

✓ Bob Abrams  
✓ Jan Pale

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

MAY 17, 1976

✓ Stanley Lowell  
- Jerry Goodman

ⓧ Brussels Conference

IT IS INDEED A GREAT PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO ADDRESS  
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY.

*Amey*  
YOUR LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY REPRESENTS A LARGE  
NUMBER OF AMERICANS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF  
THEIR CORELIGIONISTS IN A COMMUNIST NATION.

BUT LET ME TELL YOU TODAY: THE PLIGHT OF  
SOVIET JEWRY IS NOT JUST A JEWISH ISSUE. IT IS A  
MORAL ISSUE. IT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.

*It's Bicentennial  
Issue therefore  
it*

*Life, Liberty - Pursuit of Happiness*

IT IS AN ISSUE WHOSE CAUSE BOTH JEW AND  
CHRISTIAN HAVE JOINED.

IT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WHICH  
OUR GREAT NATION FACES AS IT FORMULATES ITS FOREIGN  
POLICY DURING ITS BICENTENNIAL.

L IT IS CRITICAL THAT OUR NATION PUT A PREMIUM  
ON THE SUPPORT OF EXISTING DEMOCRACIES AND THOSE  
PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO BE FREE.

L WE MUST DO THIS IN ISRAEL.

L WE MUST DO THIS IN GREECE, IN PORTUGAL, IN  
SPAIN AND IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF AFRICA.

L AND WE MUST AID AN OPPRESSED MINORITY IN THE  
SOVIET UNION.

L MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS AFTER LENIN'S REVOLUTION,  
THE FLAME OF JEWISH FREEDOM IS ALIVE IN RUSSIA.

h THE CZAR'S POGROMS, STALIN'S TERROR AND THE  
SECRET POLICE OF HIS SUCCESSORS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO  
EXTINGUISH THE JEWISH QUEST FOR FREEDOM.

h THE SOVIET JEW HAS NEVER GIVEN UP IN HIS STRUGGLE.

L AND WE MUST NOT ABANDON OUR STRUGGLE EITHER.

L THE MESSAGE MUST GO FORTH FROM HERE AND FROM

ALL ACROSS AMERICA TO THOSE IN THE SOVIET UNION WHO

LISTEN TO OUR VOICES: LET YOUR JEWISH CITIZENS LIVE

AS JEWS OR LEAVE AS JEWS!

L THIS IS NOT JUST A MESSAGE WHICH I VOICE IN

WASHINGTON L I HAVE SPOKEN THESE WORDS IN THE KREMLIN

AS WELL. L AND ALL WHO MEET WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS

AND ORDINARY CITIZENS MUST DO THE SAME.

L WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A HEATED ELECTION CAMPAIGN

IN WHICH THE TOPIC OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAS

BECOME AN IMPORTANT ISSUE.

↳ DESPITE THE FULMINATIONS FROM THE RIGHT WING  
OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, JERRY FORD AND EVEN RONALD  
REAGAN KNOW THAT A RENEWAL OF THE COLD WAR IS NOT IN  
THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

↳ AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT--BE HE DEMOCRAT OR  
REPUBLICAN--HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY TO NORMALIZE  
RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. ↳ WORLD PEACE DEPENDS ON  
IT. ↳

↳ THE QUESTION IS HOW AND ON WHO'S TERMS. <sup>what</sup>!

↳ LET ME GIVE YOU MY VIEWS.

↳ NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS SHOULD  
NOT MEAN THAT WE ACQUIESCE THROUGH OUR SILENCE TO  
SOVIET INTERNAL POLICIES OR PRACTICES.

WE HAD A PERIOD OF ACQUIESCENCE IN THIS WORLD IN  
THE TIME OF HITLER. PEOPLE DID ACQUIESCE, IN GERMANY  
AND ELSEWHERE, WHO KNEW THAT HITLER'S POLICIES WERE  
WRONG. THERE WAS TOO MUCH ACQUIESCENCE IN  
AMERICA BOTH TO JAPANESE IMPERIALISM AND GERMAN  
NAZISM WITH PEOPLE SAYING IT WASN'T ANY OF OUR  
BUSINESS.

THE FACT IS THAT FREEDOM IS OUR BUSINESS.

THE FACT IS THAT DEMOCRATIC IDEALS ARE OUR  
BUSINESS. AND WHENEVER WE SELL THEM OUT BY SILENCE  
OR BY NEGOTIATION, WE DO SO AT OUR PERIL.

WE MUST NEVER ABANDON THE LONG-TERM GOAL OF  
PEACEFUL CHANGE WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE COMMUNIST  
SYSTEM AS THE PRICE OF U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONSHIP.

↳ IF WE SHOULD DO SO, THIS RELATIONSHIP CANNOT  
LONG ENDURE.

↳ THESE ARE THE VERY BASIC <sup>framework</sup> PARAMETERS OF WHAT  
I BELIEVE SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SOVIET-  
AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP.

↳ UNLESS THEY BECOME BASIC AMERICAN POLICY, OUR  
ABILITY TO SOLVE THE URGENT PROBLEM FOR WHICH WE ARE  
GATHERED TODAY WILL BE SEVERELY IMPAIRED.

↳ UNLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA JOINS THE  
STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM FOR SOVIET JEWS THEIR CAUSE  
WILL BE LOST. ↳ THEY WILL REMAIN OPPRESSED ↳ ISRAEL  
IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH ↳ OUR ALLIES IN EUROPE AND ELSE-

WHERE ARE TOO OFTEN SADLY INDIFFERENT <sup>either</sup> OR ACCUMULATED  
BY THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

L WE REMAIN THE ONLY HOPE OF THE SOVIET JEW.

L BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT BEEN TOTALLY SUCCESSFUL IN

OUR EFFORTS, IS NO EXCUSE TO GIVE UP.

L BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE TOLD US "THIS IS NONE

OF YOUR BUSINESS", IS NO EXCUSE TO ABANDON OUR

STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS..

*Let everyone know -  
that human rights are our business!*

L IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT WE MUST RENEW OUR

EFFORTS AND DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

L LET ME TALK WITH YOU FRANKLY! DURING THE

REMAINING MONTHS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, I SEE

LITTLE PROSPECT FOR A RENEWAL OF SERIOUS SOVIET-

AMERICAN DISCUSSIONS ON THIS VITAL ISSUE.

↳ HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT ONCE WE HAVE ELECTED  
A PRESIDENT, THIS MAN SHOULD MAKE IT HIS BUSINESS TO  
APPROACH THE SOVIETS QUIETLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL  
AND PRESS FOR A SOLUTION TO THIS CRITICAL HUMAN  
PROBLEM.

↳ IT IS, OF COURSE, MY HOPE THAT A DEMOCRAT  
WILL BE PRESIDENT IN NOVEMBER.

↳ BUT NO MATTER WHO IS THE PRESIDENT, THE PLIGHT  
OF SOVIET JEWRY CAN NO LONGER BE VIEWED AS AN ISSUE  
APART FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF SOVIET-AMERICAN  
RELATIONS.

↳ A NEW ADMINISTRATION CANNOT REGARD THE PLIGHT  
OF SOVIET JEWRY AS A MINOR IRRITANT THAT IT MUST  
DEAL WITH IN SHAPING ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

↳ A NEW ADMINISTRATION MUST CONSIDER THIS ISSUE  
AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR WHICH IT MUST RESOLVE  
IN THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZING AMERICAN RELATIONS  
WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

↳ IT CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO TREAT THE MATTER  
AS AN AFTER-THOUGHT.

↳ IT CAN NO LONGER REGARD THE MATTER AS THE  
CONCERN OF A MINORITY.

↳ AND IT CAN NO LONGER SEEM TO BE INFLUENCED BY  
THE SOVIET VIEW THAT THEIR TREATMENT OF THEIR JEWISH  
CITIZENS IS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR WHICH NO FOREIGN  
GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS CONCERN!

*The Protection of* *more than an*  
↳ NO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IS AN "INTERNAL  
MATTER" IN A SHRINKING, INTERDEPENDENT WORLD.

AND THIS IS TRUE FOR CHILE, KOREA AND THE SOVIET  
UNION.

↳ THE TIME HAS COME FOR AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND  
HIS SECRETARY OF STATE TO MAKE THE WORLDWIDE STRUGGLE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS A FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT OF AMERICA'S  
FOREIGN POLICY.

*The definition of*  
*America is the dignity of*  
*the individual - the basic rights*  
*of people.*

WE CAN DO NO LESS AS WE CELEBRATE OUR FREEDOM.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO  
SUPPORT A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH PLACES CONCERN FOR  
THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS SECOND TO POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY.

I SUGGEST TO YOU THAT THE UNITED STATES CAN HAVE  
A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH IS BOTH PRAGMATIC AND MORAL--  
THE TWO ARE NOT INCONSISTENT - *in fact they are inseparable!*

THE TIME IS FAST APPROACHING WHEN A NEW ADMIN-  
ISTRATION MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE WITH THE SOVIETS  
TO SOLVE THE MOST PRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM OF  
OUR TIME.  
WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO DRIFT.

I KNOW THAT THE CONGRESS STANDS READY TO WORK  
WITH A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN AN APPROACH TO THE  
RUSSIANS.

LET ME CONCLUDE WITH THIS THOUGHT. <sup>President</sup> GERALD FORD

WENT TO HELSINKI IN AUGUST, 1975 TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT

WITH <sup>Secretary</sup> LEONID BREZHNEV AND 35 OTHER SIGNATORIES.

THIS AGREEMENT WAS MEANT TO ASSURE BASIC FREEDOMS FOR  
ALL PEOPLES, BE THEY SOVIET, AMERICAN OR EUROPEAN.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO INSURE THAT ALL  
WHO SIGNED THIS AGREEMENT LIVE BY IT. IT IS TIME  
FOR DOCUMENTS TO BECOME LIVING LAW.

LET US SEND A MESSAGE TO THE SOVIETS. WE WILL  
NOT LET THEM FORGET HELSENKI AND THE FUNDAMENTAL  
FREEDOMS IT GUARANTEES.

WE WILL NOT LET THEM FORGET THAT IN ORDER TO  
RECEIVE THE FRUITS OF AMERICAN GENIUS--BE THEY FROM  
THE EARTH OR FROM OUR FACTORIES--THEY MUST OBEY THE  
INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED CODES OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND HUMAN DIGNITY.

\* \* \*



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)