

## Soviet Jewry In The New Year

The Soviet Jewry scene may change drastically during the next year. There are several possible scenarios:

**One:** The "Jackson agreement" now being worked out, will come to pass and will be implemented by the Soviet Union. In return for trade and credit, the Soviet Union will permit up to 60,000 Jews to emigrate each year, and will stop harassing those who request visas. The Jewish community's activities will shift from protest to even large programs of welfare and rehabilitation.



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**Two:** Whether the Jackson agreement worked out or not, the "detente" between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. will collapse, one of the points of deterioration being the Middle East.

In that case we will be back there we were 10 years ago. Emigration will be hated and official hostility towards Soviet Jews will harden. We will protest, but the Kremlin won't care.

**Three:** The Jackson agreement will be implemented for a while, until the "Jam-pot effect" sets in. The Jam-pot Effect: lucrative relationships having been established with Russia by American business, and the American economy, a reversal of the Jackson agreement by the Kremlin will not bring serious political repercussions here, even in the face of renewed protests.

In any case, there is a natural law for protests, known as the Post-Victory Flaccids: "an apparent victory having been achieved after years of loud and vigorous protest, a renewal of that protest after a relaxed period usually meets some groaning resistance from the public. This suggests that the interpretative machinery should not be dismantled too precipitously, even if a Jackson agreement seems ratified."

Whatever variations on these themes may ensue, the Jewish community is going to have to deliberate anew on strategies. It is doubly tragic that Hal Light will not be part of these deliberations. To some who knew him only casually, Hal's image was often that of a Sherman Tank. He bluntly pushed on to his objectives, indecorously strewn nay-sayers and bureaucrats in his path. But Hal was not a mindless militant. *He made a difference* — a claim which can be made for few men — because he was, finally, a thoughtful man. The proof is that many of those bruised nay-sayers and bureaucrats usually came around to his way of thinking.

Hal, for example, was instrumental in helping to develop the delicate model approach to Soviet cultural events which so characterizes San Francisco, and which was copied by so many other communities around the country. Listen to some responses from the non-Jewish community to the recent events mounted jointly by the BACSJ, the SJAG and the JCRC on the occasion of the Moiseyev. From one of the heads of the California School Administrators: "... my very deep appreciation for the manner, the very good taste of your protest ... It was a message that needed to be given, and it was." From one of the heads of the S.F. Chamber of Commerce: "I appreciate receiving your thoughtful letter ... your restatement of the plight of Soviet Jewry is both appropriate and necessary ... I shall make your thoughts known to many with whom I have personal contact." There were literally dozens of such unsolicited letters.

Whatever the scenario, there must be devised some such careful and inventive means of continually interpreting the situation to the general public, to keep them tuned in, not turned off. Hal's thoughtful approach, as well as his determination will continue to influence us. Come to think of it, as much as we will miss him, Hal Light will not be absent from these future deliberations; he will continue to *make a difference*.