

Letter to Editor

A Political View of Summit Sunday

EDITOR:

I recently had occasion to participate in what was perhaps the largest demonstration to take place around The Capitol in U.S. history.

The issue was the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate, one of the most fundamental as well as one of the most universally accepted in our community.

The demonstration was a beautiful sight. Mathematical

estimates put the gathering at over 200,000, but that cold statistic hardly tells the story.

Prior to the demonstration, a group of mayors met with Assistant Secretary of State Richard Shifter, who is charged with the overseeing of fundamental rights within the sphere of United States foreign policy. The Secretary gave us a historical briefing on the issue of Soviet emigration from Soviet Russia. He explained that two other national origin groups also were prominent in the struggle to leave Russia: Germans and Armenians. As in the case

of Jews, these groups are victimized because of their desire to live in freedom and/or to maintain a culture and religion. He added that the repression of Jews extended to other specific forms of discrimination, most notably impediments to academic and economic advancement. And, he noted, the problem was not subsiding under the present Soviet leaders but rather increasing.

Against that background, we marched in the cold D.C. weather. The Florida con-

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tingent included American and Cuban Jews, political leaders and many young people. The mood was jovial and serious at the same time. Everyone shared what was in his bag or backpack. The human warmth overshadowed nature's cold. The clear sky prompted Shrnsky to proclaim that the justice of the cause had forced the rain to retreat.

Various leaders spoke at the rally. Other than refuseniks, the most vehement were New York Mayor Ed Koch and Vice President George Bush. Koch quoted Reagan's characterization of Communist Russia as the "evil empire;" he urged that in all negotiations, there be maintained a linkage between human rights issues within Russia and other external issues such as arms control.

Vice President Bush emphasized that the right of Soviet Jews both to emigrate and to stay and lead Jewish lives was non-negotiable.

The rally was obviously a success. The media coverage was extraordinary. Undoubtedly, the timing was right. Gorbachev has no doubt



Mayor Suarez

alleged policy of *glasnost* must go beyond words to actual deeds. It sensitized and informed Congressional and other leaders on the plight of Soviet citizens and the reality of totalitarianism.

One would certainly hope that all Americans would develop from the collective massive witness of the demonstrators and the in-

dividual, poignant witness of the refuseniks, a wariness towards the supposed softening represented by *glasnost*. In a published address, Secretary Shifter gave an explanation for this policy which indicates the shallow, self-serving nature of the new policy. Among other explanations, he explains that *glasnost* is a device to flush out incompetent bureaucrats, by promoting open criticism of them by their subordinates. He contrasts the supposed objective of *glasnost* with the reality of Soviet repression.

As we left Washington, D.C., having been exposed to the events, emotions and information of the day, I couldn't help but wince at the sight of the Soviet flag displayed alongside ours in front of the White House. I prayed for a world in which peace and justice were reconciled, so that the joint display might represent more than mere wishful thinking.

XAVIER L. SUAREZ
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Local News

Sunday, November 29, 1987

The Miami Herald

Section B

Marchers seek Jews' freedom

By GEOFFREY TOMB
Herald Staff Writer

A week from today as many as 100,000 Americans, more than 400 from South Florida, will march on Washington. Taste the old times. Mary Travers singing *Blowing in the Wind*. Kids and grandparents in earth shoes. Carrying guitars, signs. A thousand buses rolling down the New Jersey Turnpike.

But this is not time machine, not *deja vu*. This is different.

For one thing, mobilization for Freedom Sunday is not anti anything. It is to support 383,000 Soviet Jews and their right to leave the Soviet Union for Israel.

Next Sunday's march has full backing of the man in the White House, Ronald Reagan. George Bush, candi-

South Floridians to help send message to Gorbachev in D.C.

date and vice president, will march.

The goal is to exert international, not national leverage. Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev begins a 2½-day superpower summit in Washington with President Reagan Dec. 7. The march is intended to demonstrate to Gorbachev that the whole world is watching. Is *glasnost* from the heart?

"We have a unique window of opportunity here," said Jeffrey Berkowitz, South Florida summit mobili-

zation chairman.

"Gorbachev is coming to the United States asking us to enter into an arms agreement predicated on us trusting the Soviet Union. How can we, as a people, trust any country that has at least 400,000 people entrapped behind the Iron Curtain who have expressed, in writing, a desire to leave?

"He is acutely aware of public opinion," Berkowitz said.

Berkowitz is a veteran marcher. His

last two decades ago, took place when he was a Cornell student. Nixon in the White House. Candlelight processions.

"A generation had its hand on impacting the course of history," he said. A wistful look comes to his 39-year-old face. This trip he is taking sons Andrew, 11, and Mikie, 8.

"What are you going to say when your children ask you, 'Where were you on Dec. 6?'" he said.

"I was at the 1963 march on Washington when Martin Luther King said, 'I have a dream,'" said Judy Gilbert, 52, community relations coordinator for the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

She is going again in 1987. "I was very pregnant then. Now I am just

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FREEDOM SUNDAY

THE FREEDOM SUNDAY march on Washington assembles at 11 a.m. Dec. 6 at the Ellipse between the White House and the Washington Monument. At 1 p.m. marchers, by state and region, begin a one-mile journey down Constitution Avenue to the Mall area in front of the Capitol.

AT 2 P.M. celebrities and politicians such as Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary, Vice President George Bush and Sen. Robert Dole warm up the crowd.

MAIN SPEAKERS include Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, National Conference of Soviet Jewry chairman Morris Abram and former prisoners of conscience and refuseniks Natan Sharansky, Ida Nudel, Valdimir Slepak, Mikhail Kohlmiansky and Yuli Edelstein. The program concludes at 4 p.m.

Marchers have a message for Gorbachev

MARCH / from 1B

very old."

But this is different. This is the '80s. People charter jets to mobilize for marching.

The South Florida Conference of Soviet Jewry has chartered a pair of Rich International Airways jets. The DC-8s seat 189. Every seat is sold. Price is \$200. Food is Kosher. There will be singing on the planes.

All other available commercial seats have been reserved from Miami and Fort Lauderdale, where there are 50 seats taken. More planes could be filled if they could be found.

"If we had them, we could fill five planes," said Hinda Cantor, co-chair of South Florida Conference on Soviet Jewry and a vice president of Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

"There isn't a charter flight to be had in the country," said Berkowitz. Columbus snatched an L-1011. Detroit already filled a 344-seat plane, is working on a second and is trying for a third. Boston filled one 344-seat plane

and has 1,000 people on a waiting list. Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and Dallas are looking for more planes.

Baltimore has 135 buses chartered. Northern New Jersey vows to send 2,000 by bus. Even Youngstown has two buses filled.

"We lost six million Jews once because maybe we didn't do all we could do," said Berkowitz. He calls it the sin of silence.

"This very well may be the last chance to save Soviet Jews. Gorbachev will react to public opinion. Once the treaty is signed, the door may be slammed," said the Federation's Gilbert.

This march is also non- and bi-partisan. Republican Bush will march with Democrats like Florida U.S. Sen. Lawton Chiles and state Sen. Carrie Meek of Miami. Jorge Mas Canosa, head of the Cuban American National Foundation, is supposed to be at the airport to "send us off," said Berkowitz.

Former Cuban political prisoner

Armando Valladares, now living in Washington, is also expected to march.

Berkowitz envisions a coalition that goes beyond religion.

"It is difficult for anyone to sit back in apathy while our brother humans are being denied freedom, liberty and their independence."

Hinda Cantor, whose all-volunteer office on Soviet Jewry opened in April, is concerned about what happens after the excitement of march.

"I am scared to death that human rights might be sold down the river. We are dealing with a country that makes war on its own citizens. I wonder if this is a reliable partner," she said.

She wants the United States to bargain hard to get the Soviet Union to establish an emigration plan that would permit a sustained rate of emigration. Her goal is to see at least 51,000 Jews a year leave the Soviet Union. That number equals the 1979 level of Jewish emigration. Last year only 1,000 were allowed to leave.



CHUCK FADELY / Miami Herald Staff

Hinda Cantor, left, and Marilyn Himmel help in local planning for the Washington march.