

## Vanik-Jackson Amendment

By ROBERT E. SEGAL

In the recent season marking the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the USSR received dramatic and unwelcome reminder that scores of our congressmen not only believe in our freedoms but are willing to act upon that belief in the crunch.

For as soon as had the United Nations commemorated the significant observance than the House, by a resounding vote of 319 to 80, approved an amendment to the trade reform

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bill telling Moscow forthrightly that the rights of free men are far more important to Americans than are political maneuvering and economic concessions. By passing the amendment put forward by Congressman Charles A. Vanik of Ohio and strongly championed by Senator Henry Jackson of Washington, 319 of our congressmen were making it clear that trade credit guarantees to the USSR would be out if President Nixon determined that Russia denied its citizens the right to emigrate or charged more than a nominal fee for exit permits.

This bold stand was fashioned by thorough soul-searching and persistent campaigning. In this instance, one has every right to use the clear term, lobbying. For pressure exerted by the White House and by powerful international trade interests in the United States necessitated a relentless effort to push through the Vanik amendment.

"You are in serious trouble in the Middle East," champions of the Vanik bill were told. "You are endangering detente. By bucking the President on this Russian trade issue, you are not only putting a damper on this glorious new era of big money flow into the United States from Russia through new commercial agreements, but you are actually making it tougher for Jews to get out of the Soviet Union."

These arguments were being advanced in high places in some of the darkest days ever faced by Jews everywhere. The appeals to pipe down, to sit it out, to take a stroll came when the ceasefire in the Middle East was a puny, flickering flame; when diplomats were getting ready for peace talks in Geneva; when Vienna was turning tighter than ever the lock on Schoenau Castle, the transit center for Jews bound for Israel from Russia.

In those troubled days, Congressman Vanik spoke for millions who cherish human rights above nearly all other blessings when he said: "These (trade) credits are not rights, but gifts that can be offered by the American people. The gift is an internal affair of this country. This amendment is in the American tradition. There is no security for the U.S. in the oil and gas fields of Siberia."

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