

Case Of The Non-Jew

Of the 16 Congressmen from Northern California, 12 have just confirmed their commitment to the Mills-Vanik bill. That's the bill which would make most-favored-nation status for Russia dependent on more liberal emigration policies for Soviet Jews, and for others who want to leave.

Of course, the 76 nations of the "Third World" have just urged the Soviet Union to prevent Jews from emigrating. That's rather ironic, since the "Third World" nations constantly trumpet their interest in the principles of freedom. Indeed, many of them have a special stake in the principles of freedom, having been deprived of them for so long. And one of the foundation stones of political freedom is freedom of movement, freedom of emigration. Every international document on human rights lists that freedom near the top. The principles of human rights are all right in their place, but when it comes to the Jews . . .



Raab

However, it's not likely that this unsurprising position by the so-called unaligned (!) nations will have much of an effect in the United States. Indeed, there is some new support for the Mills-Vanik bill as a result of the Sakharov case. And therein lies a further irony.

Andrei Sakharov is the eminent Soviet scientist who has been publicly complaining about the lack of civil liberties in the Soviet Union. As a result, he has been severely harassed and threatened by the Soviet government. The attacks on him have accelerated during the past weeks. The National Academy of Science in this country has reacted with a strong statement, indicating that American scientists will no longer participate in joint Soviet-American scientific projects if the harassment of outspoken Soviet scientists continues.

The National Academy of Sciences was urged to react just as strongly during the years when Jewish scientists were being seriously harassed in the Soviet Union, as they continue to be. But while some scientists signed our protests, the Academy never quite responded as it has to the case of Andrei Sakharov, who is not Jewish. Why?

Maybe there's a clue in the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE column last Sunday by Nicolas Von Hoffman, a liberal-chic type who has in the past poo-pooed the efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Now, suddenly, the harassment of Sakharov puts a new light on the matter for Von Hoffman. He points out that Sakharov has come out in favor of the Mills-Vanik bill, and says that "those of us who are leary of intervening in another nation's internal affairs have opposed this idea, but maybe we had better have another look at it."

Why "another look?" Nothing is happening to Sakharov that wasn't happening to many Jewish scientists. It is somehow more important to Von Hoffman, and to the National Academy of Science, when it is happening to non-Jews? Do Jews count a little less? Or are the Von Hoffmans so accustomed to Jews being oppressed that they feel that it's a normal state of affairs? Or have they just become weary of Jews complaining, Jewish complaints not being at all chic these days. Whatever the answer, it has to be a little ugly.

On the other hand, there's the old Jewish axiom: never psychoanalyze a gift horse. Because of the oppression of a non-Jewish Sakharov, and his courageous endorsement of the Mills-Vanik bill, there's new hope. All of the Northern Californian Congressmen have been approached in recent days, and the following have indicated their commitment to the Mills-Vanik bill: Philip Burton (San Francisco), Leo Ryan (San Mateo), Paul McCloskey (Palo Alto), John Moss (Sacramento), Robert Legget (Vallejo), Ronald Dellums (Oakland), Fortney Stark (Oakland), Don Edwards (San Jose), Charles Gubser (San Jose), Jerome Waldie (Martinez), John McFall (Manteca), B.F. Sisk (Fresno).

So far, there have been NO such commitments from Don Clausen (Santa Rosa), Harold Johnson (Roseville), Burt Talcott (Salinas) or William Mailliard (San Francisco). Maybe they think Sakharov is Jewish.