IS LINKED TO ASSURANCES THAT THE COUNTRY IS MOVING TOWARDS A POLICY OF FREE EMIGRATION. IF THE PRESIDENT GETS SUCH ASSURANCES, HE THEN GOES TO CONGRESS WITH A WAIVER. THE WAIVER MUST BE RENEWED EVERY YEAR.

THE QUESTION OF GRANTING MFN TO THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE IS NOW THE SUBJECT OF CABINET LEVEL DISCUSSIONS. BOTH SECRETARIES BLUMENTHAL AND VANCE ARE CONSULTING WITH SENATE AND HOUSE LEADERS TO DETERMINE HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS -- EITHER WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF JACKSON-VANIK OR THROUGH ANOTHER ROUTE. WHILE MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER SALT TO DEAL WITH THIS QUESTION, IT LOOKS AS IF IT MAY HAPPEN MORE RAPIDLY.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS UNDER DISCUSSION. CONGRESSMAN VANIK BELIEVES EMIGRATION FIGURES IN BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA WARRANT GRANTING OF A WAIVER. HE DOESN'T WANT THE CONGRESS TO TINKER WITH THE JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT, BUT TO WORK WITHIN IT AND GET THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES.

WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION IS THE VIEW SHARED BY MANY SENATORS WHO HAVE VISITED THE SOVIET UNION THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NEVER GIVE PUBLIC ASSURANCES AS REQUIRED BY JACKSON-VANIK. ANOTHER VEHICLE MUST BE FOUND FOR ACCOMPLISHING THE GOAL OF JACKSON-VANIK. SOME SENATORS ARE TALKING ABOUT MODIFYING THE LAW SO THAT PUBLIC ASSURANCES AREN'T REQUIRED. INSTEAD, THE PRESIDENT WOULD MAKE AN OBJECTIVE DETERMINATION THAT THE SOVIETS WERE MOVING TOWARDS A POLICY OF FREE EMIGRATION. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY THE ADMINISTRATION IS TALKING ABOUT IS SUSPENDING JACKSON-VANIK FOR A FEW YEARS. OF COURSE, OTHERS, AS YOU KNOW HAVE DISCUSSED REPEALING THE AMENDMENT.

THE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING THE UNITED STATES TODAY ARE UNPRECEDENTED IN THEIR SCOPE. YOU AND I AGREE THEY REQUIRE FLEXIBILITY AND AN OPEN MIND. EXPANDED TRADE WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA IS TO OUR ADVANTAGE. HERE IN MASSACHUSETTS, SUCH TRADE WOULD BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY. CERTAINLY, INCREASING OUR CONTACT AND INTERACTION WITH THE SOVIETS WOULD BE A VEHICLE FOR INFLUENCING THE COURSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS THERE AS WELL. AND TRADE, AS OTHER FORMS OF EXCHANGE, MIGHT ENCOURAGE A MORE OPEN SOVIET SOCIETY.

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WE MUST NOT, HOWEVER, LOOSE SIGHT OF OUR GOAL -- THE FREE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS. THE QUESTION THE ADMINISTRATION AND SENATE AND HOUSE LEADERS ARE ASKING IS WHETHER JACKSON -VANIK, AS IT IS PRESENTLY WRITTEN, CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY. MY CONCERN WILL BE WHETHER MODIFYING IT WILL RESULT IN THAT END. WE CAN'T BE SATISFIED WITH INCREASED EMIGRATION OVER ONLY A FEW MONTHS. WE HAVE TO BE SURE THAT THESE INCREASES GROW AND THAT NOT ONLY NEW APPLICANTS CAN LEAVE, BUT ALSO HARD-CORE REFUSEDNIKS. IF WE DECIDED THAT QUIET, BEHIND THE SCENES GUARANTEES WERE THE WAY TO GO, I, PERSONALLY, WOULD WANT TO BE SURE THEY WOULD STICK. OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, I WILL CAREFULLY STUDY WHATEVER PROPOSALS ARE MADE. WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH CAUTION, NOT HASTE.

BEFORE ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY LEFT THE COURT LAST JULY, HE RECALLED THAT, WHEREVER JEWS MAY BE, EVERY YEAR, THEY HAVE REPEATED THE PHRASE: "NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM." HIS COMMENTS ENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

"NOW, WHEN I AM FURTHER THAN EVER FROM MY PEOPLE, FROM MY WIFE, AVITAL, FACING MANY ARDUOUS YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT, I SAY TURNING TO MY PEOPLE, MY AVITAL -- NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM."

UNTIL SCHARANSKY IS FREE AND IN JERUSALEM, YOU AND I HAVE TO CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT WHENEVER AND WHEREVER WE CAN. AS LONG AS HE IS IN PRISON, YOU AND I CANNOT BE COMFORTABLE.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT SCHARANSKY'S STRUGGLE IS NO DIFFERENT FROM STRUGGLES AGAINST INDIGNITIES AND ABUSES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THOSE MASSACURED IN CAMBODIA DIDN'T HAVE A SENATOR TO SPEAK FOR THEM IN WASHINGTON. WHEN STEPHEN BIKO WAS BRUTALLY MURDERED IN SOUTH AFRICA, FEW IN WASHINGTON EXPRESSED OUTRAGE. WHO CRIES OUT FOR THE GREEKS ON CYPRUS OR THE LEFTISTS STILL IN CHILE?

IF THE HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE HAS MEANING, IT MUST MOVE THOSE WHO SPEAK OUT FOR THEIR OWN PEOPLE TO ALSO SPEAK OUT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO ONE TO SPEAK FOR THEM.

Thank you.