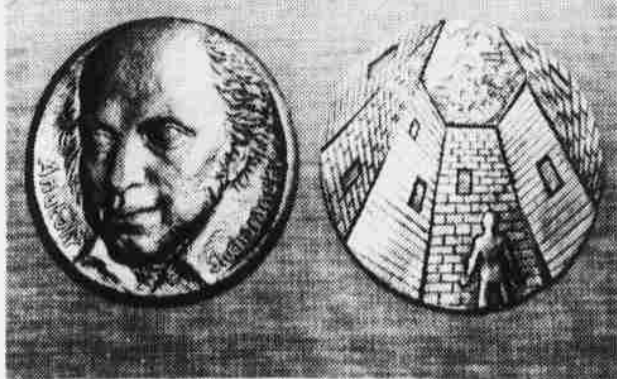


Shcharansky "Prisoner Of Conscience" Medal Created



In March of this year, 1500 delegates gathered in Jerusalem at the World Conference on Soviet Jewry to devise ways to stimulate Western pressure on the Kremlin to free Jewish prisoners and reopen the gates to emigration. Only 125 Soviet Jews left in February, less than left on an average day during the peak year of 1979. Reliable sources say about 10,000 families are now in limbo...having applied to leave...having lost their jobs...waiting for the rapidly dwindling number of exit visas.

Some "Refuseniks" lose more than their jobs; they are deprived of what little freedom is available to Jews in the Soviet Union and are banished to Siberia. Their only crime is their quest for freedom. Hunger strikes have been attempted in desperation...but haven't produced any positive results. Soviet chess champion and former grand master Boris Gulka ended his fast for freedom after 40 days. And, perhaps the best known "prisoner of conscience," Anatoly Shcharansky, continued his hunger strike for over 100 days to no avail. He was forced fed by the authorities, and remains in solitary confinement in the Chistipol Prison.

The Free World is not remaining mute. There have been letter writing campaigns, demonstrations, and even an International Tribunal to "investigate charges that the USSR has violated the human and civil rights of Soviet citizen Anatoly Shcharansky which are guaranteed to him by international treaties to which the USSR is signatory and by the Constitution and laws of the USSR." But in spite of this worldwide outcry, Shcharansky "celebrated" his 35th birthday in prison on January 20, as he has done for the past six years. He has been sentenced to a total of thirteen years in prison and labor camp in the infamous Gulag Archipelago.

Ten years ago (April 1973), Shcharansky applied for a visa to Israel. In spite of the fact that he had never worked in his profession as physicist, the reason given for the refusal was "access to classified material." On July 4, 1974 he married Avital, and the next day she was able to leave for Israel. He was again detained, and served numerous short 10-15 day prison terms, all without charges being filed. In May of 1976, Anatoly became a founding member of the Committee for the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreement in Moscow.

Shcharansky was arrested in March of 1977 on trumped up charges of "treason" and "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," including spying for the CIA. In 1981, he spent 185 days in a solitary punishment cell and was sentenced to prison again after a kangaroo court decreed that he failed "to work at rehabilitation" and continued to consider himself innocent." Shcharansky has not been allowed to receive any mail since 1981 and has not been allowed any visitors since January, 1982. To protest his isolation from the world, Anatoly began a hunger strike on September 26, 1982, the Jewish Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). He was kept alive through painful force-feedings of 1000 calories per day until finally relenting in February of this year. While young Anatoly Shcharansky "is alive," as Russian authorities have stated, his present condition is unknown. His mother has not been allowed to see him in

over a year!

To honor this heroic "Prisoner of Conscience," a monumental 4½" bronze medal has been commissioned and produced in very limited numbers. These medals will serve as a permanent reminder to all free people of the rights which are all too often taken for granted, but which are deprived countless of others around the world because of their religion, race or beliefs.

The Shcharansky medal's creator, Alex Shagin, is no stranger to the desperate situation of Russia's Refuseniks...he was one himself. Shagin studied for six years at the Leningrad Mukhina Fine and Decorative Art School, and upon graduation was selected by the Soviet Government to be on the artistic staff of the Leningrad Mint. In this distinguished position, Alex designed the official Apollo-Soyuz medals which were presented to the American astronauts during their visit to the Soviet Union, as well as many of the 1980 Moscow Olympics commemorative coins. But while Shagin's artistic output was considerable between 1972 and 1977, he wanted more...artistic and personal freedom. And so, he and his parents applied for exit visas. Shagin immediately lost his high position and had to wait over a year until the valuable documents arrived. Today, Alex lives in Los Angeles where his exceptional artistic talents have been utilized over the last few years to create distinctive award medals for major Jewish organizations. However, his medallic tribute to fellow Refusenik, Anatoly Shcharansky, is not only the most "meaningful" assignment since gaining freedom, but it is Shagin's first medallic work of art being made

available to the general public.

Shagin's portrait of Shcharansky is dramatically sculptured. The medal's reverse movingly depicts the powerless feeling of the Russian Jews and other Soviet citizens who are being deprived of the means to earn a living and are otherwise harassed when they express a desire for freedom. A lone figure is surrounded by high-rising walls; the walls may be real as in Shcharansky's lonely solitary confinement or they could represent the pressures applied by the Communist state. However, above the walls there is a hint of the outside world...a world of freedom. Shagin has purposely portrayed the hope for the future in a six-sided form, alluding to the Star of David, symbol of the Jewish religion that the USSR is attempting to eradicate along with other religions in that atheistic society.

A portion of the proceeds from the medal sales will be contributed to Shcharansky's wife, Avital, who makes her home in Israel, and to the Councils for Soviet Jewry which have been established in over 30 American cities from Washington D.C. to Honolulu. The impressive 4½" hand-patinated bronze Anatoly Shcharansky medals are available to those making \$100 contributions to the non-profit Magnes Museum, "The Jewish Museum of the West." Only 250 medals will be individually serial numbered and personally initialed on the edge by the artist Alex Shagin...so early orders are recommended. Contributions should be sent to the Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley, California 94705. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Soviet Jewish Emigration Statements Protested



Members of separated families appeal to Soviet officials for release of their loved ones. (Photo by Michael Kesselman).

Approximately 500 angry demonstrators gathered outside the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco to protest recent statements by the "Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Republic" that Jewish emigration from the USSR is coming to an end.

The protest was called by the Bay Area Council on Soviet Jewry (a member of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews) and the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula.

Protesters lined the sidewalk and lifted a 90-foot long computer printout sheet with names of thousands of refuseniks, some of who have been waiting to leave for more than 15 years. It is believed that more than 20,000 Soviet Jews have applied and been refused permission to emigrate. An additional 300,000 have expressed a desire to leave.

Standing opposite the protesters, near the closed iron gate of the Consulate, Greg Smith, a Russian-speaking board member of the Bay Area Council, called out the names of hundreds of separated families — families with no chance of ever being reunited if emigration is cut off.

A group of emigres stood together holding poster-size photos and signs asking Yuri Andropov to permit their mothers, fathers, siblings and spouses to emigrate and join them.

Eight-year-old Yelina Kotlyar from Kiev at-



Protestors outside Soviet Consulate display a 90-foot long computer printout with refuseniks' names. (Photo by Irwin Lazarus).

tempted to deliver a bouquet of flowers to the newly-appointed Consul General, Anatoly Myahkov, but no one would open the gate to receive it. She also had a letter in Russian asking that her grandmother, a refusenik, be allowed to join her family in San Francisco.

Earlier this month, members of the Soviet-sponsored "anti-Zionist Committee" said that "Jewish emigration had effectively stopped because most Soviet Jews who wanted to leave had gone." They also claimed that "Family reunification has essentially been completed, and for this reason emigration has diminished." (The New York Times, June 7, 1983).

Senator Alan Cranston sent a message of support to the demonstrators which called "absurd" the assertion that all Jews who wish to leave the Soviet Union have left. "I suggest," wrote Cranston, "that members of their anti-Zionist Committee be put to work stamping exit visas for Soviet Jews so that the Kremlin's assertion that all Jews who wish to leave have left will eventually become reality."

The protest was co-sponsored by the Bay Area Council on Soviet Jewry, the Jewish Community Relations Councils of the Bay Area, the Board of Rabbis of Northern California, the Soviet Jewry Commission of the Greater Los Angeles JCRD, and the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews.