

NEW YORK CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY
General Meeting

June 18, 1969 -- 4 P. M.

RABBI NORMAN LAMM - PRESIDING

PRESENT: Abraham Bayer; Jacob Birenbaum, SSSJ; Mrs. Clara E. Bloom, N.Y. Council-Pioneer Women; Al Blumenthal, AJCongress; Herbert J. Cohen, United Synagogue of America; Jack Fields, Free Sons of Israel; Sol Friedman, Workmen's Circle; Rabbi Jacob Goldberg, N.Y. Board of Rabbis; Jerry Goodman, AJCommittee; Martin Lapan, J.L.C.; Moshe Mann, Farband; Isaiah Minkoff, NCRAC; Edward D. Moldover, New York Chapter, AJCommittee; Frank Phillips, Poale Zion; Glenn Richter, SSSJ; Mervin H. Riseman, JCRAC & AJCommittee; Arthur Rosenbluth, B'nai B'rith; Elkanah Schwartz, UOJCA; David Sidman, Jewish War Veterans; Benjamin Silverman, J.W.V.; Mrs. Helen Telushkin, Mizrachi Women; Mrs. Eva Weissman, Nat'l Council of Jewish Women; Morris M. Winer, B'nai B'rith; Herman Brown, A.J. Congress; David Geller, AJCommittee.

The meeting was held at the Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 Street, NYC, Room 800-A. Rabbi Jacob Goldberg opened the meeting, greeting the representatives of the various Jewish organizations. He thanked them for their cooperation in the past, and introduced the new Chairman, Rabbi Norman Lamm.

Rabbi Lamm urged representatives to commit themselves to the development of a strong program of public education and public relations in order to be as effective as possible in the struggle for the freedom of the Jews in the Soviet Union. He then presented a citation to Rabbi Jacob Goldberg from the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, "for his dedication and persevering efforts" on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Rabbi Lamm also introduced David Geller, who will be staff coordinator of the New York Conference, and his two associates, Herman Brown, Director of the Metropolitan Council, AJCongress and Rabbi Louis Ginsburg, Director of Special Activities, National Conference of Synagogue Youth of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

Abraham Bayer reported on the TV program about Soviet Jewry, which was presented on Sunday, June 15th, during the half hour program of the N.Y. Board of Rabbis. Rabbi Lamm acted as moderator to a panel consisting of Dr. Moshe Dechter, Rabbi Israel Miller and Joseph Siev, a young student who had been in the Soviet Union very recently. The program was advertised in the N.Y. Times and in The Day - Morning Journal.

Jacob Birnbaum of SSSJ reported on the plans for the Simchat Torah demonstration formulated by the special sub-committee of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry. It was decided that Thursday, October 2nd, would be the date most acceptable to the largest majority of the youth whose presence is the key-factor in this type of demonstration. It was also felt that any later date would dissipate the drama and impact of the demonstration. The demonstration will be held at the Dag Hammersjold Plaza, between 6:30 - 7:00 P.M. The details of the program will be worked out by a special ad hoc steering committee. It was also reported that an intensive publicity campaign would be undertaken, aimed especially at schools and synagogues throughout the New York area. It was suggested that posters be prepared and mailed to several Day Schools, Sunday Schools and Hebrew Schools; that flyers be prepared to be inserted in any mailing sent by the schools to the students and their parents; and school principals be urged to have some program or some educational materials to which the students can be exposed prior to the demonstration, in order that the demonstration itself will be more meaningful to them.

Jerry Goodman, European specialist for the AJCommittee reported briefly on the history and present status of the Kochubievsky case. A general discussion followed his report regarding possible actions that might be taken by the New York Conference. Suggestions included: a solumn service on Tisha B'Av to be held in front of the Soviet Embassy; a demonstration organized in front of the Soviet Embassy which would hear Maurice Samuel and Bernard Malamud who wrote about the Beilis trial, which was held in the same building as that of the Kochubievsky trial, a one or two week long vigil in front of the Soviet Embassy, beginning as soon as possible, to be manned by representatives of various organizations and synagogues; a program which would include representatives of Amnesty International, members of the Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry and representatives of the American Engineering Society (since Kochubievsky is an engineer). Other suggestions included: the freeing of helium-filled balloons bearing the words: LET ME GO; and a hike, paralleling a similar type demonstration held in Israel, which would symbolize, and express in action, Kochubievsky's declaration that he "would go to Israel even if on foot."

Assemblyman Al Blumenthal voiced his opinion that a vigil would be the most effective means at this time to publicize the Kochubievsky case and volunteered to be one of the participants.

The general consensus seemed to be that, taking into account the urgency of an immediate activity, and bearing in mind the difficulties in arranging and coordinating demonstrations, the best activity under the circumstances would be a vigil. Mr. Sella will be call-

ing a meeting of the steering committee at the early part of next week to plan and implement the necessary arrangements.

Rabbi Lamm introduced Mr. Edward Moldover, President of the New York Chapter, AJCommittee, who told the assembled representatives that Mrs. Rita Hauser, U.S. Representative to the Human Rights Commission, had asked him to inform the Conference that she has been instructed to forthrightly press the case of Soviet Jewry in any international conference where it is applicable.

David Geller announced that it had been the unanimous agreement of the ad hoc steering committee that each participating organization in the Conference be assessed \$100. Members present were asked to vote, and the motion was passed.

Mr. Isaiah Minkoff, Executive Vice-Chairman of the NCRAC, urged strongly that a special meeting be held on how to ensure better communication between agencies, and between the leadership of the agencies and their membership, especially in a situation where a quick response is necessary. A short discussion followed and it was decided that the issue was of such importance that a special meeting would be devoted entirely to this subject.

The following announcements were made:

- 1) On September 21st, over TV Station WNBC, a special program on Soviet Jewry will be broadcast, featuring Elie Wiesel.
- 2) That there would shortly be announced a concert - by Nechama Lifshitz, a Yiddish singer who recently came from the Soviet Union. All organizations would be asked to give it their full support.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

DG/ah