

Word From Gulag

The *Ad Hoc Committee for Intellectual Freedom* is beginning to operate in California. It is now concerned about the general oppression of freedom in the Soviet Union. This is one of the marks of a new stage in American feelings towards the Soviet Union—and perhaps a new stage in the drive to free Soviet Jewry.



Raab

The most immediate concern of the Ad Hoc Committee, about which you will be hearing in the weeks to come, centers about Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn and his new book. He is, of course, the Nobel prize-winning Russian author who is the courageous standard-bearer for the fight for democratic life within the Soviet Union. And the book is "The Gulag Archipelago," smuggled out of the Soviet Union and just published in the Russian

language in Paris.

In this book, Solzhenitsyn documents his contention that the Soviet Union has both imprisoned and executed many more people than the czars ever did, and many more than Hitler ever did.

Many otherwise liberal people have long closed their eyes to this fact. A few did not. In the organized Jewish community, the Jewish Labor Committee was always a leader in protesting the general oppression in Russia, and the specific oppression of Jews in Russia. They were doing that in the 1930s, but not many liberals in the general or Jewish community wanted to believe them.

In the early 1950s, the same public protest was taken up again. At that time, the JCRC of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula produced a long radio series on KNBC, documenting the general repression of freedom in Russia, and the specific oppression of Soviet Jews. But again, the liberal population did not want to believe it—or were too discouraged by the density of the Iron Curtain.

When Stalin departed and the Iron Curtain seemed to lift a little, Is now existed and offered a refuge to Soviet Jews, who began to go public with their dissatisfaction. This question arose: should the fight for the freedom of Soviet Jews be a separate one; or just part of the protest against general repression in the Soviet Union?

The decision was made that the campaign for Soviet Jews should be a separate one, because it had a very specific objective; the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. It seems to have been a wise decision. But there have been some new developments. Limited emigration continues and some notables, like Valerie Panov and his wife, are being allowed to emigrate. But within the Soviet Union, the repression of Jews has become more intense.

At the same time, America's stance towards the Soviet Union has become more critical, after the first euphoria of the summit "detente" agreements. Embattled Soviet intellectuals say that if the United States just prostrates itself before the Soviet Union, it will strengthen the repressive Soviet government. From San Francisco, Harold Light was one of the first to point out the pertinency of the sour Wheat Deal to the general struggle for Russian freedom. Out of these considerations, much of the liberal community joined the labor movement and the organized Jewish community in helping to pass the Mills-Vanik measure.

The concern for the state of freedom within the Soviet Union is now a general one. The *Ad Hoc Committee for Intellectual Freedom* is composed of writers, academicians, labor leaders and enlightened citizenry. It is a liberal committee concerned with the internal and world-wide effects of illiberality in the Soviet Union.

The Northern California contingent of this committee is worried about Solzhenitsyn and his book, which is scheduled to be published in English in April. No one should miss the excerpts which the *N.Y. Times* has started to print in English in April. The Soviet Union recently became part of an international copyright convention, and has already suggested that it may want to use that agreement in order to prevent the spread publication of this book abroad.

And, in February, the Ad Hoc Committee for Intellectual Freedom is bringing Dmitri Simes to California. He's an academician, part of the democratic movement in Russia, who had to get out of that country this past year. Watch for the name of this committee. There's a new wind stirring. There is going to be more concern, by a broad and liberally motivated group of Americans, about what goes on inside Russia—as well as in the right to emigrate.