

Refusenik In New York

BY DEBORAH HART

Life for Jews in the Soviet Union today is "more difficult" than it had been for German Jews just prior to the Second World War, insisted Avital Scharansky, wife of the imprisoned refusenik, Anatoly Scharansky, as she spoke before 3,000 people in DIALOGUE 79, with Rabbi William Berkowitz, at New York's Institute of Adult Jewish Studies.

Speaking in halting English, the fragile looking, intense young woman also described her husband's living conditions in the prison 800 kilometers east of Moscow, where he has been held since his "espionage" conviction in July, 1978.

Allowed no correspondence or kosher food, he is also being denied urgently needed medical care, despite the pleas of his mother and others. According to recently released fellow inmates, Scharansky is suffering from a variety of serious ailments and is nearly blind. When asked by Rabbi Berkowitz, how Scharansky and his followers have found the strength to continue their struggle, Avital explained that the refuseniks "realize that they are defending an entire Jewish movement -- so they sacrifice themselves."

As for the response of non-Jews, Avital noted that Roman Catholic Priest and Congressman, Robert Drinan, has been most supportive and helpful. And in one of the few light moments in an otherwise solemn evening, Mrs. Scharansky recounted her meeting during a speaking tour of the South with "a cowboy wearing a big hat." Initially, the "cowboy" had asked Avital to act as his "agent" by distributing his business flyers. But on hearing the purpose of her visit to America, the cowboy was so amazed that such a situation could exist in the world, that he cried, and then asked what he could do to help.

Turning again to life in the Soviet Union, Avital told DIALOGUE moderator, Rabbi Berkowitz, how she, Anatoly, and many other re-

fuseniks, risked their lives to learn Hebrew. She also described their first seder, held in a fellow refusenik's Moscow apartment. And when Anatoly asked the Four Questions, observed Avital: "That Seder was about us -- we are going from Egypt." Asked if she ever loses hope for Anatoly's release from bondage, Avital replied softly: "Of course, it's difficult; but to do it is good for our People."

In reference to the State of Israel where she now makes her home, Avital observed that "I have found everything there that I have always wanted in my life." Noting that she currently has a "crazy life" Avital inspired another light moment, when responding to Rabbi Berkowitz's request for her to elaborate on that statement, she replied: "You called, Rabbi, and said I must come to your DIALOGUE, so I dropped everything and came." Responding, Rabbi Berkowitz said: "I thank you for being crazy!"

As the evening drew to a close, Avital urged Americans to write letters of protest to M. Sokolokov, Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR in Moscow and also to M. Malofeev Chistipok, TASSR, Box UE148/ST-USSR, which is where her husband is imprisoned.

HAPPY
CHANUKAH
GREETINGS

To Our Friends and Customers



MR. SY'S
CASINO
OF FUN

OSTOMY SUPPLIES
HOME
NURSING
EQUIPMENT

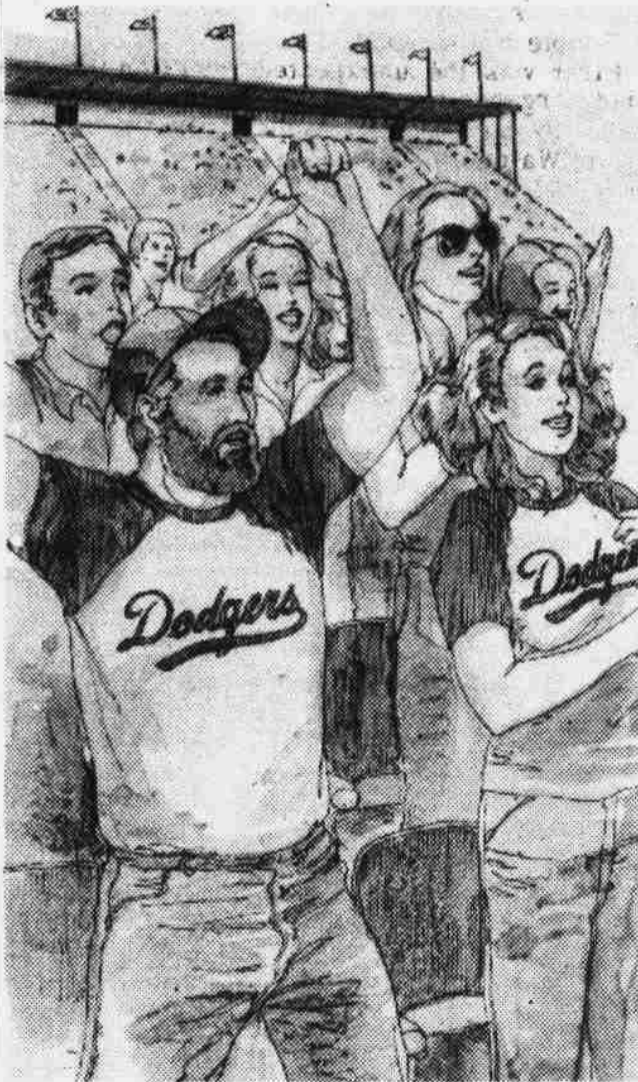
HAPPY HANUKAH
For Rent & Sale
FREE DELIVERY

DICK HERRMANN
Medical
Specialties,

Inc.
MSI
In Commercial Center

953-37 E. Sahara
Las Vegas, Nevada
(702) 733-2926

A
Crowd
Can Be
Fun...



Sunrise Hospital Medical Center - where good things happen - now **guarantees** your **privacy**. Sure, there are times when you feel like having a lot of people around, but there are other times when privacy is very precious. At Sunrise Hospital you are assured of the comfort and convenience of a private

...But
Privacy
Can Be
Precious.



room for only \$7 more per day than a two-bed semi-private room would cost. All you or your physician need do is call Sunrise Hospital 48-hours in advance to arrange your guaranteed private room. **Guaranteed privacy.** Another health care first. Only at Sunrise Hospital, the medical center.

Sunrise Hospital Medical Center

3186 Maryland Parkway • Las Vegas, Nevada 89109 • (702) 731-8000