

Student Coalition for Soviet Jewry

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
January 16, 1987

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to the members of the Student Coalition for Soviet Jewry on the occasion of your 11th annual Washington Lobby.

We who live in freedom have a very special and solemn obligation to those who are persecuted for their religious commitment. Soviet Jews are denied the right to their rich religious and cultural heritage because they are ruled by a state that denies the existence of God while seeking to usurp His place. Their struggle is our struggle, and their courage in confronting an implacable tyranny is an inspiration to free people everywhere.

Prisoners who have escaped the horrors of the Gulag assure us that our every effort in their behalf makes a difference to those who remain behind. Your work has helped to free such heroes as Anatoly Shcharansky. By proclaiming loudly and insistently that they are not forgotten, you have sent a message of hope and comfort to all victims of persecution.

You have my warmest good wishes as you continue your noble works. May you go from strength to strength and may the Almighty bless you.

Ronald Reagan

At the 11th annual Washington Lobby in 1987, President Ronald Reagan praised the work of the SCSJ on behalf of Soviet Jews and human rights.

Courtesy of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at NEHGS.



Natan Sharansky during a visit to the Netherlands following his release in 1986.

In 1977, the longtime refusenik and Soviet dissident Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky was arrested by the KGB and sentenced to 13 years of hard labor. The high-profile case encouraged concerned undergraduates at Brandeis University to form the Student Coalition for Soviet Jewry (SCSJ). For more than a decade, the SCSJ organized an annual Washington Lobby, which brought hundreds of college students from across the country to Washington, D.C., for a weekend of meetings with congressional leaders and representatives from the State Department and the White House. Their efforts helped keep the plight of Soviet Jews on the political agenda during a period of heightened Cold War tensions and low emigration levels in the 1980s.



Natan Sharansky with his wife, Avital Sharansky, and mother, Ida Milgrom.

Washington Lobby

The past six years have seen tremendous growth for the Student Coalition for Soviet Jewry. Founded in 1977 in response to the arrest of Anatoly Shcharansky, the Coalition's chief aim has been to get students actively involved in the movement to aid Soviet Jews in order that we may try to do just that: Aid Soviet Jews.

Towards this goal, programming on campuses all over the world has evolved in the form of International Student Solidarity Day for Soviet Jewry. This year, the focus of activity on the East coast of the United States will again be the Washington Lobby.

Originally, this Lobbying program consisted of thirteen Brandeis University students who traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak with their Senators and Representatives and to both educate these officials about the situation of Jews in the Soviet Union and to see what they could do as officials to aid their cause. Although 1982's Washington Lobby grew to include 700 students from over fifty colleges and universities, the purpose of the Day was the same.

Once in Washington, D.C., the Lobby day began with intensive briefing sessions on the current situation of Soviet Jewry and how to effectively lobby Congress. Among the speakers for these briefings were Paul Meek of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, Glenn Richter of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, and Mark Levin of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

After a question and answer session, the students were broken up into their individual state caucus groups to discuss and organize the meetings which would take place later that day.

The 700 lobbyists were then divided into five groups for Concurrent programming across the city. The first group was addressed by the 1982 National Lobby Coordinator, Michael Torop, as well as the Lobby's Congressional and Honorary Chairpeople, Bill Gradison, Barney Frank, and Christopher Dodd. Other programs included a Vigil in front of the Soviet Embassy and a meeting with Professor Richard Pipes of the National Security Council.

Following these programs, the students converged on Capitol Hill for meetings with their Home Senators and Representatives. In all, there were 68 Senatorial meetings and 165 Representative meetings of constituents with their own Members

This circular summarizes some of the lobbying efforts that were undertaken by college students during the annual Washington Lobby in 1982.

Courtesy of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at NEHGS.

SCSJ
ISSDSJ FEBRUARY 24, 1982
SOLIDARITY DAY

We have organized an International Student Solidarity Day for Soviet Jewry, to designate one day on which students will voice their concern over the plight of Soviet Jews. Every action on behalf of Soviet Jewry is a step in the right direction, and the more people calling on the Soviets to be lenient, the more likely it is that the more people will be heard. In addition, the heightened awareness fostered by International Student Solidarity Day should lead to a continuous involvement in this cause. Until the day when all Jews can live where they choose, no Jew should be idle.

This is the first year that we have had an International Student Solidarity Day. Ten countries will be having activities. In addition, this year we have fifty three campuses (a hundred percent increase from last year) participating in the U.S.A. (for more information on this see inside.)

Canada: The highlight of the Canadian students activities will be their rally in front of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa. Canadian Students are also lobbying parliament.

Costa Rica: Students in Costa Rica are demonstrating in front of the Soviet Embassy.

England: Universities are preparing educational programs through their Hillel organizations.

Germany: Students in Munich are organizing leafleting.

Israel: A diverse program has been planned at Hebrew University. The University President Harmon and Ruth Bar-On of the Israel Public Council for Soviet Jewry will be speaking. There will be a movie on Prisoner of Conscience Ida Nudel and a tape from the Moscow unofficial Hebrew teachers. There will also be singing and a Soviet / oled pantomime. In the evening there will be a special program for the School of Overseas Students. During the week, a Soviet Jewry petition signed by U.S. citizens will be presented to the U.S. consul-general. President Navon has been asked to give a proclamation of the day's proceedings and Prime Minister Begin has been asked to enter a statement in the parliamentary record.

Japan: An ex-refusenik studying on a graduate level in Tokyo will probably be speaking on one of the International Universities' Campuses. Japanese students are also attempting to deliver a petition to the Soviet ambassador.

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Panama: Students in Panama are having an educational program.

South Africa: Educational programs will be held in the evening in Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. Students from Bnei Akiva, Betar and Habonim youth movements are participating.

Sweden: Approximately seventy students will be demonstrating in the center of Stockholm.

U.S.S.R.: Jews in the U.S.S.R. know about International Student Solidarity Day, and their thoughts are with us: Alla Abersson, a Moscovite in her early twenties says: "You have on February 24, the opportunity (that we do not have) to ask your government and ours many questions and an account for their actions."

In addition we received the following statement from Mark Landesman, an Austrian student. "In solidarity with S.C.S.J., at least 1500 people were expected to participate on the 24 of February, in a demonstration in the main streets of Vienna. However threats from AL ASIFA, a splinter group of the P.L.O. forced the Vienna students to cancel these plans."

american participating campuses

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| ARIZONA University of Arizona | COLORADO Colorado College University of Colorado |
| ARKANSAS University of Arkansas | FLORIDA Florida International University Florida State University University of Miami University of Florida University of South Florida |
| California California State University Long Beach, CA California State University Northridge, CA Los Angeles Valley College Van Nuys, CA Stanford University Stanford, CA University of California Santa Barbara, CA University of California Los Angeles, CA University of Southern California Los Angeles, CA San Francisco State University San Francisco, CA | GEORGIA Emory University |
| ILLINOIS A symposium of 74 universities | INDIANA Indiana University Purdue University |
| KANSAS University of Kansas | KENTUCKY University of Louisville |

Beginning in 1982, the SCSJ organized an International Student Solidarity Day for Soviet Jewry to coincide with the annual Washington Lobby.

Courtesy of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at NEHGS.

