

# Shcharansky Speaks To 300,000 At New York Solidarity Rally

NEW YORK (WNS) — Anatoly-Natan-Shcharansky made an emotional appearance before hundreds of thousands of demonstrators saying that their solidarity with the cause of Soviet Jewry was responsible for his release.

"All the resources of a superpower was not enough to isolate a Jew who hears the voice of solidarity with his people," Shcharansky told the huge mass of people gathered at the 15th annual Solidarity Sunday for Soviet Jewry rally in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza across from the United Nations. "All this has become possible because of you." In a brief address, the recently released former Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience, said "The solidarity of the people behind bars in the Soviet Union can be expressed only in spirit. But you, the people in the free world, can do much more."

The 38-year-old mathematician who now lives in Israel added that the Soviet leadership "who delude themselves into thinking they can keep as prisoners 400,000 of our brothers, must understand that they will never to destroy our solidarity."

The appearance of Shcharansky at the rally, sponsored by the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, is part of the former POC's 12-day visit to the United States, his first since his release from the Soviet Union last February as part of an East-West exchange of prisoners. He was imprisoned by the Soviets for nearly a decade on charges of treason.

The Solidarity Sunday demonstration began,

under brilliant spring afternoon skies, with the traditional march along Fifth Avenue, where thousands and thousands of people carried placards urging freedom for Soviet Jews. It took on an almost festive atmosphere, apparently boosted by the realization that the leading symbol of the Soviet Jewish emigration movement had finally been freed and reunited with his wife Avital in Isarel. She did not make the trip on her doctor's advice. She is in her second month of pregnancy.

The Reagan Administration's continued commitment to the easing of the plight of Soviet Jews was outlined at the rally by Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead. Speaking on behalf of President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz, Whitehead said "We honor him (Shcharansky) as the incarnation of man's determination to be free." Calling him a "symbol...a hero of our time," Whitehead added that "he is the first to remind us that others yearn to be free." He noted that Shcharansky will meet Reagan and Shultz in Washington. He is also scheduled to meet with Congressional members, and receive the Congressional Gold Medal, according to Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D. N.Y.).

John Cardinal O'Connor, who greeted the marchers as they passed St. Patrick's Cathedral, told the demonstrators that "I pray each day that those who wish to remain in the Soviet Union remain culturally and religiously free, and that those who wish to leave" will be allowed to do so. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R. N.Y.) said the

Soviets must live up to their previous international agreements, such as the Helsinki Accords. Governor Mario Cuomo spoke in a similar vein. "There can be no lasting trust...no lasting basis of mutual agreement" until Jews are permitted to emigrate, practice their religion in the Soviet Union and all Prisoners of Conscience are released, he said.

During the nearly 10 years that Anatoly Shcharansky was in Soviet prison, a chair was reserved for him at the Hebrew Institute synagogue of Riverdale in The Bronx, whose rabbi, Avi Weiss, as chairman of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, has worked ceaselessly on behalf of Shcharansky and the some 400,000 Soviet Jews who have applied to leave the Soviet Union.

On Saturday night, before a packed house, Shcharansky himself removed the "reserved" sign from his chair and sat in it for the delight of the throngs of people in the synagogue and in a separate hall set aside with closed-circuit television to accommodate the additional hundreds who had assembled to hear him.

Addressing the crowd, Shcharansky related how, about a year after his arrest, when he was still in the dark about efforts in the outside world to secure his release, he was permitted to go through documents pertaining to his so-called "high treason" as an American spy. Sifting through the papers, he was amazed to find footage from television coverage of demonstrations on his behalf, including shots of his wife in front of the Soviet Embassy. Having been constantly told by his captors that the world had forgotten him, Shcharansky was astonished to find, and be able to view, this evidence to the contrary.

Annoying his prisoners by requesting for hours on end to review the tape again and again, he watched the scenes of demonstration in his behalf while his irritated guards ironically advised him that these people could not help him. "What do you think, that these people can help you?" he quoted the KGB. "They are just students and housewives."

"And here you are," he told the crowd who had come to see and hear him, "students and housewives...who together with teachers and rabbis, lawyers and presidents, were fighting against the KGB." The crowd cheered wildly.

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