UNIVERSALIZING THE SOVIET JEWRY MOVEMENT:

THE NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE ON SOVIET JEWRY, CHRISTIAN ACTIVISTS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN THE 1970s AND EARLY 1980s

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"Our Christian delegation (…) will bear witness to the universality of the struggle to secure the legitimate human rights of Soviet Jews."[1]

Sister Ann Gillen

[1] "US Christian Leaders to Attend Brussels Confab and Are Expected to Issue a 'Call to Conscience'," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* February 4, 1976, accessed on July 15, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1976/02/04/archive/u-s-christian-leaders-to-attend-brussels-confab-and-are-expected-to-issue-a-call-to-conscience.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry as an organization advocating for Soviet Jewish emigration and as an interreligious cooperative. It asks how the Task Force, under the supervision of the American Jewish Committee, contributed to the Soviet Jewry movement and how the organization's efforts differed from those of the leading Soviet Jewry organizations. As an interpretive framework, the tension between particularism and universalism is used. The thesis argues that the Task Force universalized the base and the agenda of the Soviet Jewry movement. By mobilizing Christians on a local, national and international level, the Task Force broadened the base, often using human rights and human rights instruments such as the Helsinki Final Act as a means to universalize the struggle. Furthermore, the Task Force universalized the agenda by including Soviet Christians in their advocacy, thus taking a universalistic approach to linkage. As an interreligious cooperative, the Task Force advanced interreligious dialogue in the United States and helped promote the particularistic American Jewish agenda. Consequently, the American Jewish Committee allowed the Task Force flexibility regarding linkage, although they preferred a particularistic approach themselves.

List of Abbreviations

AJA	American Jewish Archives
AJC	American Jewish Committee
AJC-DA	American Jewish Committee Digital Archives
AJCSJ	American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry
CCSA	Cleveland Committee on Soviet Anti-Semitism
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
JDL	Jewish Defense League
MFN	Most favored nation
NCCIJ	National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice
NCSJ	National Conference on Soviet Jewry
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SSSJ	Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry
UCSJ	Union of Councils for Soviet Jews
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

On March 19–20, 1972 the National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry took place in Chicago, Illinois. It brought together clergymen, theologians and staff members from America's major Roman Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Evangelical and Jewish organizations to discuss the plight of the so-called refuseniks, Jews who were denied exit visas to emigrate from the Soviet Union. The Consultation succeeded in reaching a large audience of religious leaders and was widely reported on in the religious and mainstream US press. With over 500 people in attendance, *Religious News Service* concluded that it was the "largest national interreligious assembly ever held for the cause of Soviet Jewry." The organization behind the Consultation was the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry which had grown out of a relationship between the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ) in October 1971. After two days of lectures, workshops and seminars, the Consultation's attendees voted for the Task Force to become a permanent organization.[2] This thesis assesses the importance of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry as both an organization for Soviet Jewry and as an interreligious cooperative.

The existing scholarly literature on the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry is surprisingly limited.[3] In his early account of the Soviet Jewry movement, historian William Orbach gives the Task Force only a cursory examination. Although he argues that the 1972 Consultation was "crucial" in popularizing the movement and that the Task Force

[2] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, Box 72, Folder 1: Soviet Jewry, 1969–1970, MSC 603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945–1992 [hereafter: Tanenbaum Collection], American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio [hereafter: AJA].

[3] An exception is an upcoming book by historian Fred A. Lazin about the role of American Christians and the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry in the American Soviet Jewry movement. This book will, unfortunately, be released too late to be of use to this thesis. See: Fred A. Lazin, *American Christians and the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry: A Call to Conscience* (London: Lexington Books, 2019).

contributed to broadening the movement's base, he does not discuss the organization in detail.[4] Historian Henry Feingold's examination of the American Jewish movement for Soviet Jewish emigration, similarly, only mentions the Task Force in passing and connects the organization to the right of emigration and freedom of religion.[5] Through analyzing the Task Force, this thesis aims to contribute to a growing debate on the Soviet Jewry movement that has made important strides in chronicling other aspects of this struggle, but has neglected its interreligious dimensions.

Within the historiography of the Soviet Jewry movement, much attention has been paid to documenting the practical aspects of why Soviet Jews desired to emigrate and why the Soviet Union eventually decided to let some of them go. A number of these works, such as lawyer Leonard Schroeter's *The Last Exodus* and Orbach's *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews* were already published during the lifetime of the Soviet Jewry movement.[6] One example of a later study investigating the Soviet Union's decision to eventually let some Jews emigrate comes from the former Dutch ambassador to the Soviet Union, Petrus Buwalda, in his book *They Did Not Dwell Alone: Jewish Emigration from the Soviet Union, 1967–1990*. Against the "external theory" emphasizing the importance of foreign pressures and the "internal theory" emphasizing internal considerations, Buwalda proposes the "interaction theory." He argues that foreign pressures played an important role in getting Soviet leaders to allow Jews to emigrate but insists "that foreign pressure did not spring up by itself; it had to be evoked first by pressure from inside the country."[7] Thus, Buwalda's theory holds that it was the interaction between the

[4] William W. Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), 66–7.
[5] Henry L. Feingold, *"Silent No More": Saving the Jews of Russia, The American Jewish Effort, 1967–1989* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 163.
[6] Leonard Schroeter, *The Last Exodus* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1979).; Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews.*
[7] Petrus Buwalda, *They Did Not Dwell Alone: Jewish Emigration from the Soviet Union, 1967–1990* (Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997), xvi.

Soviet Jewish desire to emigrate and international politics that eventually led to Soviet Jewish emigration.[8]

Whereas much of Buwalda's analysis focuses on the official, intergovernmental aspects of the struggle for Soviet Jewish emigration, journalist Gal Beckerman's award-winning work *When They Come For Us, We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry* spends the majority of its narrative on the rise of grassroots movements in both the Soviet Union and the United States. Beckerman argues that American Jews were as important to the movement as their Soviet counterparts, stating that "while Soviet Jews were pushing for unobstructed emigration from inside the Soviet Union, American Jews were pushing for it from the outside."[9] According to Beckerman, the Soviet Jewry movement was essentially about redemption. For Soviet Jews, this redemption was physical and was achieved by emigrating. For American Jews, redemption was psychological.[10] As Holocaust consciousness rose among American Jews, Beckerman argues, so did feelings of guilt stemming from the idea that they had not done enough to save European Jews from Hitler's Final Solution.[11] Consequently, the determination not to let this happen again and the memory of the Holocaust became the "emotional engine" of the movement.[12]

The importance of Holocaust memory as a motivating factor is also put forward by Feingold who, like Beckerman, contends that the Soviet Jewry movement was so important to American Jews "because of the opportunity it offered for some kind of redemption from the guilt felt regarding its imagined failure during those [wartime] years."[13] Much more than Beckerman, however, Feingold sees the success of the movement in its ability to generate a

[8] Buwalda, *They Did Not Dwell Alone,* xvi–xvii.
[9] Gal Beckerman, *When They Come For Us We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2010), 7.
[10] Beckerman, *When They Come For Us,* 6.
[11] Beckerman, 40–1.
[12] Beckerman, 465.
[13] Feingold, "*Silent No More",* 306.

public relations campaign that first raised awareness and then put the Soviet Jewry issue at the top of the Cold War agenda. In this regard, the Soviet Jewry movement became "quintessentially a struggle for human rights."[14] In a similar argument as those made by historians Barbara Keys and Sara Snyder, Feingold argues that human rights became a weapon in the ideological Cold War for those opposed to détente and that the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration was intrinsically linked to this effort. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Helsinki Final Act, for example, were such human rights measures that implicitly or explicitly included the right of free emigration for Soviet Jews. [15]

Some, however, contend that Jews shied away from connecting their concerns to human rights after the Six-Day War of 1967. Historian James Loeffler, for example, argues that Jews abandoned human rights activism because the human rights community turned against Israel and Jewish interests, exemplified in the UN "Zionism is Racism" Resolution of 1975.[16] He contends that while the Soviet Jewry movement and human rights were connected, Jewish activism and Jewish activists had little to do with it. In contrast to Feingold, Loeffler does not regard the Soviet Jewry movement as a continuation of Jewish human rights activism, traditionally aimed at the United Nations (UN). Instead, he argues that the Soviet Jewry movement should be seen as a part of American human rights history instead of Jewish human rights history.[17] Political scientist Michael Barnett, similarly, argues that Jews were quick to adopt human rights language but distanced themselves from human rights activism after 1967. In this period, Barnett argues, American Jews were able to link Jewish interests to American

[14] Feingold, 302, 307.
[15] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 302–9. See: Barbara J. Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) and Sara B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[16] James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 172, 232, 261, 275.
[17] Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans,* 290–2.

interests, thus no longer needing human rights language.[18] Historian Michael Galchinsky, moreover, contends that American Jews' commitments to human rights, Jewish nationalism and domestic pluralism increasingly conflicted after the 1960s.[19] Nevertheless, he argues that Jewish human rights activism persisted in some cases, pointing to the Soviet Jewry movement as an instance where Jews created "a global human rights network" to advocate for Soviet Jewish emigration.[20]

Another aspect of the Soviet Jewry movement that deserves mention is the role of Israel. From its inception, Israel had an important stake in the movement. As Feingold explains, Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel "represented not only the fulfillment of the Zionist imperative of 'ingathering of the exiles' but also a solution to its dire need for population."[21] When many Jews— the so-called "drop-outs"— leaving the Soviet Union for Israel changed course in processing centers in Vienna and chose to head elsewhere, this led to conflict between Israel and American Jews.[22] As historian Fred Lazin's analysis of this conflict shows, Israel stressed that Soviet emigration in essence was about *Aliyah,* about return to the homeland. American Jews, however, supported freedom of choice, which means that they believed that Soviet Jews should be able to choose which country they wished to emigrate to.[23] Again, the memory of the Holocaust played an important role. With the American government having refused entry to refugees fleeing from the Third Reich, American Jews were hesitant about stopping Soviet Jews from coming to the US if they wished to do so.[24]

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[18] Michael N. Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 13, 191–2, 196.
[19] Michael Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights: Dancing at Three Weddings* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 3.
[20] Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights,* 52.
[21] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 46.
[22] Feingold, 149.
[23] Fred A. Lazin, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics: Israel versus the American Jewish Establishment* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 2.
[24] Lazin, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewy in American Politics,* 2.

What is missing from the historiography on the Soviet Jewry movement is an account of how relations between American Jews and other religious groups impacted and were impacted by this movement, which is the gap that this thesis aims to fill. In agreement with Beckerman, Buwalda and Feingold, this thesis regards the American Jewish effort as fundamental to the Soviet Jewry movement. However, American Jews could not do it alone. As Feingold explains, they were not a sovereign actor and had to lobby the US government to act on their behalf which leads Feingold to stress the importance of the movement's public relations campaign.[25] In order to succeed, as broad a base as possible had to support the cause. While much research has been devoted to studying how the American government became involved, such efforts are lacking with regards to how non-Jewish religious groups were mobilized for the Soviet Jewry movement. Contrary to Beckerman's emphasis on the importance of non-establishment individuals in the grassroots movement, this thesis shows that the American Jewish establishment had a major role in coordinating the efforts to mobilize religious Americans. Finally, this thesis underwrites Feingold's argument that the Soviet Jewry movement was closely connected to human rights. Portraying the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration as a human rights concern, I contend, was an important method used to mobilize religious groups.[26]

Research Questions and Aims

The main research question in this thesis is "How did the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, under the supervision of the American Jewish Committee, contribute to the Soviet Jewry movement during the 1970s and early 1980s and in what ways did this organization's efforts differ from those of the leading organizations within the Soviet Jewry movement?" Sub-

[25] Feingold, *"Silent No More"*, 294.
[26] Unless used or defined differently in a quoted and/or referenced document, I use the rights and principles outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human as the definition of the term "human rights". "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, accessed August 2, 2019, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.

questions that this thesis explores are "what methods did the Task Force use to mobilize non-Jewish religious groups?", "what (concrete) results did the Task Force achieve regionally, nationally, and internationally?", "how did the current state of interreligious relations impact the work of the Task Force, and vice versa?" and finally, "what are the main differences between the Task Force's work and that of leading Soviet Jewry organizations?"

As mentioned, the main aim of this thesis is to contribute to the debate on the Soviet Jewry movement by analyzing how non-Jewish religious groups were mobilized for the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration. Apart from this, I also aim to provide an account of the state of interreligious relations in the 1970s and show how these relations changed by working for a joint cause. Furthermore, this thesis aims to be of interest to those studying the (international) human rights movement by providing an analysis of how human rights featured in the Task Force's efforts and consequently, of how the interaction between Jews and human rights developed in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Theory and Methodology

In interpreting the Task Force's activities and impact, I make use of theoretical ideas concerning the tension between universalism and particularism which features prominently in Jewish history and theology. In essence, this tension comes down to the question of what kind of people the Jews are or aspire to be in relation to non-Jews, each other and the world as a whole. According to Barnett, particularism sees Jews as the chosen people, obliged to keep their covenant with God and take care of each other first. Universalism, on the other hand, sees Jews as a prophetic people obliged to take care of both Jews and non-Jews and to work to better the world.[27] Theologist Svante Lundgren, similarly, argues that what matters here is not merely a group's or individual's personal orientation, but also the orientation they believe the Jewish

[27] Michael N. Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 7.

people as a whole should have.[28] One important issue that particularism and universalism differ on concerns the Jewish contribution to the world. Particularism neglects the influence of Judaism on the world and focuses its attention on Jews only, seeing non-Jewish affairs as a waste of time. Universalism, on the other hand, holds that Jews should focus their efforts for peace and justice on the entire world and that the Jewish impact on wider society is important.[29]

I use universalism and particularism as a framework to interpret the Task Force's methods and results, and the differences between the Task Force's contributions and those of other organizations. This framework is appropriate because it offers a clear lens through which to interpret these factors as well as an approach that situates the Task Force and Soviet Jewry movement at large within broader Jewish history. Furthermore, the balance between universalism and particularism allows me to identify the continuity and discontinuity of the role human rights play in Jewish activism. As mentioned, scholars such as Loeffler and Barnett argue that Jewish human rights activism all but disappeared after 1967. Through analyzing the Task Force's use of human rights language and their motivations to do so through the lens of particularism and universalism, I am able to analyze how the American Jewish approach to human rights developed after 1967.

Methodologically, this thesis approaches its topic primarily from the discipline of history. Furthermore, methods and insights from other disciplines are used in an integrative manner. For example, the interpretive framework relies heavily on theoretical ideas from the field of theology and the analysis of interreligious relations will borrow insights from the field of social studies. The main method, however, is historical and consists of a qualitative analysis of both primary and secondary sources. The bulk of the source material is composed of archival material relating to the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry drawn from the

[28] Svante Lundgren, *Particularism and Universalism in Modern Jewish Thought* (Binghamton: Global Publications: 2001), 6.
[29] The other four issues are the concept of the chosen people, the nature of the Jew, the attitude towards converts and the view of non-Jews in the messianic age. See: Lundgren, *Particularism and Universalism,* 6–12.

American Jewish Committee Digital Archives and the Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection housed at the American Jewish Archives. This material is supplemented by documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States*–series and the Ronald Reagan Library. Next, I use articles from Anglo-Jewish periodicals and newspapers, including the *American Jewish Year Book, Commentary,* the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* and *The Jewish Chronicle*.[30] This last paper is used to assess the impact of regional Task Force activities. Finally, articles from the mainstream press, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, are used to gauge the national impact of the Task Force.[31]

Although the chosen methodology is deemed appropriate for this study's scope and focus, it is not without problems. First, the vast majority of the sources were produced by the Task Force themselves and they, consequently, present the view of the Task Force. As archives from cooperating non-Jewish groups were not consulted, this might result in a biased view. To combat this issue, I pay close attention to the correspondence and news articles from these groups that were found in the Task Force materials. Second, although the organization remained active until 1987 this thesis focuses primarily on the Task Force's activities in the 1970s and early 1980s. Activism for Soviet Jewry greatly increased during the 1970s and turned the issue into a global cause at the end of the decade. This period, thus, forms an appropriate time frame for this study.[32] Moreover, the vast majority of digitized source material comes from this period, making the choice to focus on the 1970s and early 1980s a practical one as well.

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[30] All of these periodicals are accessed online. The *American Jewish Year Book* is accessed through the AJC Digital Archives. *The Jewish Chronicle* is accessed through the Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project. The other periodicals are accessed through their own digital archives. "Welcome," The Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project, accessed July 9, 2019, https://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/portal/collections/pjn/index.jsp.; "Archive," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* accessed July 9, 2019, https://www.jta.org/archive.; "Issues," *Commentary,* accessed 9 July 2019, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/issues/.

[31] The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are accessed through Proquest Historical Newspapers which is accessed through the library of Leiden University. ProQuest, accessed on July 31, 2019, https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/?accountid=12045.

[32] Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue,* 110.

Thesis Statement and Disposition

In this thesis, I argue that the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry contributed to the Soviet Jewry movement by mobilizing a wide range of Christian groups for the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration by reaching out to the Christian establishment and grassroots on a local, national and international level. Their agenda increasingly included advocating for freedom of religion for Soviet Christians. Simultaneously, the Task Force's efforts contributed to bettering interreligious relations in the US, which sets the Task Force apart from the leading organizations in the Soviet Jewry movement.

This argument will be supported in three chapters. The first chapter consists of a literature review and provides background information on the Soviet Jewry movement, the position of the Jews in the US and the involvement of Jews in the international human rights movement. The second chapter discusses the Task Force's activities and methods to mobilize non-Jewish religious groups. Attention will be paid to the Task Force's activities on a local, national and international level. Finally, this chapter considers the results the Task Force achieved. The third chapter goes into detail as to what set the Task Force apart from other organizations in the Soviet Jewry movement. It addresses the discussion on whether or not to include Soviet Christians in their agenda and the interplay between the Task Force and the state of interreligious relations in the US. Finally, the conclusion will summarize this thesis's findings, consider their implications and place them within the historiographical debate.

Chapter 1. Literature Review: Soviet Jews, American Jews, Human Rights

The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry stood far from alone in their fight for Soviet Jewish emigration. On the contrary, the Soviet Jewry movement encompassed a large number of organizations and individuals all fighting for the same cause. Similarly, the movement did not operate in a vacuum. Instead, it was closely connected to and mutually influenced by, for example, the position of Jews in American society, the human rights movement and the international Cold War climate. This chapter serves as both a literature review and an historical background. It builds upon the historiographical debate discussed in the Introduction and makes explicit the various connections and relationship mentioned above. It does not aim to provide a complete history of the Soviet Jewry movement nor of its historical context. Rather, it aims to point out those aspects that have influenced the Task Force's activities and achievements that are discussed in the next chapters.

The American Soviet Jewry Movement

The American Soviet Jewry movement was born in response to a particularistic concern; it responded to the deteriorating situation of Jews in Eastern Europe. Starting in 1948, the Soviet authorities starting a campaign to eradicate Jewish cultural life.[33] Furthermore, as Galchinsky describes, Jews were deprived of their rights in various manners. He states:

> Over two million Jews in the USSR were being deprived of their rights to emigrate, to move freely inside the country, to practice their religion freely, to transmit their cultural heritage to their children, to work, to make telephone and postal contacts, and to be reunified with their families abroad. They were detained for long periods without counsel, subjected to show trials, sent into exile, deprived of citizenship, and incarcerated in prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals.[34]

[33] Albert D. Chernin, "Making Soviet Jews an Issue," in *A Second Exodus: The American Movement to Free Soviet Jews,* ed. Murray Friedman and Albert D Chernin (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 16.
[34] Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights,* 51.

In addition to these push factors, the pull factor of wanting to make *Aliyah,* of going to Israel, contributed to Soviet Jews' desire to emigrate.[35]

The West did not become aware of nor involved in the struggle until the mid–1960s. According to former activist Albert Chernin, in mid–1963 "growing concern about developments in the Soviet Union led Jews in the highest echelons of the US government, top national Jewish leadership, the rabbinate, and grassroots to call for an end to the low priority and low profile the American Jewish community had given Soviet anti-Semitism."[36] Several organizations devoted to the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration were formed on both a grassroots and establishment level. Among these organizations were the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry (AJCSJ), which was later renamed to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), Lou Rosenblum, Daniel Litt and Herbert Caron's grassroots initiative the Cleveland Committee on Soviet Anti-Semitism (CCSA) and Jacob Birnbaum's Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ).[37] Most organizations kept their activities within the realm of diplomacy, raising awareness and peaceful protest. One notable exception was Rabbi Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League (JDL) whose members turned to violent protests and even bombings to advance their cause.[38]

The early 1970s saw Soviet Jews reach the agenda of the Cold War and US-Soviet relations.[39] At the end of 1972, Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-WA) put the issue of Soviet Jews firmly on the (inter)national agenda when he introduced what would become the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.[40] According to Keys, Jackson was a conservative Democratic opposed to détente who "grasped the language of international human rights" and used it to support

[35] Yaacov Ro'i, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewish Emigration, 1948–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.
[36] Chernin, "Making Soviet Jews an Issue," 29.
[37] Chernin, "Making Soviet Jews an Issue," 29.; Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews,* 20–7.
[38] Beckerman, *When They Come For Us,* 213–5, 232–4.
[39] Chernin, "Making Soviet Jews an Issue," 51.
[40] Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue,* 113.

conservative causes.[41] While his opposition to, for example, arms control could not count on much support, his campaign for Soviet Jews could. The center piece of his campaign, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, tied a US-USSR trade agreement to free emigration. This trade agreement would give the Soviet Union most favored nation status (MFN)— a status enjoyed by all other American trading partners— which was long sought after by the Soviet Union. Jackson introduced his Amendment amidst outrage over a newly introduced Soviet "exit tax", requiring all those wishing to leave the country to repay the costs of higher education. The Amendment was reintroduced in 1973 and passed in 1974.[42] Although its effectiveness in increasing emigration is debatable, the Amendment was successful in focusing American and world attention on the Soviet Jewish issue.[43]

Particularism on the Rise

While the abovementioned efforts were important in establishing the movement, another underlying factor responsible for popularizing the Soviet Jewish issue should not be forgotten: a rise in particularism among American Jews. In the 1960s and 1970s, American Jews increasingly grew anxious over their high levels of assimilation. As demographer Uzi Rebhun shows, Jews as a minority group have enjoyed high levels of integration and social and economic mobility in the US, especially after World War II.[44] From the start of the twentieth century, interfaith dialogue between Jews and non-Jews increased and reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s.[45] This, according to religious scholar Yaakov Ariel, has helped advance the

[41] Keys, 113.
[42] Keys, 118–24.
[43] Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue,* 124.; Buwalda, *They Did Not Dwell Alone,* 108.
[44] Uzi Rebhun, *Jews and the American Religious Landscape* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 13.
[45] In this thesis, interfaith or interreligious dialogue refers to the attempts made between Jews and Christians, often members or leaders of establishment organizations or congregations, to improve mutual understanding and interreligious relations. For a detailed discussion of the differences between interreligious dialogue and interreligious relations, see Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 185–190.

position of American Jews even further.[46] To be sure, some Christian denominational groups continued efforts to evangelize Jews and although negative stereotyping decreased, some old prejudices persisted or where replaced with new ones, such as anti-Israeli standpoints.[47] Yuri Slezkine's *The Jewish Century*, moreover, contends that modernization actually caused non-Jews to become more like Jews, to learn skills such as delivery of goods and services that Jews had traditionally been specialized in, which would make the twentieth century the Jewish century.[48] In practice, however, most American Jews worried not about the rest becoming more like them, but about Jews losing their Jewishness.

These concerns are expressed by Charles Liebman in his 1973 book *The Ambivalent American Jew.* Liebman discusses the situation of American Jews in all areas of life and describes them as "torn between two sets of values—those of integration and acceptance into American society and those of Jewish group survival."[49] Historian Dana Kaplan contends that American Jewish organizations and rabbis were committed to integration and universalism well into the 1960s. In this period, Jews were involved in many social justice movements, such as the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam protests, counterculture, feminism and more, showing a clear commitment to contributing to wider society.[50] In the late 1960s, however, the Jewish communal agenda shifted towards particularism, threats to Jews and group survival.[51] This new survivalism was visible in an upsurge of religious traditions as well as in the philanthropic and political causes Jewish organizations supported.[52]

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[46] Yaakov Ariel, "American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism,* ed. Dana Evan Kaplan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 327.
[47] Ariel, "American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue," 334–7.
[48] Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11, 17.
[49] Charles Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew: Politics, Religion and Family in American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), vii.
[50] Dana Evan Kaplan, "Trends in American Judaism From 1945 to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism,* ed. Kaplan, 66.
[51] Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 29.
[52] Steven M. Cohen and Leonard J. Fein, "From Integration to Survival: American Jewish Anxieties in Transition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1985): 81–2.

Apart from anxieties about integration, survivalism was sparked by two other factors. First, the threats to Israel's physical safety during the Six-Day War of 1967 and the state's subsequent victory. Israel's victory, Kaplan argues, filled American Jews with "unprecedented pride" and made Israel "a central pillar of the American Jewish civil religion."[53] Historian Jack Wertheimer, furthermore, contends that the Six-Day War resulted in an increase in American Jewish lobbying activities in support of Israel as well as in support of other particularistic Jewish causes, such as Soviet Jewish emigration. The Six-Day War, finally, caused Jews to feel alienated from their former allies. Especially among those involved with interfaith dialogue, Jews were appalled at Christians' indifference towards Israel. [54]

The second factor causing an increase in particularism was the growth of Holocaust consciousness. Events such as the 1961 Eichmann trial and the 1978 television series *Holocaust* brought the Holocaust to the public's attention.[55] According to Barnett, this presented an important change in the way American Jews treated the Holocaust. He contends that American Jews had been ambivalent towards the Holocaust in relation to Jewish identity because they did not want Jews to be seen as helpless victims only. In the late 1960s, however, the Holocaust became both a symbol and a source of identity for American Jews.[56] They not only incorporated the Holocaust as part of their own identity, they also worked to elevate it in American consciousness both to strengthen the bonds among Jews and to strengthen American support for Israel.[57]

The Rise of Human Rights, American Jews and the Soviet Jewry Movement

Holocaust consciousness emerged at the same time as human rights consciousness was on the rise. According to some scholars, the Holocaust was connected to human rights since the latter's

[53] Kaplan, "Trends in American Judaism," 66–7.
[54] Wertheimer, *A People Divided,* 29–31.
[55] Wertheimer, 29–31.
[56] Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes,* 165–6.
[57] Barnett, 166.

articulation. They argue that the UN Human Rights and Genocide Conventions were specifically intended to prevent another Holocaust from happening. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, for example, contend that the horrors of the Holocaust gave these conventions their legitimacy.[58] Others, such as historian Samuel Moyn, argue that human rights could not have been a response to the Holocaust, as a widespread Holocaust consciousness did not exist in the 1940s.[59] Both positions hold some truth, as historian G. Daniel Cohen's recent contribution to *The Human Rights Revolution* explains. On the one hand, in establishing the human rights apparatus of the UN states had other goals and motivations than merely preventing another Holocaust. They intended, instead, to protect their own sovereignty against interventions. On the other hand, the Holocaust did have a "triggering effect" on the development of human rights instruments.[60]

The Holocaust did have a role to play during the human rights boom of the 1970s. According to Moyn, international human rights as we know them today did not emerge until the 1970s. He argues that human rights emerged in 1970s as the last utopia when other prior state-based and internationalist utopias collapsed. In this decade, Moyn contends, a genuine social movement appeared around human rights that bypassed governmental institutions, especially the UN, which had been responsible for human rights' irrelevance from the start.[61] In order for human rights to matter, he contends, the UN had to be replaced as their essential institution.[62] The Holocaust, according to historian Mark Bradley, inspired some of these new human rights activists' strategies.[63] As historian Annette Wieviorka argues, the 1960s started

[58] Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "The Institutionalization of Cosmopolitan Morality: The Holocaust and Human Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 3, no. 2 (2004): 143, 149.
[59] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010), 6–8.
[60] G. Daniel Cohen, "The Holocaust and the "Human Rights Revolution": A Reassessment," in *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History,* ed. Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 56–8.
[61] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 8.
[62] Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (London: Verso, 2014), 76, 82.
[63] Mark Bradley, *The World Reimagined: Americans and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 139–40.

the "era of the witness."[64] This was also the time when Holocaust testimonies dramatically increased. The Eichmann trial, which featured 112 witness testimonies, caused Holocaust survivors to gain societal recognition as survivors and created an immense social demand for systematic collection of testimonies. These testimonial practices, Bradley argues, directly informed the strategies of humanitarians and human rights activists.[65]

The connection between the Holocaust and human rights also plays into the tension between particularism and universalism. Through implementing human rights laws triggered by the Holocaust, Jewish activists such as lawyer René Caisin, Rabbi Hersch Lauterpacht and legal scholar and coiner of the term "genocide" Raphael Lemkin "sought to extract universality from the singular Jewish tragedy."[66] The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, for example, was directly inspired by the Nazi genocide but also significantly broadened its legacy. In the Convention text, no explicit connection between genocide and Nazism was made in order to promote the Convention's applicability in future cases of genocide.[67] A similar argument is made by Bradley. He contends that "the universalizing inclination of the 1940s human rights morality tended to erase the particularities of the Nazi genocide" which led to the Jewish fate to lose its particular Jewish character and instead be seen as a representation of universal human suffering.[68]

Interestingly, some authors argue that at the same time as human rights took off as a widespread social movement, Jews abandoned their human rights activism. Loeffler argues in *Rooted Cosmopolitans* that human rights have a Jewish backstory and originated in the wake of World War I "as a specifically Jewish pursuit of minority rights in the ravaged borderlands

[64] Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness,* trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1998).
[65] Bradley, *The World Reimagined,* 140.
[66] Bradley, 59.
[67] Bradley, 62.
[68] Bradley, 118.

of post-World War I Eastern Europe."[69] This pursuit was inspired by the "dreams and dilemmas of Jewish nationhood" and became expressed in the language of Zionism.[70] In much of the twentieth century, Loeffler argues, Jewish activists' efforts to balance their particularism and cosmopolitanism led to pragmatic idealism in the pursuit of international human rights. As Israel and the human rights community drifted apart, however, Jews began to distance themselves from human rights.[71] A similar argument is made by Galchinsky who contends that Jewish human activism declined after 1967 because Jews' commitments to human rights, pluralism and Zionism increasingly conflicted.[72]

In his analysis of American Jews' foreign policies, Barnett likewise argues that particularistic concerns won out over universalistic human rights after the Six-Day War. He contends that for much of history, most Jewish communities have favored particularism. American Jews, however, have tended to favor universalism. He argues that the foreign policies of American Jews tend to be more universalistic than particularistic. He finds the origins of this foreign policy orientation in the political theology he terms "Prophetic Judaism."[73] Prophetic Judaism entails "a belief that Jews are a people connected to the world who should demonstrate their religiosity through acts of compassion to all, and whose diaspora will help catalyze global justice and a common humanity."[74] This political theology has come about as a result of the American experience. In America, Jews enjoyed greater rights than in Europe and they were generally able to live as both Jews and Americans in their new homeland. This has installed in American Jews a preference for liberalism, pluralism and non-Orthodox Judaism.[75] After Israel's victory in 1967, however, American Jews turned inwards towards particularism and

[69] Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans*, xii-xiii.
[70] Loeffler, xv.
[71] Loeffler, xiv–xv.
[72] Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights,* 3.
[73] Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes,* 8–9.
[74] Barnett, 9.
[75] Barnett, 8–9.

discovered a new sense of self-respect regarding their Jewish identity. Furthermore, Israel's human rights record has made it harder for American Jews to reconcile their liberal values with their support for Israel. As a result, they started avoiding the term "human rights" as to not undermine Israel or start uncomfortable discussions.[76]

The Soviet Jewry movement, as I will argue, forms an exception to this disillusionment with human rights. As Feingold argues that in the US the issue was very much portrayed as human rights issue related to the freedom of movement. He states: "In a sense everything linked to the struggle to free Soviet Jewry (…) is encompassed in the human rights movement. The campaign for Soviet Jewry was quintessentially a struggle for human rights."[77] Feingold, furthermore, contends that the American approach was inspired by Cold War motives. By framing the issue as a human rights one, the US could use it as a weapon in the ideological war with the Soviet Union.[78]

As the previously discussed Jackson-Vanik Amendment exemplifies, Soviet Jewry activists were able to use this anti-communist embrace of human rights to their advantage. The entanglement of the Cold War, human rights and the Soviet Jewry movement can, furthermore, be seen in the Helsinki Final Act signed at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975.[79] The Helsinki Final Act was the result of three years of negotiations and, according to historian Sarah Snyder, "produced a new framework for East-West relations."[80] The Soviet Union had long sought to start such negotiations in order to secure their post–war borders in Eastern Europe, but the West was not interested in the idea until the late 1960s and early 1970s when the talks were portrayed as broader effort to reduce Cold War

[76] Barnett, 163, 191–2, 228.
[77] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 302.
[78] Feingold, 295, 303.
[79] The full text of the Helsinki Final Act is available at the website of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. "Helsinki Final Act," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, August 1, 1975, accessed August 2, 2019, https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act.
[80] Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War,* 2–4.

tensions.[81] The negotiations were divided into so-called "baskets". Basket I included confidence-building measures such as the recognition of borders that the Soviet Union desired. Basket II concerned cooperation in the fields of economics, technology, science and the environment. Basket III incorporated measures that would combat Eastern European isolation, something the West had pushed hard for. It included provisions for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as provisions for human contacts and humanitarian measures. Basket IV, finally, concerned the follow-up procedures. It should be noted that while the Helsinki Accords were not legally binding, they did carry moral and political significance for the participating states.[82]

Basket III and Basket IV were especially important to the Soviet Jewry movement. Basket III explicitly mentioned freedom of movement in terms of family reunion which, according to Buwalda, "made clear that the fate of Soviet Jews had undoubtedly been in the negotiators' mind."[83] According to historian and Soviet Jewry activist William Korey, Soviet Jewish activists appealed to the Helsinki Final Act and its Basket III provisions for family reunification immediately. American Jews also took up the issue. They lobbied the US government to take a strong stand at the follow-up conferences that Basket IV outlined. The NCSJ, for example, pressed for legislation that would create a Helsinki Monitoring Commission in the US. This Commission was the first-ever legislative-executive body to serve American foreign policy goals in such a major way.[84] Using such instruments as the Helsinki Monitoring Commission and the Helsinki Final Act, American Jews were able to use universalistic methods to reach their particularistic goals.

[81] Snyder, 4.
[82] Snyder, 5–7.
[83] Buwalda, *They Did Not Dwell Alone,* 117.
[84] William Korey, "From Helsinki: A Salute to Human Rights," in *A Second Exodus,* ed. Friedman and Chernin, 125–9.

Conclusion

In short, American Jews, Soviet Jews and human rights came together to form a movement that reached the highest agenda of the Cold War and presented an entanglement of particularism and universalism. In the end, victory came when the Soviet Union collapsed. As Feingold states, "the instances in American Jewish history when an organization announces 'mission accomplished' and closes shop could probably be counted on the finger of one hand."[85] This was such an instance. Before victory could be claimed, however, it was up to American Jews to raise their nation's concern. This is where the Task Force comes in.

[85] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 289–90.

Chapter 2. Universalizing the Base: Bringing Christians into the Soviet Jewry Movement

"Americans," according to William Orbach, "traditionally react to problems by creating a committee or organization."[86] The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, too, was formed as a response to the following problems: the plight of the refuseniks, the lack of non-Jews in the Soviet Jewry movement and the need to incentivize the American government to press the Soviet Union to let Jews emigrate. This chapter discusses the Task Force's methods to mobilize Christians for the cause of Soviet Jewry.[87] I argue that the AJC's sponsoring of the Task Force was motivated by their desire to broaden the base of the Soviet Jewry movement and turn the issue from a particularistic Jewish concern into a universalistic American and international concern. Through their activities, the Task Force aimed to mobilize Christians for the Soviet Jewry movement. Moreover, they conveyed to the American and Soviet governments that a universal base supported Soviet Jews. Furthermore, this chapter argues that the Task Force often framed the plight of the refuseniks as a human rights and religious freedom issue, which allowed them to attract wide support and use human rights instruments, such as the Helsinki Final Act, as a basis for their programs and activities. Last, it argues that the Task Force's character as a coordinating organization allowed them to target different audiences— from the grassroots to the Christian establishment to government officials— on the local, national and international levels which contributed to their success in establishing themselves as the main interreligious voice of the Soviet Jewry movement.

To support these arguments, I first briefly describe the origins of the Task Force, paying attention to how and why the organization was set up, their relationship to the AJC and their

[86] Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews,* 19.
[87] The "interreligious" in National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry primarily meant that it was a cooperative between Jews and Christians. Although the organization could, in theory, target other religious groups as well, in practice their target audience consisted primarily of Christians.

initial aims and strategies in putting themselves on the map. I also describe the Task Force's transformation into a permanent secretariat led by Executive Director Sister Ann Gillen, who would become the main voice and face of the organization. Second, I examine the Task Force's activities and programs on a local, national and international level and argue that linking the Soviet Jewish issue to human rights and religious freedom was a major component of the Task Force's rhetoric and programming. In my discussions of the local, national, and international activities, I pay close attention to how the Task Force adapted their programs to different audiences. Third, I consider the success of the Task Force in establishing themselves as the interreligious voice of the Soviet Jewry movement.

Setting up the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry

Without Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry might not have come into existence at all. It was Traxler's strong statement on Soviet Jewry, published the newsletter the National Coalition of American Nuns, of which she was the president, that caught the attention of staff members of the AJC's Chicago Office. Sensing that Traxler's concern for Soviet Jews could lead to more than simply a fiery statement in an organizational newsletter, Judah Graubart and Eugene Du Bow contacted Sister Traxler, who was also the Executive Director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ), to discuss possible programmatic cooperation between herself, the NCCIJ and the AJC. According to Graubart, he and Du Bow first got the idea to set up "a national conference on Soviet Jewry, by, for, and of the Christian community" while riding a taxi to a meeting at the NCCIJ. Sister Traxler was enthusiastic right away.[88] Together with Professor Andre LaCocque of the Chicago Theological Seminary, she convened a meeting on October 13, 1971

[88] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Seymour Lachman, March 23, 1972, Folder: Evaluation of the March National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, American Jewish Committee Digital Archives [hereafter: AJC-DA].

with AJC staff and a group of nationally prominent Christians. This group voted to form the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.[89]

The AJC envisioned the Task Force to help in their efforts to mobilize non-Jewish public opinion to press for Soviet Jewish emigration on a local and national level. An internal information sheet shows that if the Task Force would be able to get funding, the AJC planned that they "would serve as a national, prestigious organization through which concerned Christians may act in behalf of the Soviet Jewish community."[90] The AJC argued that, because there were already a significant amount of American Jewish organizations involved in the Soviet Jewry movement, the majority of the Task Force's members should be Christians.[91] As Feingold contends, 1972 was the year in which the issue of Soviet Jewish finally began to receive some attention in the national political arena but it would not be until October that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was introduced.[92] Thus, although the Jewish community was effectively mobilized when the Task Force was established, American public opinion in general was not. Through the Task Force, the AJC aimed to take a particularistic Jewish cause and turn it into one that was universally supported by American society.

Before members of the Task Force could mobilize the Christian community, the newly chosen co-chairmen Traxler and LaCocque, later to be joined by the AJC's Director of Interreligious Affairs Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, had to put the Task Force on the map. As their first project, the group decided to hold an interreligious consultation on Soviet Jewry in March 1972 in Chicago.[93] In their early efforts, the Task Force recruited prominent Americans to

[89] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Seymour Lachman, March 23, 1972.; Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972.; Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to David Geller, October 18, 1971, Folder: Memorandum on the Founding of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, AJC-DA.
[90] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Information Sheet, Undated, Folder: Memoranda on Upcoming National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, AJC-DA.
[91] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Information Sheet, Undated.
[92] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 115.
[93] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to David Geller, October 18, 1973.

sponsor the Task Force so that their names could be listed on the stationery and invitations for the consultation. They focused on the highest levels of the Christian establishment, but also included some Jewish names, such as Tanenbaum and Rabbi Abraham Heschel.[94] These efforts were very successful. Traxler was able to get former American ambassador to France R. Sargent Shriver to come aboard as Honorary National Chairmen and many of the approached establishment figures followed suit, leading Graubart to describe the stationery as "a mini-version of Who's Who in America."[95] With their stationery sporting the names of Americans from "virtually every political stripe and color", the Task Force invited religious leaders from the Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish communities, voluntary agencies and civic groups to the National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, again focusing on inviting prominent Christians, preferably those who had in some way made their interest in the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration known.[96]

The National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, likewise, was a great success and resulted in the Task Force, which had until then been a temporary working group, becoming a permanent organization with a secretariat in Chicago.[97] The Task Force brought on another Catholic nun, Sister Ann Gillen, as their Executive Director. Although Sister Ann had some experience in interreligious relations and religious organizational life, Du Bow described her as needing a considerable amount of guidance and being not much of an expert on the topic.[98] Consequently, the AJC took on much of the responsibility for the Task Force's finances and

[94] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to David Geller, November 19, 1971, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force Minutes. Memorandum Regarding the Minutes and Upcoming March Consultation is Attached, AJC-DA.
[95] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Seymour Lachman, March 23, 1972.
[96] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Seymour Lachman, March 23, 1972.; Memorandum from David Geller and Gerald Strober to Area Directors and Executive Assistants, January 12, 1972, Folder: Memoranda on Upcoming National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, AJC-DA.; Invitation from R. Sargent Shriver, January 27, 1972, Folder: Memoranda on Upcoming National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, AJC-DA.
[97] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 3.
[98] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, October 31, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–72, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, The Task – First Edition, November 21, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Nov-Dec 1972, AJC-DA.

daily operations. All Task Force activities had to be approved by the National Interreligious Affairs Department and the Chicago Office took on much of the administrative responsibilities in addition to lending some manpower for programming purposes.[99] Financially, the AJC would be responsible for the Task Force throughout their existence. The AJC intended not to spend their own money on the Task Force and applied for outside grants on behalf of the Task Force. They would stay the only organization responsible for meeting the Task Force's financial needs and would continue to oversee and work closely with Sister Ann during the Task Force's lifetime.[100] Sister Ann's inexperience with handling finances and programming led to some friction with the AJC which contemplated dropping her as Executive Director in late 1973. However, after moving administrative responsibility to the AJC's New York headquarters and considering the need for continuity and Traxler's personal concern for her, they decided to keep Sister Ann on.[101]

In her role as Executive Director, Sister Ann was responsible for the Task Force's programming. In the following, I discuss the activities the Task Force used to reach their goals of raising awareness and mobilizing the Christian community on a national, local and international level. Furthermore, I show that the Task Force in many of their programs and activities attempted to portray the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration as not merely a concern of and about Jews worried about their particularistic group survival, but as a concern of a diverse

[99] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Gerald Strober, September 11, 1972.
[100] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Gerald Strober, September 11, 1972.; Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. Arnold S. Alperstein, October 12, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–72, AJC-DA.; Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mrs. Maurice Goldstick, September 7, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–72, AJC-DA.; The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.
[101] Memorandum from Gerald Strober to Marc Tanenbaum, October 2, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from Gerald Strober to Marc H. Tanenbaum, November 19, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from Gerald Strober to Marc Tanenbaum, December 11, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.

community about universal human rights. As human rights became a worldwide concern in the 1970s, linking up with the human rights movement broadened the appeal of the Task Force and the Soviet Jewry movement. Although some were worried that too much universalism would erase the particularistic, Jewish foundation of the movement, human rights were too appealing a strategy to pass up on.[102]

The Task Force's National Activities: Mobilizing the Christian Establishment and Appealing to the US Government

In order to mobilize anyone, they first need to know that there is something to be concerned about. At the Consultation, delegates agreed, based on the assumption that Christians were unaware of the issue, that a greater dissemination of information about the plight of refuseniks was a necessity.[103] Apart from their public events, the Task Force utilized two main channels to raise awareness: a newsletter and seeking coverage by the press, radio and television.[104] First, the Task Force's main publication was The Task which was sent out quarterly. In addition, Special Alerts were sent whenever crisis situations occurred.[105] In November 1973, The Task already reached about 15,000 Christian and Jewish leaders and organizations.[106] Second, to get media coverage, the Task Force held press conferences and sent press releases to denominational publications.[107] For example, after their interreligious mission to the Soviet Union was denied visas at the last minute, the Task Force held a press conference which got covered well by New York area broadcasters.[108] Another example is Sister Ann's appearance

[102] This discussion regarding the desirability of linking the plight of refuseniks to that of other groups and movements will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
[103] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 18.
[104] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry: Report of Activities, February 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[105] The Task, Vol. 1, No. 1, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–1972, AJC-DA.
[106] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry Report of Activities, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[107] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 17–9.
[108] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Hon. Robert F. Drinan, February 12, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.

on the TODAY show.[109] These efforts were successful. An AJC review of their activities on behalf of Soviet Jews stated that Sister Ann's appearances "received unusually wide press and television coverage."[110]

On a national level, the Task Force's programs included three main types of activities. First, the Task Force set up programs intended to personalize the struggle for Soviet Jewish emigration. Such projects established a personal link between an individual or family in the US and a refusenik or political prisoner and their family in the Soviet Union.[111] These so-called "adoption programs" were first proposed by the NCSJ.[112] The idea of using "people-to-people" project in the fight for Soviet Jewish emigration originally came from Lou Rosenblum of the CCSA and Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ). According to Beckerman, contacts between American Jews and Soviet Jews contributed greatly to humanizing the cause and helped to make "an abstract issue exceedingly real."[113] "People-to-people" projects ranged from sending greeting cards to telephone calls to visiting the Soviet Union.[114]

In the case of the Task Force, these projects were often interreligious, meaning that an American Christian family would be matched with a Soviet Jewish family and vice versa. Examples of such projects are Adopt-A-Family, Adopt-A-Scientist and Children of the Otkazniki.[115] Some projects were aimed specifically at children. Operation Write On, for instance, encouraged American children to write letters to Soviet children to express their concern and encourage them not to lose hope.[116] Other letter-writing campaigns targeted adults

[109] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. David T. Goldstick, December 29, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Nov-Dec 1972, AJC-DA.
[110] The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, Undated.
[111] The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, Undated.
[112] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 102.
[113] Beckerman, *When They Come for Us,* 219–21.
[114] Beckerman, 219–221.
[115] The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, Undated.
[116] Flyer Operation Write On, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.; Flyer Write On, Undated, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.

instead, such as Operation Lifeline.[117] Some projects, such as Co-Adoption Greetings, centered around specific holidays.[118] The target audience of most of these projects were regular people, the grassroots. However, some, such as Adopt-A-Sister were aimed at the organized religious community.[119]

Another method used to personalize the struggle centered around advocating for specific political prisoners or refuseniks. The Task Force, first, drew attention to specific individuals in the press and in The Task newsletter.[120] The most remarkable of such publicizing attempts came in 1979 when Sister Ann Gillen offered herself as ransom in exchange for the release of political prisoner Ida Nudel, who was then serving a labor sentence in Siberia. This proposition, which Sister Ann acknowledged had little hope of success, was featured in both American and international newspapers.[121] It helped both to draw attention to Ida Nudel and her situation and to the Task Force and their activities on behalf of Soviet Jews.

The second type of the Task Force's national activities concerned large-scale national events that the Task Force either participated in or organized. First, the Task Force participated in Solidarity Sunday, an annual demonstration for Soviet Jews in New York, sponsored by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry.[122] The Task Force organized for a delegation

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[117] "Program Planned to Train Church School Teachers to Improve Their Teaching About Jews and Judaism," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* December 13, 1983, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1983/12/13/archive/program-planned-to-train-church-school-teachers-to-improve-their-teaching-about-jews-and-judaism/amp.
[118] Co-Adoption Greetings, Undated, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 2: Soviet Jewry, 1977–1978, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[119] Press Release, November 28, 1979, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, May 1979–June 1980, AJC-DA.
[120] See for example: "Catholic Nuns Urge Intervention on Behalf of Soviet Dissidents," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* July 7, 1978, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1978/07/07/archive/catholic-nuns-urge-interventions-on-behalf-of-soviet-dissidents.; The Task, Vol. 2, No. 2, November 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Nov-Dec 1974, AJC-DA.; The Task, Vol 1., No. 3, October 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Soviet Union Trip, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1973, AJC-DA.; Press Release, Appeal for Ida Nudel, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Aug-Dec 1976, AJC-DA.
[121] Christopher Howse, "Nun Offers to Take Prisoner's Place," *Catholic Herald,* Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 3: Soviet Jewry, 1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.; Joel Roteman, "A Nun's Visit With 'Angel of Mercy'," *The Jewish Chronicle,* December 6, 1979.
[122] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 102.; "200,000 March for Soviet Jews," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* April 29, 1974, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1974/04/29/archive/200000-march-for-soviet-jews.

of Christian leaders to participate in the demonstration during multiple installments. In 1974, Congressman Robert F. Drinan (D-MA) led the delegation. A *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* article quoted him saying that the Christians of America and the world would be responsible if Soviet Jewish emigration would not materialize. He urged Christians to not be "Good Germans" and to not be silent on this issue, thus drawing an explicit parallel with the Holocaust.[123] In 1975, the Task Force first sponsored an interfaith Seder— a Jewish religious ritual meal— during Passover where they called on Christians to participate in Solidarity Sunday.[124] During the demonstration, Christian clergyman again marched with the Task Force.[125] In 1978, the Task Force was present as well.[126] According to their 1973 President's Report, the AJC saw the participation of key Christian leaders in Solidarity Sunday as a major accomplishment of the Task Force in mobilizing Christian support and universalizing the struggle.[127]

Perhaps the greatest strides in mobilizing Christians for the Soviet Jewry movement were made at the national events and consultations that the Task Force organized. According to Orbach, the Task Force and their conferences contributed to broadening the Soviet Jewry movement's base, and their efforts to universalize the struggle helped to secure broad support in the US.[128] It was during these events that the Task Force firmly portrayed the struggle for Soviet Jewish emigration as a human rights issue. Participation-wise, the large-scale national

[123] "200,000 March for Soviet Jews."
[124] "Appeals and Interfaith Seders Mark the Passover Holiday," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 27, 1975, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1975/03/27/archive/appeals-and-inter-faith-seders-mark-the-passover-holiday.
[125] Press Release, Christians Participate in National Solidarity Day for Soviet Jewry, Sunday, April 13, 1975, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.; "200,000 March in Solidarity with Soviet Jewry: Largest March Ever in New York," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* April 14, 1975, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1975/04/14/archive/200000-march-in-solidarity-with-soviet-jewry-largest-march-ever-in-new-york-thousands-more-across.; Irving Spiegel, "100,000 March Here in Support of Soviet Jewry," *New York Times,* April 14, 1975.
[126] "200,000 People in Soviet Jewry Rally," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* May 22, 1978, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1978/05/22/archive/200000-people-in-soviet-jewry-rally.
[127] Elmer L. Winter, The American Jewish Committee President's Report, May 1973-May 1974, Folder: The American Jewish Committee President's Report, May 1973–May 1974, Elmer L. Winter, AJC, 1974, AJC-DA, 6.
[128] Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews,* 66–7.

events targeted prominent members of the Christian establishment, leaders of civic organizations, and American government officials. The target audience, according to Eugene Du Bow, consisted of "the 'Christian professionals' who have the power to put the issue of Soviet Jewry on the American Christian agenda."[129] Through extensive coverage in the national and religious press, the events also contributed to raising awareness among the general public.

The previously discussed March 1972 Consultation was a greatly successful effort for the Task Force, not only because it effectively launched the organization, but also because of the large audience it reached, the favorable press it received and the practical results it brought about. The AJC's report of the Consultation argued that the assembly's "primary importance derives from its obvious impact on the hundreds of religious leaders who were exposed to the problem."[130] Through these leaders, the Task Force would be able to reach their constituencies and consequently recruit more Christians to the cause. Especially helpful in this effort was the "Statement of Conscience" which was adopted at the conference. This document proclaimed its signatories' concern and urged for Soviet Jewish emigration. This statement was to be send out to Christian denominational leaders, the UN, political parties and Soviet government. It was also brought up during a session of the House of Representatives by Father Drinan.[131] The Consultation and the "Statement of Conscience" were, furthermore, covered extensively by the religious and mainstream press.[132] Finally, the Consultation agreed that a high-level interreligious group should appeal directly to President Nixon.[133] As a result, a variety of religious groups issued such appeals.[134]

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[129] Memorandum from Eugene DU Bow to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, December 9, 1976, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Aug-Dec 1976, AJC-DA.
[130] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 1–4.
[131] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 6.
[132] See: Press Reactions: A Sample, in Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 7–14.; "Ecumenical Conference on Soviet Jewry," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 17, 1972, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1972/03/17/archive/ecumenical-conference-on-soviet-jewry.
[133] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 3.
[134] Christian Statements and Documents Bearing on Christian-Jewish Relations: A Compendium Complied and Edited by Judith Banki, 1972, Folder: Christian Statements and Documents Bearing on Christian-Jewish

At the Consultation, the link between the plight of Soviet Jews and human rights was made frequently. During the opening session Rita Hauser, former US Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Commission and at the time vice-chairmen of Nixon's re-election campaign, delivered a policy statement from the administration in support of Soviet Jews' human rights and their right to emigrate.[135] At the Interreligious Assembly for Soviet Jewry that closed off the Consultation, human rights were featured again. In his opening speech, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum spread a universalistic message, in Graubart's words, "speaking in an anti-cold war, pro détente, human rights for all minorities, vein."[136] Tanenbaum was, next to his interreligious work at the AJC and his co-chairmanship at the Task Force, active in a variety of human rights causes.[137]

In the resolutions adopted at the end of the conference and in the "Statement of Conscience", the Soviet Jewish issue was, again, portrayed as a human rights concern and an issue of religious freedom. In the resolutions, the Consultation decided that efforts should be made "to introduce this human rights issue into the political debate of 1972" and that religious leaders should appeal to Nixon to communicate to Moscow "America's concern over the human rights of Soviet Jewry."[138] Next, "The "Statement of Conscience" expressed the Consultation's "profound concern about the continued denial of free exercise of religion, the violation of the right to emigrate and other human rights of the 3 million Jewish people of the Soviet Union and

Relations Compendium Compiled and Edited by Judith Banki, AJC, 1972, AJC-DA, 24–9.; Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 20–44.

[135] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 1–2.; "US Will Continue to Press Soviet to Permit Emigration of Jews," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 20, 1972, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1972/03/20/archive/u-s-will-continue-to-press-soviet-to-permit-emigration-of-jews.

[136] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Seymour Lachman, March 23, 1972.

[137] Judith H. Banki, "Biographical Sketch," in *A Prophet for Out Time: An Anthology of the Writing of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum,* ed. Judith H. Banki and Eugene J. Fisher (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), xix–xxvii.;

[138] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 15.; "Interreligious Parley Appeals to Nixon to Tell Soviet Leaders During His Visit to Grant Human Rights," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 22, 1972, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1972/03/22/archive/interreligious-parley-appeals-to-nixon-to-tell-soviet-leaders-during-his-visit-to-grant-human-rights.

of other deprived groups and nationalities."[139] The statement, finally, included a call to end the Soviet government sponsored anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist propaganda campaign, arguing that this "constituents an incitement to hatred and violence in contravention of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights."[140]

The success of the Chicago Consultation is demonstrated by the fact that multiple follow-up consultations were organized. Those consultations, too, portrayed the plight of refuseniks as a human rights issue. In 1973, the Washington National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry was held.[141] Honorary Chairman Shriver argued during this conference that Christians were increasingly becoming concerned about Soviet Jews whose situation he described as "an outstanding human-rights issue."[142] In November 1976, the Task Force convened the Second National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry in Chicago.[143] There is no doubt that this conference tried to link the Soviet Jewish issue to the human rights movement. It was titled: "The Helsinki Accord, Human Rights, and Religious Liberty in the USSR." and included sessions on human rights education, religious and ethnic communities in the USSR and Soviet Jewry specifically.[144] According to Eugene Du Bow, Chicago II attracted twice as many visitors as Chicago I and did not cost the AJC anything, in contrast to the financial burden that Chicago I had been. Especially important was that the proportion of Christians attending the conference was higher. Whereas 65% of the attendees had been Jewish

[139] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 6.
[140] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 6.
[141] Invitation to Second National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, April 13, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.
[142] The Task, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973.; "Shriver Says Christians Becoming More Concerned About Soviet Jews," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* May 15, 1973, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1973/05/17/archive/interreligious-task-force-says-struggle-for-soviet-jewry-must-continue-until-repression-ends.
[143] The documents on the Washington and second Chicago consultations speak of both of these events as the Second National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry.
[144] "The Helsinki Accord, Human Rights and Religious Liberty in the USSR," November 29-November 30, 1976, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force Helsinki Meetings, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1976–1977, AJC-DA.

in 1972, in 1976 65% were Christians. Despite not being featured in the national news, the Consultation received good coverage among Christian news outlets.[145]

Another major national event the Task Force organized that was explicitly connected to the Helsinki Accords were the March 1977 Hearings in New York. This event, titled "The Current State of Religious Liberty and Human Rights in the Soviet Union", was in essence a public tribunal where human rights specialists and scholars of religious communities in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe gave their testimonies on the Soviet Union's adherence to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.[146] The hearings were organized to prepare the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry for their testimony before the Helsinki Commission of the Senate and the House of Representatives which they were asked to give on April 28, 1977.[147] At the hearings, the selection of testimonies was broader than the Task Force's usual tendency to limit their interreligious efforts on Christians and Jews and included the situation of Soviet Muslims as well.[148] Despite the universalistic nature of the testimonies, the tribunal itself was inspired by a particularistic Jewish experience; it was modeled after the Nazi war crime tribunals.[149] The hearings contributed to spreading awareness of the plight of Soviet Jews as well and were covered in national and religious newspapers.[150]

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[145] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, December 9, 1976.
[146] Program of "The Current State of Religious Liberty and Human Rights in the Soviet Union", Hearings Sponsored by the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, March 16, 1977, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 29, Folder 7: Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1976–1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[147] "Report That 180,000 Invitations Sent to Soviet Jews to Find Their Homes in Israel Have Not Been Acted Upon by Soviet Government," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 18, 1977, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1977/03/18/archive/report-that-180000-invitations-sent-to-soviet-jews-to-find-their-homes-in-israel-have-not-been-acte.
[148] Memorandum from Rabbi A. James Rudin to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, February 3, 1977, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 29, Folder 7: Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1976–1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.; Press Release, March 16, 1977, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 29, Folder 7: Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1976–1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.; Invitation, January 7, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force Helsinki Meetings, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1976–1977, AJC-DA.
[149] Alert to Editors, Broadcasters, March 10, 1977, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 29, Folder 7: Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1976–1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[150] See: "Soviet Stalls 180,000 Emigres, Gold Testifies," *The Jewish Chronicle,* March 24, 1977.; Judith Cummings, "Religious Group Asks US To Put Pressure on Soviet Under Helsinki Accords," *New York Times,* March 17, 1977.

The last category of national Task Force activities concerns their activities aimed at the American government. Such activities include providing the government with information by testifying before Congressional Commissions, appealing to government officials directly, involving them in the Task Force and in Task Force events, supporting the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Thus, while the Task Force worked on the one hand to broaden the base of the movement in order to make it more likely that the American government would speak out on behalf of Soviet Jews, they also made efforts to influence the government's actions in a more direct manner.

The 1977 New York Hearings were, as mentioned, held in preparation for the Task Force's testimony before a Congressional Helsinki Commission. This testimony was delivered by Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler. In her testimony, Traxler argued that the Helsinki Final Act represented the beginning of a new era in which human rights were no longer considered an internal issue in any country. She stated that the Task Force stands on the principle that all living people should take responsibility to protect human rights.[151] *The Washington Post,* furthermore, reported on Traxler's plea "that the Helsinki commission press for freedom of movement for believers and relaxation of restriction on the registry of houses of worship and against teaching religious education to youth under 18."[152] Interestingly, although she appeared as a representative of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Traxler did not mention Soviet Jews specifically.

An occasion where Sister Traxler's testimony before the US government did mention Soviet Jews specifically was on April 10, 1974 before the Senate Finance Committee. Testifying in favor of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, Traxler argued that emigration was a cause of life and death for Soviet Jews. Invoking the memory of the Holocaust, which motivated

[151] Testimony of Sister Margaret Traxler Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 6202, April 28, 1977, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 29, Folder 7: Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1976–1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[152] Janis Johnson, "Soviet Religious Dissent Seen on Rise," *The Washington Post,* April 29, 1977.

millions of American Jews to support the Soviet Jewry movement, Traxler said: "Russia deliberately denies a Jew his right to Jewishness. The Holocaust offered at the Table of World War II claimed six million Jews. The USSR would not continue this cultural and religious sacrifice by adding three more."[153] Senator Packwood (R-OR) commended Traxler for "being the first to bring a moral word to this Committee."[154] According to AJC staff member Gerald Strober, Traxler's testimony, which was circulated to the press as well, was an important step for the Task Force in establishing themselves as an important organization within the movement.[155]

Traxler's testimony, furthermore, points to another set of national Task Force activities aimed at the American government: support for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Like many other Soviet Jewry organizations, the Task Force was an adamant supporter of the Amendment, both before and after its passage.[156] Often in cooperation with the NCSJ, they worked to stimulate support for the Amendment, for example by holding write-ins and phone-ins to enlist more legislative sponsors.[157] In November 1973, Senator Henry Jackson even accepted Sister Ann Gillen's invitation to become an Honorary Sponsor of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.[158] In May of the same year, The Task reported that the twenty-five of their members met with Jackson to reaffirm their support for Soviet Jews and present him with

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[153] Oral Testimony of Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, Senate Finance Committee, Washington D.C., April 10, 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.

[154] Memorandum from Gerald Strober to Marc Tanenbaum, April 11, 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.

[155] Memorandum from Gerald Strober to Marc Tanenbaum, April 11, 1974.

[156] "Shriver Says Christians Becoming More Concerned About Soviet Jews."; Memorandum from A. James Rudin to Marc H. Tanenbaum, February 27, 1979, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, Jan-Apr 1979, AJC-DA.
For a detailed description of the introduction of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the response to it from different organizations within the Soviet Jewry movement, see Chapter 4: Jackson-Vanik in Feingold, *"Silent No More."*

[157] Elmer L. Winter, The American Jewish Committee President's Report, May 1973-May 1974, 4.; The Task, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–72, AJC-DA.; The Task, Vol. 1, No. 3, October 1973.

[158] Letter from Henry M. Jackson to Sister Ann Gillen, November 27, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.

petitions signed by Christians from all over the US "indicating the interreligious support for this legislation which places human rights and moral values before dollar détente."[159] After this meeting, Jackson told the Task Force leaders that their activities convinced him that "the cause of Soviet Jewry is not just a Jewish problem, as the Soviets keep telling us, but that it is a matter of Christian conscience and American conscience."[160]

The Task Force appealed to the government in support of Soviet Jews in more general terms as well. Often, this took the form of sending letters or telegrams to presidents. For example, Sister Traxler sent a telegram on June 25, 1974 to urge President Nixon to intervene in "the critical situation confronting the Soviet Jewish prisoners of conscience."[161] In 1978, Sister Ann asked President Carter to intervene diplomatically on behalf of refuseniks Ida Nudel and Vladimir Slepak, arguing that neglecting to do so would "implicate us as accessories to the violation of basic human dignity and rights."[162] Sister Ann, furthermore, wrote several letters to President Reagan requesting help for Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate.[163]

A last method the Task Force used to appeal to the government was to involve government officials in their membership and events. Most notable with this regard was Father Drinan who was involved with the Task Force since 1972 and participated in many events, such as the Consultations and Solidarity Sunday marches.[164] Being a Jesuit priest as well as a

[159] The Task, Vol. 1, No. 2., May 1973.; "Interreligious Task Force Says Struggle for Soviet Jewry Must Continue Until Repression Ends," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* May 17, 1973, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1973/05/17/archive/interreligious-task-force-says-struggle-for-soviet-jewry-must-continue-until-repression-ends.
[160] Jackson quoted in Marianne R. Sanua, *Let Us Prove Strong: The American Jewish Committee, 1945–2006* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2007), 288.
[161] Telegram from Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler to President Richard M. Nixon, June 25, 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[162] Telegram from Sister Ann Gillen to President Jimmy Carter, June 29, 1978, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force Folder #2, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.
[163] Letter from Sister Ann Gillen to President Ronald Reagan, September 30, 1982, Box 33, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Max Green Files, Ronald Reagan Library, Simi Valley, CA.; Letter from Sister Ann Gillen to President Ronald Reagan, May 9, 1988, Box 23, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Max Green Files, Ronald Reagan Library.
[164] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, 3.; "200,000 March for Soviet Jews."; "Shriver Says Christians Becoming More Concerned About Soviet Jews."

Congressman, Drinan contributed to the Task Force getting press coverage and establishing their profile as a Christian initiative.[165] Drinan also ensured that the Task Force was noticed by Congress, for example by submitting the "Statement of Conscience" to the Congressional Record.[166] Apart from Drinan, the Task Force's events were attended by various other Congressmen and members of the administration were often part of the conferences' program, for example Rita Hauser's and Drinan's speeches at the 1972 Consultation and US State Department Counselor Matthew Nimetz's speech at the Leadership Conference of 1979.[167]

The Task Force's Local and Regional Activities: Involving the Grassroots

In tandem with the large-scale national events targeted at Christian professionals and the government, the Task Force focused their attention on mobilizing grassroots Christians through local and regional activities. This is the area where Sister Ann was personally perhaps most effective. The main method employed in this case was holding regional conferences which, according to Rabbi Tanenbaum, would function as "a network of Christians concerned about the cause of human rights of Soviet Jews" that the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry could coordinate.[168] Another method was to draw attention to the plight of Soviet Jews at Sister Ann's speaking engagements at conferences and events organized by other organizations.

At the 1972 Consultation, it was already decided that regional and local consultations modeled on the national one should be organized immediately.[169] Sister Ann took up this task

[165] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. Jerry Goodman, September 6, 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[166] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, 6.
[167] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, 1–2.; Program of National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 1: Soviet Jewry, 1969–1976, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.; Press Release, October 30, 1979, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Regional Interreligious Task Forces, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978–79, AJC-DA.
[168] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. David T. Goldstick, December 29, 1972.
[169] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, 3.

and made plans to hold the first two regional conferences in Houston, Texas and Los Angeles.[170] The Task Force continued sponsoring conferences in later years as well, for example those in 1979 in Dallas and Philadelphia.[171] Local AJC chapters, furthermore, took the initiative to organize such conferences. In 1974, the Greater Miami Chapter and South Florida Conference on Soviet Jewry worked together to facilitate an Interreligious Committee on Soviet Jewry, patterned after the National Interreligious Task Force.[172] The sponsored conferences were highly successful. They often resulted in the establishment of local task forces, as was the case in for example Boston, Chicago and New York.[173] The Task Force also aided in establishing and co-sponsoring local task forces directly, as was the case with the Illinois Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.[174] By 1979, there were about twenty local and regional task forces.[175] More importantly, in establishing the local task forces, hundreds of human rights and religious groups worked together on a coalition basis, allowing the Task Force to reach a wide audience.[176]

Next, Sister Ann reached local audiences through her speaking engagements. A few examples are her address to the National Federation of Priests Council's workshops in San Francisco and her presence at the Chicago Women's Plea for Human Rights for Soviet Jewish

[170] Memorandum from Judah Graubart to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, November 1, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Nov-Dec 1972, AJC-DA.
[171] Memorandum from Rabbi A. James Rudin to David Geller, March 15, 1979, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, Jan-Apr 1979, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from A. James Rudin to Marc H. Tanenbaum, February 27, 1979, , Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, Jan-Apr 1979, AJC-DA.
[172] Memorandum from Faith Mesnekoff to David Geller, March 13, 1974, F older: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[173] "Basis Laid for Inter-Faith Task Force," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* February 6, 1974, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1974/02/06/archive/basis-laid-for-inter-faith-task-force.; "Chicago Area Christian, Jewish Leaders Map Actions on Soviet Jews," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* March 12, 1974, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1974/03/12/archive/chicago-area-christian-jewish-leaders-map-actions-on-soviet-jews.; Task Force Report, September 1975, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.
[174] Letter from Judah L. Graubart to Mrs. Morton Blitstein, June 14, 1974, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1974, AJC-DA.
[175] Press Release, October 19, 1979, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 3: Soviet Jewry, 1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[176] The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry.

Prisoners of Conscience in 1972 and the Delaware Committee on Soviet Jewry in 1975.[177] In 1979, she was the keynote speaker at the Greater Pittsburgh Women's Plea for Human Rights for Soviet Jewry which was elaborately covered in the local Jewish newspaper.[178] Through her speaking engagements, Sister Ann was able to spread the Task Force's message to individuals already involved in organized (religious) life.

The Task Force's International Activities: Visiting the Soviet Union, Helsinki Conferences & the Vatican

As an organization dedicated to advocating for Jews in the Soviet Union, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry had a built-in international character. Naturally, they directed a considerable amount of energy at the international scene. In fact, the 1972 Consultation that launched the Task Force had been influenced by an international event. In 1971, the first Brussels Conference was held in Belgium. This international conference brought together Jewish advocacy groups from all over the world. It led to the establishment of the World Conference of Jewish Communities on Soviet Jewry and their "Declaration of Solidarity" which called for attention to the Soviet Union's violation of the human right of Soviet Jews and was presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights.[179] The Task Force's 1972 Consultation was intended to be the interreligious equivalent of the Brussels Conference.[180] In their international activities, the Task Force's purpose was not so much to recruit more Christians to the cause, but to show the Soviet government and international community that the plight of the refuseniks was a universal concern and not only a Jewish one.

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[177] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry Report of Activities.; "Nun Active on Behalf of Soviet Jewry," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* December 1, 1972, accessed July 14, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1972/12/01/archive/nun-active-on-behalf-of-soviet-jewry.; Memorandum from Judah Graubart to David Geller, December 21, 1972, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Nov-Dec 1972, AJC-DA.; Schedule for Sr. Ann Gillen, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.

[178] Joel Roteman, "Women's Plea Playlet to Depict Soviet Jewry," *The Jewish Chronicle,* December 6, 1979.

[179] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 82–3.

[180] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Information Sheet, Undated.

As their first international program, the Task Force planned to send an interreligious delegation to the Soviet Union to visit political prisoners and seek to achieve amnesty for them.[181] According to Marc Tanenbaum, the purpose of this trip was also "to impress on key Soviet authorities that the American people as a whole, and not just the Jewish community, wants an end to the education tax, continued right to emigrate to Israel or elsewhere on part of Jews and others, and the right to perpetuate Jewish culture and religion in Russia."[182] The idea of visiting the Soviet Union was not necessarily an original one.[183] Feingold argues that the Israeli foreign ministry planned trips under the guise of tourism to establish contact with Soviet Jews, exchange information and heighten the profile of the emigration movement.[184] Beckerman, similarly, argues that some American Jews were drawn to the Soviet Jewry movement after a tourist visit to the USSR.[185] The Task Force's planned trip to the Soviet Union was, thus, inspired by actions of others within the movement.

The Task Force trip was initially planned for January 4–11, 1973.[186] It was later postponed to February 11–19, 1973 because Soviet authorities claimed that they could not find hotel reservations for the initial period. AJC staff member Gerald Strober, however, suspected that the Soviet simply did not want to allow an interreligious visit.[187] On February 2, the delegation was once again informed that there were no hotel reservations available. In protest,

[181] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19–20, 1972, 15.; Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. David T. Goldstick, December 29, 1972.
[182] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Mr. David T. Goldstick, December 29, 1972.
[183] Many American (Jewish) activist groups and individuals traveled to the Soviet Union under the guise of tourism to visit Soviet Jews. They wrote reports of their visits to spread the information they obtained and raise awareness of the plight of refuseniks. The American Jewish Historical Society owns a large collection of such reports which is housed at the Center for Jewish History. The collection can be found in the Center for Jewish History's digital archive: "American Soviet Jewry Movement Trips Reports," Center for Jewish History Digital Collections, accessed on July 15, 2019, http://digital.cjh.org/R/A8T871ULY18V3MFK7MHP93KRTADIQCT6IVB9R6HEBJGE7RJH69-00091?func=collections-result&collection_id=1927.
[184] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 48–9.
[185] Beckerman, *When They Come for Us,* 354.
[186] National Interreligious Task Force to Soviet Union, January 4–11, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Soviet Union Trip, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1973, AJC-DA.
[187] Letter from Gerald Strober to Mrs. Reinhold Niebuhr, January 9, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Soviet Union Trip, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1973, AJC-DA.

they sent a telegram to Soviet Chairman Leonid Brezhnev and appealed to him to intercede.[188] In the end, the interreligious delegation never visited the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Task Force did get some publicity out of it. When they were rejected for visas a second time, the Task Force held a press conference to protest which was widely featured in the media, among others in the *New York Times*.[189]

Sister Ann did succeed in travelling to the Soviet Union in 1974 and 1978. In 1974, she went on an extended trip to Europe and the Middle East and was able to meet with refuseniks in Moscow and Leningrad. The Task of November 1974 featured an extensive description of her trip and her conversations with the refuseniks she met, during which she told them of the support of American Christians and Jews for Soviet Jewish emigration.[190] In 1978, Sister Ann visited the Soviet Union again, this time together with Sister Gloria Coleman of the Cardinal's Commission on Human Relations and the Philadelphia Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry. From June 9 to 25, they met with thirty key activists of the Soviet Jewish emigration movement. At the press conference following the trip, Sister Ann emphasized that the situation of Soviet Jews had not improved since 1974. In fact, she argued, it had worsened and a strong response by Western public opinion was needed. She also discussed how the Soviet Union's harassment of Americans showed her a glimpse of what Soviet Jews had to go through. Sister Ann and Sister were, for example, followed by the KGB, had their papers confiscated and were subjected to body searches at the airport.[191]

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[188] Telegram from Congressman Robert Drinan, Dr. Arnold T. Olsen, Mother Margaret Brennan and dr. Milton Curry to Chairman Leonid Brezhnev, February 8, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Soviet Union Trip, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1973, AJC-DA.
[189] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Hon. Robert F. Drinan, February 12, 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Soviet Union Trip, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1973, AJC-DA.; "Soviet Union Said to Bar 10 US Religious Leaders," *New York Times,* February 10, 1973.
[190] The Task, Vol. 2, No. 2, November 1974.
[191] Press Release, July 6, 1978, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Folder #2, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.; Text of Statement Given at the Press Conference by Sister Ann Gillen at the Headquarters of the American Jewish Committee, July 6, 1978, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Folder #2, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.; "Catholic Nuns Urge Interventions on Behalf of Soviet Dissidents," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* July 7, 1978, accessed July 15, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1978/07/07/archive/catholic-nuns-urge-interventions-on-behalf-of-soviet-dissidents.

Like those of many other organizations, the Task Force's trips had a dual function. On the one hand, they allowed Sister Ann to speak to refuseniks and to tell them of the support of American Christians and Jews for the emigration movement. On the other hand, they were a way for Sister Ann to tell the US and the world of her first-hand experiences in the Soviet Union. By telling the public of her experiences and the situation of the refuseniks through the media and at press conferences, she attempted to mobilize American public opinion and call the American government to action.

The second type of international activities the Task Force pursued was the attendance of international conferences. Having modeled their first consultation after the first Brussels Conference, the Task Force attended the Second Brussels Conference in 1976 which, in contrast to Brussels I, included an interreligious component and a special Commission for Interreligious Leaders. The Task Force was responsible for inviting and coordinating the conference's Christian participants.[192] In her invitation, Sister Ann asked religious leaders "to help in the shaping of the direction of history towards the recognition of human rights."[193] Through attending the Brussels II Conference, which paid considerable attention to human rights and the Helsinki Final Act, the Task Force was able to show the support of Christians for the cause. According to AJC staff member David Geller, the presence of non-Jews contributed to the significance of the conference and ensured the commitment and participation of these people.[194] In the words of Sister Ann: "Our Christian delegation, by its presence in Brussels, will bear

[192] Invitation from Rabbi A. James Rudin to Dr. Cynthia Wedel, December 18, 1975, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Brussels Meeting, Feb 16-19, 1976, AJC-DA.; Letter from Sister Ann Gillen to Christians Concerned About the Cause of Soviet Jewry and Human Rights in the USSR, December 2, 1975, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Brussels Meeting, Feb 16-19, 1976, AJC-DA.
[193] Letter from Sister Ann Gillen to Christians Concerned About the Cause of Soviet Jewry and Human Rights in the USSR, December 2, 1975.
[194] Amended Draft Program – Brussels II, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Brussels Meeting, Feb 16-19, 1976, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from David Geller to Morris Fine, February 25, 1976, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 1: Soviet Jewry, 1969–1976, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.

witness to the universality of the struggle to secure the legitimate human rights of Soviet Jews."[195]

Moreover, the interreligious delegation coordinated by the Task Force made a public appeal to Christians to support the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration. The representatives of Christian denominations from eight countries issued a "Christian Call to Conscience" which urged the Soviet Union to let those who wished to do so emigrate and to assure the civil, religious and cultural rights of those who wished to remain.[196] In its opening paragraph, the "Christian Call to Conscience" argued that their generation of Christians would not remain silent like the wartime generation of Christians had done during the Holocaust. Instead, they condemned the violation of human rights of Soviet Jews and called upon the Soviet government to live up to the Helsinki Agreement.[197] The "Christian Call to Conscience" was submitted by the Task Force and was accepted by the Christians participating in Brussels II.[198]

The "Call to Christian Conscience" referenced the Helsinki Final Act and this connection between the Soviet Jewry movement and the human rights movement was a part of the Task Force's other international activities as well. The Task Force was certainly not alone in this endeavor. According to Korey, the US government consistently used the Helsinki Final Act to press for Jewish emigration and Jewish rights in the Soviet Union.[199] A 1982 briefing book prepared for Secretary of State George Shultz, indeed, argued that exerting public pressure at for example CSCE conferences was a useful method to deal with human rights abuses in the

[195] "US Christian Leaders to Attend Brussels Confab and Are Expected to Issue a 'Call to Conscience'."
[196] "Christians Issue 'Call to Conscience'," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* February 20, 1976, accessed July 15, 2019, https://www.jta.org/1976/02/20/archive/christians-issue-call-to-conscience.
[197] Call to Christian Conscience, Brussels II Conference, February 17–19, 1976, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 1: Soviet Jewry, 1969–1976, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[198] The Task, Special Issue: A Report on the Second World Conference of Jewish Communities on Soviet Jewry, Brussels, February 17–19, 1976, March 1976, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.
[199] Korey, "From Helsinki," 126–135.

Soviet bloc.[200] American Jewish organizations supported this strategy. The NCSJ, for example, supplied the American CSCE Commission with information on the plight of Soviet Jews in preparation for the Belgrade Conference.[201] Korey, however, argues that the 1977 Conference did not allow non-governmental organizations (NGOs) much of a role yet. At later conferences, he contends, the NCSJ gave lobbying and disseminating information about Soviet Jews high priority.[202] The Task Force's activities, however, show that Belgrade did offer some possibilities for NGOs to advance their cause.

The Task Force sent a delegation to follow-up Conferences on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Belgrade, 1977 and Madrid, 1980. As mentioned, the Task Force was responsible for preparing a testimony before the Congressional Helsinki Commission as part of this Commission's preparation for the Belgrade Conference. In June 1977, Rabbi A. James Rudin, Executive Chairman of the Task Force, contacted the State Department to see if they would be willing to meet with a Task Force delegation during the Belgrade Conference to discuss progress of the CSCE review. Matthew Nimetz answered affirmative.[203] The Task Force, in 1977 still the only organization bringing Jews and Christians together on the issue of Soviet Jews' human rights, believed that an interreligious component was missing at Belgrade and sent a seven-person delegation in November 1977.[204] In Belgrade, they met with delegations from different countries, such as the Vatican, the Netherlands and Hungary, to appeal to them to demand religious freedom in the Soviet Union.[205] In November 1980, the

[200] Papers Prepared in the Department of State, Washington, June 25, 1982, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter: *FRUS*], 1981–1988, Volume XLI: Global Issues II, ed. Alexander O. Poster (Washington: United States Government Publishing Office, 2017), Document 58.
[201] Memorandum of a Conversation, Washington, April 8, 1977, *FRUS,* 1977–1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union, ed. Melissa Jane Taylor (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2013), Document 25.
[202] Korey, "From Helsinki," 126–135.
[203] Letter from Matthew Nimetz to Rabbi A. James Rudin, June 23, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Helsinki Meetings, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1976–77, AJC-DA.
[204] Belgrade Journal or "Leave it to Arthur: by Rabbi A. James Rudin, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Belgrade-Rome Trip Follow-up, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.
[205] Belgrade Journal or "Leave it to Arthur," June 23, 1977.; What's Doing at the Committee, Vol. 8, No. 1, January 1978, Edited by Morton Yarman, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Belgrade-Rome Trip Publicity, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.

Task Force sent a delegation to the Madrid Conference. Here, they repeated their commitment to human rights and religious liberty in a six-point position paper submitted to ambassador of thirty-five countries. They also had meetings with Denmark, Sweden, West-Germany and the US.[206]

As mentioned, the Task Force met with individual government in connection with the Helsinki follow-up conferences. To garner more support for the cause, they also met with officials at the Vatican, a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act, after the Belgrade Conference in 1977. During meetings with Vatican officials, the Task Force discussed human rights and religious liberty and were ensured of the Vatican's commitment to these principles. However, no practical gains could be made. The Vatican's approach to the Soviet Union was one of quiet diplomacy and they were unwilling to speak out on specific human rights cases, even if they involved Catholics. While in Rome, the Task Force participated in the International Sakharov Human Rights hearings. The goal of these hearings was to gain data on human rights violations in Eastern Europe.[207] While the talks with the Vatican did not lead to tangible results, the Task Force's participation in the Sakharov Hearings showed the universal, interreligious support for Soviet Jewish emigration in an international setting.

Conclusion: The Task Force's Contribution to the Soviet Jewry Movement

The Task Force contributed to the Soviet Jewry movement by mobilizing Christians and consequently, showing the US government and the world that the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration was not merely a particularistic Jewish concern, but a matter of universalistic human

[206] The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Aide Memoire Submitted to the Madrid Conference on European Security and Cooperation, November 24, 1980, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 40, Folder 3: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1980, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.; Draft Press Release, Undated, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 40, Folder 3: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1980, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.

[207] National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry Delegation Urges Strong Human Rights Stand in Belgrade and Rome, by Rabbi A. James Rudin, December 11, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Belgrade-Rome Trip Publicity, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.; Memorandum from Rabbi A. James Rudin to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, March 9, 1978, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Belgrade-Rome Trip Follow-up, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.

rights. In these efforts, I argue that the Task Force was successful. First, as evidenced by the large-scale consultations, the Christian participation in Solidarity Sunday and conferences and the large number of local task forces, the Task Force succeeded in mobilizing American Christians at both the professional and grassroots levels. Second, the US government repeatedly invited Task Force members such as Sister Margaret Traxler to give testimonies before Congressional commissions and to meet with delegates at CSCE conferences. Evidentially, the government recognized the base of the Task Force and listened to their arguments. Third, through participating in Brussels II and issuing the "Christian Call to Conscience", visiting the Soviet Union and meeting with ambassadors from a variety of countries at Helsinki Conferences, the Task Force showed the international community that American Christians were active in the movement, consequently helping it shed its particularistic Jewish character.

In their efforts, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry repeatedly invoked human rights instruments and generally framed the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration as a human rights issue. I argue that activism for Soviet Jews can, therefore, be seen as human rights activism. This goes against the arguments put forward by Barnett and that Jewish human rights activism greatly declined after 1967.[208] Although the Task Force's leadership consisted largely of Christians, the AJC and AJC members, such as Rudin and Tanenbaum, were heavily involved in the Task Force's programming, in control of approving their actions and responsible for financing their activities. The AJC was, as mentioned, the only organization financially responsible for the Task Force. Considering the fact that the Task Force's budget consistently increased over the years, it is safe to say that the AJC stood behind the Task Force's work and their emphasis on human rights and considered the organization to be important to the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration.[209] Therefore, the work of the National Interreligious Task Force on

[208] Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes,* 13, 196.; Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans,* xiv–xv.
[209] The budget increased from $31,500 for October 1972 -December 1973 to $73,700 for 1979

Soviet Jewry is evidence for the argument that Jews were, in fact, highly active in the field of human rights after 1967.

It should be emphasized, however, that the Task Force did not achieve all of this alone. Some of the Task Force's programs were, as mentioned, inspired by or set up in cooperation with other leading organizations within the Soviet Jewry movement, such as the NCSJ. However, as the only body bringing together Christians and Jews on this issue, they were the main party responsible for bringing Christians into the Soviet Jewry movement. In this effort, the Task Force was successful, leading them to become the main interreligious voice of the movement.

Proposed Budget of National Interreligious Task Force For Soviet Jewry, Oct. '72 – Dec. 1973, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–72, AJC-DA.; The American Jewish Committee, National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Projected Budget – 1979, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Interreligious Affairs Department, Jan–Apr 1979, AJC-DA.

Chapter 3. Universalizing the Agenda: Advocating for Soviet Christians and Advancing Interreligious Dialogue

By mobilizing American Christians for the Soviet Jewry movement, the Task Force succeeded in becoming the movement's main interreligious voice. The interreligious component of the organization, however, encompassed more than Christians working with and in behalf of Jews. Whereas the previous chapter focused on the "Soviet Jewry" part of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, this chapter examines the "Interreligious" part and contends that the organization's interreligious character had a major impact on their agenda and their relationship with the AJC. Due to their interreligious character, the Task Force took a more universalistic approach than Jewish organizations within the Soviet Jewry movement, such as the NCSJ and the AJC, both with regards to the organization's base and to their agenda. First, the Task Force took a universalistic approach to the issue of linkage—linking the plight of Soviet Jews to other issues such as the dissident movement and détente—by firmly linking their activities to the human rights movement and by expanding their agenda to include Soviet Christians. Second, as an interreligious organization, the Task Force both impacted and was impacted by the state of interreligious relations in the US. In other words, whereas organizations such as the NCSJ focused their programming firmly on aiding Soviet Jews, the Task Force's programming was rooted in a desire to both aid Soviet Jews and promote interreligious dialogue and understanding in the US. Motivated by the wish to improve Jewish-Christian relations, the AJC took a flexible stand regarding the Task Force's universalistic approach, even if the AJC would have preferred to maintain the particularistic Soviet Jewish agenda that the Task Force also initially limited themselves to.

To support these arguments, I first discuss the Task Force's roots in the field of interreligious relations and dialogue, paying attention to the background of Task Force leaders in interreligious dialogue and the place of the Task Force on the AJC's interreligious agenda. I

also briefly describe the state of interreligious relations in the 1970s, expanding upon the discussion provided in the first chapter of this thesis. Second, I examine the Task Force's approach to the linkage issue. I argue that the Task Force initially focused their activism on Soviet Jews only, but increasingly included Soviet Christians during the late 1970s. Furthermore, I argue that as the Task Force more firmly portrayed the plight of Soviet Jews as a human rights and religious freedom issue, other oppressed religions automatically became part of the deal. Third, I argue that while the AJC disagreed with the universalistic approach, they allowed the Task Force some flexibility regarding linkage, partially because of the Task Force's contributions to advancing interreligious dialogue and improving interreligious relations.

An Interreligious Organization: The Task Force, the AJC and Interreligious Relations in the 1970s

Although the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration had much to do with international affairs, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry was run not under the auspices of the AJC's International Affairs Department, but under the supervision of the Interreligious Affairs Department.[210] This rootedness in interreligious affairs was also reflected by the professional backgrounds of most of the Task Force's leaders who had experience working in the field of intergroup or interreligious relations. Executive Director Sister Ann Gillen had started several interfaith initiatives in her hometown of Houston, Texas. Some examples of her initiatives were Project Awareness, which invited Jewish women to teach the meaning of Hanukkah and Passover at Catholic schools and the Houston Interfaith Committee for Aid to Bangladesh.[211] Co-chairman Sister Margaret Traxler, next, had worked in improving intergroup relations through her directorship at the NCCIJ.[212] Finally, Rabbi Tanenbaum was the AJC's director of

[210] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to Gerald Strober, September 11, 1972.
[211] Biographical Data Concerning Sister Ann Gillen, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1971–1972, AJC-DA.
[212] Memorandum from Eugene Du Bow to David Geller, October 18, 1971.

Interreligious Affairs and an important figure in the field of interreligious dialogue. Tanenbaum had extensive contacts with Christian leaders, had arranged for the first dialogue between the National Council of Churches and the Synagogue Council and was present at the concluding session of the Second Vatican Council which adopted *Nostra Aetate,* in which the Vatican proclaimed that all Jews could not be held responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.[213]

Under Rabbi Tanenbaum, the AJC's Interreligious Affairs Department tracked the Christian community's response to the plight of Soviet Jews already before the Task Force was founded in 1971 and simultaneously looked for opportunities to organize interreligious programs in behalf of Soviet Jewry. For example, after the Leningrad Trial of December 1970 in which eleven Soviet citizens, of whom nine were Jewish, were found guilty of attempting to hijack an airplane and two Jews received the death sentence, the Interreligious Affairs Department assembled a compendium of international, national, local and press reactions from the Christian community.[214] In the introduction to this compendium, Tanenbaum noted the "profound and widespread protest from Christian leadership on every level in many parts of the world."[215] The *American Jewish Year Book* of 1973, similarly, describes an outpouring of concern from Christian groups, labor organizations and leading personalities.[216] The AJC sent the compendium to other organizations and partners. In the accompanying letter, Tanenbaum offered the AJC's services to help "in organizing interreligious efforts in behalf of Soviet Jewry and other suppressed religious groups" if the recipient would want to plan such programs.[217]

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[213] Banki, "Biographical Sketch," xxiv–xxv,
[214] Christian Reaction to the Leningrad Trial of Soviet Jews, Prepared by the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, 1971, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 15, Folder 2: Christian Reaction to Leningrad Trail of Soviet Jews, 1971, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[215] Christian Reaction to the Leningrad Trial of Soviet Jews, 1971.
[216] Abraham J. Bayer, "American Response to Soviet Anti-Jewish Policies," *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 74 (1973), 211.
[217] Letter from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum to Friend, May 4, 1971, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 15, Folder 2: Christian Reaction to Leningrad Trail of Soviet Jews, 1971, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.

Tracking Christian responses to issues of concern to American Jews was a part of the AJC's efforts to promote interreligious dialogue and understanding. Apart from tracking the response to the plight of Soviet Jews, the AJC for example tracked the Christian response to the Yom Kippur War, arguing that this was "important to Jewish-Christian dialogue because the security and well-being of the people and the State of Israel figure to centrally in Jewish consciousness today."[218] True dialogue, after all, involves mutual respect and acceptance of the validity of the other's religious beliefs and convictions.[219] According to Tanenbaum, this sentiment should be extended to the other's particularistic agenda, as long as it did not interfere with one's own. In an article originally published by the American Lutheran Church, Tanenbaum argued that understanding and supporting each other's particularistic agenda was of the utmost importance to Jewish-Christian relations and at the time, the Jewish agenda was concerned about Israel and about Soviet Jews. As partners in interreligious dialogue, he furthermore contended, Jews had a moral right to expect Christians to make a true effort to understand their concerns and support them as much as possible. In return, Jews should support the Catholic and Protestant particularistic agendas whenever they did not interfere with Jewish fundamental beliefs.[220]

Promoting understanding of their particularistic concerns was, thus, an important issue on the AJC's interreligious agenda for the 1970s. As discussed in the first chapter, Jews had attained a comfortable position within American society and interreligious dialogue had reached its peak during the 1970s. According to religious scholar Yaakov Ariel, Christian groups began accepting Judaism as a legitimate faith in the 1950s and 1960s, a development

[218] Christian Responses to the Yom Kippur War: Implications for Christian-Jewish Relations, by Judith Hershcopf Banki, 1974, Folder: Christian Responses to the Yom Kippur War: Implications for Christian-Jewish Relations, Judith Hershcopf Banki, AJC, 1974, AJC-DA.
[219] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 186–7.
[220] Marc H. Tanenbaum, "Do You Know What Hurts Me?" *Event,* Vol. 12, No. 2, February 1972, Series A: Writings and Addresses, Box 2, Folder 29: "Do You Know Wat Hurts Me?", February 1972, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.

which was reinforced by the Christian ecumenical movement and the Cold War which legitimized religious expression as the "American way" of life.[221] Nevertheless, Ariel contends, increased dialogue and recognition did not mean true acceptance.[222] Moreover, the fact that interreligious dialogue had reached its peak in the 1970s does not mean that interreligious relations were always harmonious.

Two issues put Jewish-Christian relations under pressure in the 1970s. First, the state of Israel was a divisive factor. In the 1970s, many liberal Christian groups became pro-Arab and objected to Israel's policies in the Middle East. Jews were disappointed by Christians' lack of understanding of the meaning of Israel to Judaism, which was amplified by the lack of Christian response to the Six-Day War of 1967.[223] Second, the rise of Protestant fundamentalist evangelicals and a surge in missionary activities threatened Jewish-Christian relations. The *American Jewish Year Book* of 1973 showed a concern among Jewish leadership that this might mean a return to the ideology of "Christian America."[224] In 1972, Christian evangelicals planned a year-long nationwide campaign, known as Key '73, to spread their message. Although the campaign itself was not primarily aimed at Jews, some groups targeted Jewish youth specifically.[225] A September 1973 article in *Commentary* by sociologist Marshall Sklare described the Key '73 movement as striking at the heart of Jewish-Christian relations and being especially painful for Jews because it portrayed Judaism as unequal to Christianity.[226]

Other issues not exclusive to Jewish-Christian relations increased American Jewish feelings of anxiety and insecurity. A growing sense of ethnic consciousness throughout American society led Jews to become preoccupied with particularistic issues, but also to

[221] Ariel, "American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue," 332–3.
[222] Ariel, 336.
[223] Ariel, "American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue," 336–7.; Wertheimer, *A People Divided,* 29–31.
[224] Murray Friedman, "Politics and Intergroup Relations in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 74 (1973): 139, 161.
[225] Friedman, "Politics and Intergroup Relations in the United States," 161.
[226] Marshall Sklare, "The Conversion of the Jews," *Commentary,* September 1973, accessed on July 22, 2019, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-conversion-of-the-jews/.

become more aware of possible dangers to Jewish security, especially antisemitism. According to the *American Jewish Year Book* of 1972, a Gallup poll showed that 34% of American Jews believed that antisemitism had increased in the last few years.[227] Jews saw antisemitic overtones in, for example, the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist campaigns of the New Left and the Black Panthers.[228] In 1974, Arnold Foster and Benjamin R. Epstein of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith argued in their study *The New Anti-Semitism* that a new kind of antisemitism had taken hold in the US and abroad.[229] This new antisemitism, they contended, was often typified by "a callous indifference to Jewish concerns."[230] The *American Jewish Year Book* summarized Foster and Epstein's observances of new antisemitism as "anti-Israel statements with an anti-Jewish impact, often from respectable sources; silent acceptance by public officials and the clergy of overt manifestations of anti-Jewish bigotry; antisemitism among black extremists blaming Jews for urban ills; radical-left assaults on Israel, Jews, and Jewish concerns, and a revival of anti-Jewish stereotyping in the arts."[231] Although not all Jews agreed with this definition, the feeling that Americans were becoming insensitive and indifferent to Jewish concerns was widespread.[232] The Anti-Defamation League released another study by Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock in 1979. This study analyzed antisemitism among different groups in detail, including Christian sources of antisemitism. Quinley and Glock argued that while interreligious dialogue had led to a degree of mutual acceptance between Christians and Jews, orthodox Christian beliefs remained associated with antisemitic prejudice.[233]

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[227] Murray Friedman, "Intergroup Relations and Tensions in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol 73 (1972): 109.
[228] Friedman, "Intergroup Relations and Tensions in the United States," 111–2.
[229] Arnold Foster and Benjamin R. Epstein, *The New Anti-Semitism* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), xii.
[230] Foster and Epstein, *The New Anti-Semitism,* 5.
[231] Milton Ellerin, "Politics and Intergroup Relations," *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 76 (1976): 124.
[232] Ellerin, "Politics and Intergroup Relations," 124.
[233] Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 94–109.

In the context of these threats to Jewish-Christian relations, the AJC sponsored the establishment of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry as a forum for helping Soviet Jews and for facilitating interfaith dialogue. At the meeting that founded the Task Force, Gerald Strober already addressed the programmatic possibilities of the Task Force as both Soviet Jewry programs and interfaith relations programs.[234] A 1978 factsheet on the Task Force, similarly, listed among the organization's aims "reconciliation: through co-operation in solving common problems."[235] Apart from spreading their particularistic concern for Soviet Jews to those involved with the Task Force, the AJC also attempted to gain support for Israel by bringing Christian leaders involved with the Task Force to Israel. According to historian Marianne Sanua, the Task Force worked in tandem with the AJC's Christian Visitors to Israel program. These trips had the dual effect of motivating these leaders to support Israel and Soviet Jews.[236] Overall, the Task Force was successful in providing a forum for interreligious dialogue which, as the last section of this chapter argues, was a reason for the AJC not to oppose the organization's universalizing tendencies.

An Interreligious Agenda: Linkage and Advocating for Soviet Christians

With regards to the Soviet Jewry movement, linkage has multiple meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the issue of linking the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration to détente. The most important example of this linkage was the Jackson-Vanik Amendment which linked a US-USSR trade agreement to free emigration.[237] On the other hand, linkage concerns the linking of the Soviet Jewry movement to other groups and movement seeking change and human rights in the Soviet Union. Primarily, linkage in this sense concerned linking the Soviet Jewry

[234] Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, October 13, 1971.
[235] Origins, Aims and Evolution of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Undated, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.
[236] Sanua, *Let Us Prove Strong,* 288.
[237] Beckerman, *When They Come For Us,* 280–1.

movement to the democratic or dissident movement, but also linking the plight of Soviet Jews to that of other religious groups. Although many dissidents were Jewish, the difference between them and the refuseniks was that they saw the struggle for emigration as part of other attempts to liberalize the Soviet Union and gain human rights at home.[238] As argued in the second chapter of this thesis, the Task Force, like many other organizations within the Soviet Jewry movement, supported the Jackson-Vanik Amendment—and thus linkage to détente—from the amendment's inception. The organization's approach to linkage with other movements, however, took a different trajectory.

Initially, the Task Force focused their efforts solely on Jews, although other oppressed groups were sometimes mentioned along general lines. The "Statement of Conscience" adopted at the 1972 Consultation, for example, mentioned that the Task Force was concerned about the denial of rights of "the 3 million Jewish people of the Soviet Union and of other deprived groups and nationalities."[239] Despite such mentions, however, the Task Force explained in the first publication of The Task that the organization focused on Soviet Jews as "its *only* agenda" even if they were also concerned about other oppressed groups.[240] The Task gave three reasons for this. First, Jews suffered special deprivation as the only separate nationality denied the cultural rights that other nationalities enjoyed. Second, Jews as a religious group suffered higher levels of oppression than other religious groups. Third, Christian antisemitism was one of the reasons why the Holocaust could take place and Christian groups should therefore realize that threats to the freedom of one group, in this case Soviet Jews, were a threat to the freedom of all groups.[241] In a 1976 statement defending the Task Force against allegations of indifference to the plight of Christians, Sister Ann again pointed to the special situation of Soviet Jews whose

[238] Beckerman, *When They Come For Us,* 254–5.; Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews,* 43.
[239] Report on National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry, March 19-20, 1972, 6.
[240] Emphasis in original. The Task, Vol. 1, No. 1, Undated.
[241] The Task, Vol. 1, No. 1, Undated.

threatened spiritual and physical survival earned them a special claim to Christian conscience.[242]

As time progressed, the Task Force increasingly included Soviet Christians in their agenda. I argue that there are three main reasons for this. First, just as American Jews worried about the fate of Soviet Jews so did American Christians worry about the fate of their own co-religionists. According to an AJC compendium, Christians involved in the Soviet Jewry movement became increasingly aware of the discrimination of Christian religious groups in the USSR.[243] In other words, many Christians were ignorant of the plight of Soviet Christians until they started advocating for Soviet Jews. As a result of their own particularistic concerns for their fellow Christians, they took up their cause as well.[244] The universalization of the Task Force's agenda was, thus, in a way the result of Christian particularism.

Second, I contend that the interreligious nature of the Task Force's programming inevitably led to the inclusion of Soviet Christians. As described in the second chapter of this thesis, the Task Force's people-to-people programs were often interreligious in nature. In practice, the meant that American Christian families would adopt a Soviet Jewish family in project Adopt-A-Family and American Jewish families would adopt a Soviet Christian family.[245] Project Co-Adoption, similarly, involved church groups adopting prisoners of conscience in collaboration with Soviet Jewry organizations.[246] Likewise, Co-Adoption Greetings, which centered around sending postcards to the Soviet Union around specific

[242] Statement by Sister Ann Gillen in Response to National Catholic News Service and Religious News Service Accounts of Chicago Consultation of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, December 21, 1976, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.
[243] Christian Statements and Documents Bearing on Christian-Jewish Relations, 1972.
[244] Interreligious Cooperation in Human Rights: A Working Model, February 8, 1978, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977–78, AJC-DA.
[245] The American Jewish Committee, Its Activities on Behalf of Soviet Jewry, Undated.
[246] Statement by Sister Ann Gillen in Response to National Catholic News Service and Religious News Service Accounts of Chicago Consultation of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, December 21, 1976.

holidays, included both Jewish and Christian holidays and families.[247] Thus, as many of the Task Force's projects aimed to connect Christians and Jews in the United States and the Soviet Union, Soviet Christians naturally became a part of the people the Task Force was advocating for.

Third, the Task Force's defense of the refuseniks' cause in universalistic terms such as human rights and religious freedom made it all the more likely that the organization would broaden their agenda. After all, if one opposes the Soviet Union's limiting of religious freedom for Jews and one is aware of the fact that other religious groups suffer similar oppression, why would one not work with and for those other groups as well? In the words of Sister Ann: "Christians as well as Jews are victims of Soviet oppression, and wisdom and plain common-sense dictate that they should be joining forces to help liberate their brothers and sisters who are persecuted."[248] Especially after the Helsinki Final Act provided the Task Force with a human rights instrument that could be used to pressure the Soviet Union, universalizing their agenda and simultaneously providing the US government with more leverage to be used against its Cold War enemy became a very attractive strategy.

This was exactly what the Task Force did. At their national events after 1975, the Task Force often referred to the Helsinki Final Act and included lectures, seminars and testimonies about the situation of Soviet Jews and of other religious groups. This was the case at the Second National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry held in Chicago in 1976 and titled: "The Helsinki Accord, Human Rights, and Religious Liberty in the USSR."[249] The plenary session at this conference included an address by Dr. Thomas Bird, professor of Slavic Languages, about the situation of Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Soviet Union. Moreover, one of the

[247] Co-Adoption Greetings, Undated.
[248] Statement by Sister Ann Gillen in Response to National Catholic News Service and Religious News Service Accounts of Chicago Consultation of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, December 21, 1976.
[249] "The Helsinki Accord, Human Rights and Religious Liberty in the USSR," November 29–November 30, 1976.

seven seminars and panels was about the topic of religious and ethnic communities in the USSR.[250] In the invitation to the conference, Sargent Shriver stated his conviction "that this important meeting can have a profound impact upon the future of Jews, Christians and other religious peoples in the USSR."[251] In other words, the 1976 Consultation explicitly aimed to aid Soviet Christians as well.

The 1977 Hearings in New York were another example of the explicit inclusion of other religious groups in the Soviet Union in the Task Force's agenda. In an alert to the press, the Task Force stated that the hearings, meant to prepare the organization to testify before the Congressional Helsinki Commission, would focus on Soviet Jews but also that they would provide a forum for "spokesmen for Catholic, Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, and nationality groups in Eastern Europe to testify" about the human rights denials their people have suffered.[252] At the tribunal, first witness Professor Thomas Bird, gave an elaborate testimony in which he identified the various religious communities in the Soviet Union and reviewed Soviet laws and practices regarding religion. He spoke of a wide variety of religious groups affected by the Soviet Union's attempts to eradicate religion; the Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Georgian Orthodox, Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Evangelical Lutherans, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist communities were all mentioned. Another witness, Professor of Soviet Studies William Fletcher, spoke of multiple religious groups but, being a Baptist himself, gave examples of primarily Soviet Baptists. Others, such as Soviet émigré Ilya Levkov and Professor Howard Greenberger, focused their attention mainly on Soviet Jews.[253]

[250] "The Helsinki Accord, Human Rights and Religious Liberty in the USSR," November 29–November 30, 1976.
[251] Invitation to Second National Interreligious Consultation on Soviet Jewry from Sargent Shriver, October 11, 1976, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, Aug–Dec 1976, AJC-DA.
[252] Alert to Editors, Broadcasters, March 10, 1977
[253] Testimonies given at 1077 New York Tribunal, Undated, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Helsinki Meetings, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.

In 1985 and 1986, the Task Force again held three public tribunals in Los Angeles, Chicago and Seattle, this time titled "The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union." At these hearings, the testimonies were each specific to a certain religious group. The witnesses spoke about Soviet Jews, Roman Catholics in the Soviet Union and in Lithuania, the Ukrainian nationality, Russian Orthodox, Evangelicals, Baptists, Muslims and the Latvian Church.[254] In the introduction to the volume compiled of all these testimonies, Executive Coordinator of the Task Force Alan L. Mittleman argued that while the Task Force remained committed to securing the right to emigrate for Soviet Jews, the organization believed in using multiple strategies to achieve this goal. Included in these strategies was advocating for Christian and Muslim groups who sought human rights at home.[255] Mittleman described the Task Force as both a human rights and an interreligious organization. As a human rights organization, Mittleman stated, "it finds the linkage of Jewish with other Soviet minority concerns a natural one."[256] As an interreligious organization, he argued "it is natural for the Task Force to cooperate with other groups concerned for their communities in the Soviet Union."[257] Thus, as an organization committed to human rights and ecumenism, the Task Force found linking of the plight of refuseniks to that of other Soviet religious groups an organic step.

In their international activities the Task Force, likewise, aimed their efforts at both Soviet Jews and Christians. At the Madrid Conference in 1980, for example, the Task Force urged diplomats to work towards the release of Soviet Jewish prisoners of conscience and of the seven Christian Pentecostals who had sought refuge at the US embassy and had been living there for two years. In a press release describing the organization's activities at the Madrid Conference, the Task Force described themselves as working "in support of Soviet Jews and

[254] The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union: Testimony Presented at the Hearings of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1985–6, 1986, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 7: Soviet Jewry, 1985, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[255] The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union, 1986.
[256] The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union, 1986.
[257] The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union, 1986.

Christians."[258] A few years earlier, Sister Ann declared that the Task Force's delegation to the Belgrade Conference had asked delegates to press the Soviet Union to let "their citizens of all religions" enjoy the rights encompassed by the Helsinki Final Act at home or let them leave so "they can live freely as Christians and Jews."[259]

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Task Force's process towards including Soviet Christians in their agenda was complicated. When the Task Force initially focused on Soviet Jews only, they regularly defended their unitary agenda.[260] When the Task Force's activities did begin to include Soviet Christians, the organization defended this decision and emphasized that they remained committed to aiding Jews.[261] What complicated the decision to include Christians was internal disagreement among Task Force leaders and among the Task Force and the AJC, which is perhaps best illustrated by a leadership meeting in April 1978. At the meeting, Sister Traxler argued that it was important to include Soviet Christians. Du Bow, then AJC Regional Director and Task Force Consultation Coordinator, however, did not want the Task Force to lose their uniqueness. Task Force member Father Pawlikowski also wanted to keep a primary focus on Jews but was in favor of taking on some Christian cases as well. Professor LaCocque disagreed and wanted the Task Force to continue on their current trajectory. Rabbi Rudin, then, argued for selectivity regarding Christian cases and Sister Ann emphasized her desire for a commitment to Christians. At the meeting, no clear decision was made. Nevertheless, it was clear that Sister Ann was no longer content with the particularistic focus

[258] Draft Press Release, Undated, Series C: Interreligious Activities, Box 40, Folder 3: National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, 1980, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[259] Press Release, November 23, 1977, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 2: Soviet Jewry, 1977–1978, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[260] See for example: The Task, Vol. 1, No. 1, Undated.; Statement by Sister Ann Gillen in Response to National Catholic News Service and Religious News Service Accounts of Chicago Consultation of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, December 21, 1976.
[261] See for example: The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union, 1986.

on Soviet Jews and wanted "some leeway and room to maneuver."[262] The AJC eventually decided to let her have that flexibility.

Supporting Universalism for Particularistic Reasons

Like the Task Force's leadership, the AJC's leadership initially disagreed on the linkage issue. On December 16, 1976 David Geller sent a memorandum to all area directors about the desirability of linking up with Christian and nationalist groups in the Soviet Union. He explained that the AJC was in favor of maintaining the separation between the Soviet Jewry movement and other movements. He argued that this was justified because of the unique situation of Jews. Furthermore, while Jews were trying to leave the Soviet Union legally, other dissident movements were seen as illegal operations by the Soviet government. Linking to them would, thus, mean linking to an illegal movement.[263]

However, in early 1977 it became clear that Geller's position was not shared by all of the AJC's leadership. The other position held that portraying the issue as a human right concern would make it easier to mobilize support. Furthermore, Jews could not achieve their goals alone and needed to build bridges with other religious communities who might find it unfair if Jews would not support Soviet Christians when they had supported Soviet Jewish emigration.[264] For example, Miles Zitmore, Assistant Director of the AJC"s Southwest Office, argued based on his experiences with interfaith coalitions that "broadening the appeal for religious freedom in the Soviet Union helps garner support for Soviet Jewry."[265] In short, some of the AJC's

[262] Minutes of National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry Leadership Meeting, Chicago Illinois, April 20, 1978, May 4, 1978, Folder: Soviet Jewry, National Interreligious Task Force, Belgrade–Rome Trip Follow-up, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1978, AJC-DA.
[263] Memorandum from David Geller to Area Directors, December 16, 1976, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.
[264] David Geller, Staff Committee for Policy Consideration, Basic Outline re: Soviet Jewry Issues, January 21, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.
[265] Memorandum from Miles Zitmore to Will Katz, April 1, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.

leadership advocated a particularistic approach to the plight of refuseniks while others favored universalism.

A few months later, a decision was made. Director of Foreign Affairs Morris Fine sent a memorandum on April 28, 1977 to all area directors explaining the policies the AJC had decided on regarding linking the plight of Soviet Jews to those of other groups. The guidelines, Fine explained, were the same as those of the NCSJ. The NCJS's policy was to keep the Soviet Jewry movement distinct from the democratic dissident movement and to emphasize the uniqueness of the situation of Jews. They did support linkage to the human rights movement as they believed that the Soviet Jewry movement could capitalize on the recent exposure of human rights issues. To this, Fine added that AJC's historic, leading role in human rights made portraying the plight of refuseniks as a human rights issue even more attractive. However, Fine argued, some flexibility was necessary when it came to interfaith efforts. Although he believed that interfaith consultations should follow the NCSJ guidelines in general, they were a good forum to try multiple strategies, linkage to other religious groups being one of them.[266]

In short, while the AJC decided to keep treating the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration as a particularistic issue that could be tackled through universalistic means, it would allow interreligious efforts some flexibility with respect to linkage. As evidenced by their activities in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Task Force made good use of this and the AJC decided not to hinder the universalization of the Task Force's agenda. I argue that the AJC made this decision for multiple reasons. In addition to the arguments mentioned above that Jews could not achieve their goals alone and could use the support of Christians and the mobilizing potential of human rights to advance their cause, I contend that the role of the Task Force in advancing interreligious dialogue and interreligious relations was an important consideration. With interreligious relations under pressure, the need for dialogue increased. The Task Force's

[266] Memorandum from Morris Fine to Area Directors, April 28, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.

success in establishing dialogue and promoting the Jewish agenda to Christians were, therefore, important achievements. Not willing to risk these achievements and taking the implication of reciprocity that comes with dialogue into consideration, the AJC supported the Task Force's universalized agenda.

The Task Force was successful in getting Christians to adopt the American Jewish agenda, primarily with regards to the plight of Soviet Jews. As argued in the second chapter of this thesis, the Task Force was successful in mobilizing Christians for the Soviet Jewry movement and, thus, in motivating Christians to adopt the particularistic American Jewish agenda as their own. The AJC found this to be a success story of interreligious dialogue already in 1972. In 1972, the Interreligious Affairs Department described the increased involvement of Christian leaders in the Soviet Jewry movement as "one of the most heartening and positive developments that has resulted from the extensive growth of dialogue between Jews and Christians."[267] The Department emphasized the role of the Task Force in widening this Christian involvement.[268] In the years after 1972, this feeling persisted.

As Miles Zitmore stated in 1977, Sister Ann's Task Force activities contributed "not only to the cause of Soviet Jewry, but also to a sharing of agendas between Christians and Jews."[269] Indeed, the Task Force contributed to increased Christian support for other issues on the American Jewish agenda. Most importantly, the Task Force came to defend Israel. As mentioned earlier, the AJC ran their Christian Visitors to Israel program at the same time that the Task Force was active and sent some Christians involved with the Task Force to Israel, hoping to gain their support for Israel.[270] To summarize, the AJC saw the Task Force not only as an organization for dialogue with Christians regarding Soviet Jews, but also regarding Israel.

[267] Christian Statements and Documents Bearing on Christian-Jewish Relations, 1972.
[268] Christian Statements and Documents Bearing on Christian-Jewish Relations, 1972.
[269] Memorandum from Miles Zitmore to Will Katz, March 16, 1977, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 2: Soviet Jewry, 1977–1978, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[270] Sanua, *Let Us Prove Strong,* 288.

These efforts appear to have paid off. Not only did Task Force leaders, most importantly Sister Ann, support Israel themselves, the Task Force also publicly appealed to other Christians to do the same. After the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Sister Ann released a statement on behalf of the Task Force. She argued that Arab states were responsible for the ongoing hostilities in the Middle East and that Israel should keep control of the Golan and Sinai. Contending that Arab states were trying to isolate and close off Israel, Sister Ann called on all Americans to advocate for Soviet Jewish emigration.[271] In February 1975, Sister Ann wrote in a report to the Task Force's co-chairmen that a number of groups were coming together to discuss the Arab-Israeli issue.[272] Another example of Task Force support for Israel is a letter from Sister Ann to President Ronald Reagan. Protesting American considerations of changing Middle East policy to Israel's disadvantage, Ann argued that the US should stand firm with their friends. She wrote: "I wonder if the US knows how few friends it has today and who they are? It would serve us right if Israel began to look elsewhere for friends and support. (…) Let us stand firm with our friends!"[273] Finally, the Task Force's Aide de Memoire presented to the Madrid CSCE Conference included a condemnation of the Soviet Union's antisemitic campaign that vilifies Jews, Judaism and Israel.[274] These examples show that the Task Force not only aided the AJC's goal of promoting support for Soviet Jews, but their goal of promoting support for Israel as well.

The Task Force had clearly shown commitment to Jews' particularistic agenda, so it would not be far-fetched to expect that when they began including Soviet Christians in their agenda, Jews would support them in return. After all, Tanenbaum was a believer in

[271] Statement on the Arab Attack on Israel, Undated, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1972–1973, AJC-DA.
[272] Report to Co-Chairmen from Sister Ann Gillen, February 1975, Folder: National Interreligious Task Force, Sister Ann Gillen, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1975–76, AJC-DA.
[273] Letter from Sister Ann Gillen to President Ronald Reagan, September 29, 1982, Box 33, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Max Green Files, Ronald Reagan Library.
[274] The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, Aide Memoire Submitted to the Madrid Conference on European Security and Cooperation, November 24, 1980.

interreligious dialogue and supporting your dialogue partner's agenda whenever possible.[275] As mentioned, this sentiment was expressed by some AJC staff members as well, whose position entailed that the AJC should support linkage to Soviet Christians. Otherwise American Christians who had advocated for Soviet Jews might feel like they were treated unfairly.[276] This is what AJC members working with local task forces experienced as well. Will Katz, working with the South Florida Conference on Soviet Jewry, for example noted that Christians working with this group felt that their Jewish members had to commit to issues on the Christian agenda as well.[277] The need to do justice to their dialogue partners was perhaps what motivated the AJC and the Task Force to strongly defend themselves against allegations of only caring about Soviet Jews and not about Soviet Christians. For example, after the *Los Angeles Times* ran a column suggesting that the Jewish establishment was not concerned about the denial of religious freedom to non-Jewish religious groups in the USSR, the AJC wrote to the editor arguing that the AJC had focused on other religious groups as well despite their focus on Soviet Jews.[278]

In short, with the improvement of interreligious relations being a high priority issue in the 1970s, the AJC encouraged interreligious organizations, including the Task Force, as a forum to foster interreligious dialogue and cooperation and achieve support for the Jewish particularistic agenda. Recognizing the importance of reciprocity in such efforts, the AJC decided to allow the Task Force flexibility regarding universalization and the issue of linkage, even if the AJC themselves decided to follow NCSJ guidelines and maintain a particularistic agenda with respect to the Soviet Jewry movement.

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[275] Tanenbaum, "Do You Know What Hurts Me?"
[276] David Geller, Staff Committee for Policy Consideration, Basic Outline re: Soviet Jewry Issues, January 21, 1977, Folder: Soviet Jewry, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1977, AJC-DA.
[277] Memorandum from Will Katz to Brenda Shapiro, March 31, 1977, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 2: Soviet Jewry, 1977–1978, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.
[278] Letter from Janis Plotkin to the Editor of the Los Angeles Times, July 17, 1979, Series D: International Relations Activities, Box 72, Folder 2: Soviet Jewry, 1979, Tanenbaum Collection, AJA.

Conclusion: A Child of Two Revolutions

The National Interreligious Task Force was, according to Mittleman, a child of two revolutions: the human rights revolution and the revolution in Jewish-Christian relations.[279] The previous chapter has shown that the Task Force universalized the base of the Soviet Jewry by mobilizing Christians and portraying the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration as a human rights issue. In this chapter, I have argued that the interreligious character of the Task Force caused the organization to universalize their agenda as well by including Soviet Christians. This had three main reasons. First, American Christians developed their particularistic concerns for Soviet Christians as they became aware of their oppression. Second, the Task Force's programming was interreligious in nature and thus automatically included both Jews and Christians in the Soviet Union. Third, the Task Force's emphasis on human rights naturally led to a universalized agenda as well. Although the AJC, as the Task Force's supervising organization, maintained a more particularistic agenda, the Task Force was given flexibility. This, I argued, was due to the AJC's wish to advance interreligious dialogue and improve interreligious relations which were under pressure in the 1970s. The Task Force had proven to be a successful vehicle in mobilizing Christians for the Jewish particularistic agenda and in the spirit of true dialogue, the same consideration should be extended to them. Consequently, the Task Force was able to become truly interreligious: not only were they the main interreligious voice of the Soviet Jewry movement, they also spoke in behalf of an interreligious group of believers from the Soviet Union.

[279] The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union, 1986.

Conclusion

The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, together with a variety of other organizations, worked for years to mobilize the United States and its Western allies for the Soviet Jewry movement. This movement was an important event in Jewish history. Apart from having a significant effect on Soviet Jewish and Israeli history as a result of the, respectively, emigration and immigration of a large number of people, the Soviet Jewry movement has had great influence on American Jewish and human rights history. While the existing scholarship has focused much attention on the practical aspects of Soviet Jewish emigration, the emergence of the American (grassroots) movement and the interaction between the Soviet Jewry movement, the Cold War and the human rights boom of the 1970s, scholars have so far neglected the interreligious aspects of the movement. In order to fill this gap, this thesis focused on the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry and asked how this organization, working under the auspices of the AJC, contributed to the Soviet Jewry movement and how their efforts differed from those of the leading Soviet Jewry organizations. As an interpretive framework, the tension between particularism and universalism was used.

The main argument in this thesis was twofold. First, this thesis argued that the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry contributed to the Soviet Jewry movement by universalizing its base of support. The Task Force achieved this by mobilizing Christians on a local, national and international level and was successful in establishing themselves as the main interreligious voice of the Soviet Jewry movement. In their rhetoric and activities, the Task Force regularly linked Soviet Jewish emigration to human rights and human rights instruments such as the Helsinki Final Act, thus utilizing universalistic means to gain Christian support for the initially particularistic cause of Soviet Jewish emigration.

Second, this thesis argued that the Task Force differed from leading Soviet Jewry organizations, such as the NCSJ, in two main ways. Contrary to the NCSJ and the AJC— the

Task Force's supervising organization— the Task Force not only universalized the base of the Soviet Jewry movement, but they also universalized the agenda by increasingly including Soviet Christians in their advocacy. This, I argued, was the logical result of the organization's interreligious programming and framing of the emigration cause as a universal human rights concern. Furthermore, the Task Force stood apart because of their role in interreligious dialogue in the United States. Functioning as both a forum for and a result of interreligious dialogue, the organization helped to improve interreligious relations and to gain support for the American Jewish particularistic agenda, not only with regards to Soviet Jewry but also with regards to Israel. Because of these achievements, I argued, the AJC did not block the Task Force's universalistic approach to linkage, although they themselves preferred a particularistic approach,

This thesis' findings make the following contributions. First, these findings point to the importance of the American Jewish establishment in universalizing the base of the Soviet Jewry movement. Contrary to Beckerman who emphasized the importance of the grassroots in the Soviet Jewry movement, this thesis showed that the establishment was highly significant in mobilizing non-Jews for the cause of Soviet Jewry emigration; the AJC, working through the Task Force, was crucial in mobilizing Christians.[280] Second, this research suggests that intergroup relations played an important role in the Soviet Jewry movement. Not only did intergroup relations affect the wish of Soviet Jews to emigrate, they also affected the American side of the movement. Third, my findings show that human rights and American Jews stayed closely connected in the 1970s and early 1980s. Contrary to Barnett and Loeffler who argue that Jews and human rights drifted apart after 1967, this thesis shows the continued usage of and commitment to human rights by American Soviet Jewry organizations.[281] This research shows that American Jews still appealed to human rights language in the 1970s which is

[280] Beckerman, *When They Come For Us,* 7.
[281] Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes,* 13, 196.; Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans,* xiv–xv.

contrary to Barnett who contends that Jews stopped doing so because of their ability to link Jewish to American interests.[282] I have argued, instead, that while Jewish and American interests may have aligned with regards to the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration, portraying the issue as a universal human rights concern helped grow the movement's base and, consequently, the US government's willingness to act. Against Loeffler's argument that Jewish activists were not at the forefront of the Soviet Jewry movement, I have showed that the American Jewish establishment was instrumental in coordinating broad support for Soviet Jewish emigration.[283] Although the Task Force had a Christian Executive Director, the AJC was heavily involved in supervising the organization and supported linking Soviet Jewish emigration to human rights. This thesis, thus, confirms Feingold's argument that the Soviet Jewry movement was "quintessentially a struggle for human rights" as well as Galchinsky's portrayal of the struggle as a "global human rights network."[284]

My findings also point to more work to be done. First, further research is needed to complement the description of the National Interreligious Task Force's activities given in this thesis. This thesis focused on the Task Force in the 1970s and briefly looked into the organization's activities in the early 1980s. However, the Task Force remained active until 1987. Further research might reveal the Task Force's approach to linkage in their final years as well as the reasons behind their closure a few years before the Soviet Union's collapse made free emigration possible for Soviet Jews and Christians. Moreover, this thesis' focus on the Task Force as a coordinating committee left the bulk of activities of local task forces untouched. Further research into local task forces could shed light on the interaction between the grassroots and the establishment in the Soviet Jewry movement. Second, more research is needed to study the relationship between (American) Jews and human rights after 1967 to determine whether

[282] Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes,* 191–2.
[283] Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans,* 290–2.
[284] Feingold, *"Silent No More",* 307.; Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights,* 52.

the Soviet Jewry movement formed an exception to Jews' disillusionment with human rights or whether Jewish human rights activism continued for longer than Barnett and Loeffler suggest. Finally, while this thesis touched upon the motivations of Christians to advocate for Soviet Jewish emigration, it did not thoroughly examine them. In the context of a growing field of research dedicated to faith-based humanitarianism and human rights activism, examining the motivations of and relationship between religious groups active in the Task Force— and Soviet Jewry movement at large— might yield significant insights.[285]

Whether they were motivated by religious values or human rights ideals or felt compelled to act for any other reason, it is clear that the individuals working with the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry made their mark on the Soviet Jewry movement and helped advance interreligious dialogue in the United States. Under the leadership of Sister Ann Gillen, the Task Force succeeded in bringing Soviet Jews and Christians closer to freedom, and American Jews and Christians closer together.

[285] For a discussion of the field of faith-based humanitarianism, see Elizabeth Ferris, "Faith-based and Secular Humanitarian Organizations," *International Review of the Red Cross,* 87, no. 858 (2005): 311–325.; Elizabeth Ferris, "Faith and Humanitarianism: It's Complicated," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 3 (2011): 606–625.; Alastair Ager and Joey Ager, "Faith and the Discourse of Secular Humanitarianism," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 3 (2011): 456–472.

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