

Abraham Goldstein is a six year old boy in Tbilisi. A visa request was made for him while he was still a foetus, and has been made for him repeatedly since he was born. Just as repeatedly, his visa requests have been turned down, along with those of his parents, Elizabetha and Yishai Goldstein.

Abraham is the nephew of Dr. Grigory Goldstein, who renounced his Soviet citizenship after the Munich Olympic massacre, and, having been denied a livelihood, was given a year's exile in Siberia for "parasitism." Abraham is generally known as the Soviet Union's "youngest refusenik." The events of Iran/Afghanistan may have made his departure even more unlikely.

The Soviet Union is now talking about the return of the "cold war." The last time we had an officially proclaimed "cold war," no Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union. One of the chief reasons for increased Soviet Jewish emigration has been the leverage applied by the American government, largely at the request of American Jewry. The American government was able to apply such leverage because the Soviet Union became interested in American trade, grain, technology, participation in SALT and some moderation in America's friendship with China.

In the wake of America's reaction to the Soviet Union's naked imperialism in Afghanistan, almost all of that leverage has been wiped out, along, perhaps, with the Soviet Union's relatively liberal emigration policy.

Of course, other aspects of Iran/Afghanistan may well affect Abraham Goldstein's life, as well as those of all Jews everywhere. On the one hand, the whole Middle East struggle may have been put back into focus, along with Israel's critical importance for the United States. It has become clearer that the Middle East is *not* primarily a theatre for Israel-Arab conflict. Nor for Israel-Muslim conflict. Nor for a conflict between Israel's existence and American access to oil. It is primarily an arena for

Soviet-American conflict; and for general East-West conflict, featured by hostility towards America, even if that hostility is not Soviet-dominated.

The Iranian "students'" hatred of the United States was *not caused* by American support for Israel, even though that support further feeds the ideology of hatred. "Zionism," as used by those "students," and as used in the Soviet Union, is primarily translated as "American imperialism." So, for Americans in general, the need to support Israel may be put back into focus. Even the role of the PLO in the Middle East may have been put back into focus.

On the other hand, America's *ability* to support Israel may hang in the balance. If America proves impotent to seriously affect a basic deterioration in the Middle East, Israel's security diminishes drastically. There is some indication that the American public senses our stake in that area. Over many years, while Americans have been "sympathetic" to Israel by a 9-1 ratio, only about 20 per cent of them have said they would approve sending troops to Israel if it were about to be over-run. Last week that figure jumped to 40 per cent.

Thus, in several ways, Iran/Afghanistan may be a watershed in Jewish affairs. But, at the very least, Abraham Goldstein, and other Jews who want to leave Russia, are threatened by the relationship between the U.S. and the USSR. Of course, there has sporadically been a supplementary reason for Soviet emigration policy: the Soviet leaders may want to expel most identifying Jews because they are "troublemakers" (i.e.: heroically insist on their rights). We will find out whether that is still a consideration.

In any case, the Soviet Jews are going to need the direct moral support of American Jews more than they have in many years. Much of the mail is still going through. To begin with, Abraham Goldstein is celebrating his sixth birthday this month. His address is USSR, Gruz SSR, Tbilisi 380080, Microrayon 2, Oktiabrskaya Corpus 2, Apt. 24. Send him some simple, non-political birthday greetings.