

E S S A Y S

I. "JACKSON-VANIK: WHAT EVERY RUSSIAN CHILD KNEW"

William Korey

The late Senator Henry M. Jackson would have welcomed an extraordinary, if indirect, testimonial to him made by Russian President Boris Yeltsin at a Washington, D.C. luncheon several months ago. The unreported episode merits relating on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. An audience invited by Vice President Al Gore and comprising the American foreign policy elite heard Yeltsin say on September 27, 1994 that every Russian school child knows what the Jackson-Vanik Amendment stands for.

What it had meant, of course, was the limitation of American trade benefits, notably most-favored-nation tariff treatment (MFN) and subsidized U.S. Export-Import Bank credits, until Moscow removed obstacles to Jewish or general emigration. Now that virtually all impediments to emigration have been removed and over one-half million Jews from the former Soviet Union during the past five years have come to Israel (and another 200,000 to the U.S.), and, in consequence, President Bill Clinton could formally affirm Moscow's "full compliance" with Jackson-Vanik, the Russian Chief of State could bask in the glow of universal approbation.

"Full compliance" would now permit Russia to obtain the benefits of Jackson-Vanik without an annual review of its emigration practices. Prior to Clinton's decision on September 21, the burdensome annual review was required if the restrictive features of the Amendment were to be waived. Such a waiver has been characteristic of America's policy for the last several years.

Far more eloquent testimony of the historical significance of Jackson-Vanik than Yeltsin's comments were the actual figure of large-scale aliyah.¹ While other factors, such as the Helsinki process, were vital and crucial elements in the aliyah breakthrough, Jackson-Vanik provided a critical spark plug. Senator Jackson had specifically referred to a "benchmark" of 60,000 Jewish emigrants per annum to measure Moscow's commitment to the provisions of the Amendment which was largely his brainchild. That "benchmark" has been annually surpassed since 1989, and this past year reached 100,000 (over 65,000 to Israel alone).

As important as the volume of exodus, and perhaps more so, is the removal of obstacles to emigration and the establishment of machinery to facilitate obtaining exit visas. The principal obstacle was an arbitrary decision of Russian administrators that the exit visa applicant allegedly knew state secrets. While the numbers of such refuseniks were significantly declining, they were sufficiently numerous to constitute a disturbing concern.

In Yeltsin's first summit meeting with Clinton in Vancouver, Canada in April 1993, he tried to prevail upon the U.S. President that the Jackson-Vanik legislation be revoked. His obviously keen preoccupation with the statute was itself a clear indication of the legislation's impact. At the press conference, which climaxed the Vancouver meeting, Yeltsin hastily observed that the two leaders had "decided to do away with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment."

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The comment was hardly accurate. Clinton, in his press comments, had merely indicated that only after White House determination of whether restrictions on emigration are no longer implemented, would he then be prepared to recommend to Congress that the legislation be reconsidered. As it happened, the Administration learned from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) that the number of refuseniks was disconcertingly sizable—252. Some 134 were capriciously refused for presumably knowing state secrets and 56 on "poor relative" grounds.

Given these facts, Clinton was hardly in a position to ask for a change in the status of Russia under Jackson-Vanik, let alone repeal the Amendment. Moscow had to do better and she knew it. The next year, Russian Prime Minister

1. Aliyah is the immigration of Jews to Israel.

Victor Chernomyrdin came to Washington armed with positive details. It was on June 21, 1994 that he met with several Jewish leaders brought together by the NCSJ.

Besides noting the continuing high level of exodus, Chernomyrdin could call attention to the sharp decline in the number of refuseniks. A specially created Commission, headed by Sergei Lavrov who would soon become Moscow's Ambassador to the United Nations, had reviewed 139 key refusenik cases and approved visas for 135. When the NCSJ indicated that it had a list of new cases, totaling approximately 50, the Prime Minister offered to arrange for the Jewish leadership to meet with Lavrov himself who would shortly arrive in Washington.

Sergei Lavrov was more than cooperative. He promised to examine the controversial cases and to expedite solutions. Since then, the refusenik category plunged downward, laying the groundwork for a change in Russia's MFN status.

But that change would not and could not mean that Jackson-Vanik no longer applied to Russia. That is precisely what Chernomyrdin sought (as had Yeltsin in Vancouver). Enlightenment was provided by the late Senator Jackson's collaborator, former Congressman Charles Vanik. As an invited member of the NCSJ delegation, he told the Russian Prime Minister that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was "as firm as concrete" in both American law and the American mind.

Only Congress, not the President, can remove Russia from the Jackson-Vanik rubric and that is most unlikely. Still, Moscow no longer has to worry about an annual review except, of course, if emigration restrictions re-appear. And a semi-annual report by the State Department of compliance with the provisions of Jackson-Vanik would quickly reveal any backsliding. Such retreat could mean the return to an annual review or worse—the deprivation of MFN and Ex-ImBank credits.

While President Yeltsin was giving emphasis to the significance of Jackson-Vanik, former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, in his newly published work, Diplomacy, was expressing harsh criticism of what he perceived to be the use of trade linkage "as a means of producing domestic upheaval in the Soviet Union..." Jackson and his supporters were described by Kissinger as treating "the issue of Jewish emigration" as a "surrogate for the ideological confrontation with Communism."

The allegations were without foundation. Jackson, in reintroducing his Amendment in the Senate on April 15, 1973 had specifically referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community's principal standard of civility, as the source of his proposal. Article 13(b) of the Declaration made explicit the absolute right of everyone to leave any country including his own. The provision had been cruelly observed in the breach by the USSR and its allies in East Europe. What the Senator sought was the Soviet Union's adherence to a fundamental standard of civilization, certainly not a domestic upheaval nor even an ideological confrontation with Communism.

The Universal Declaration's Article 13(b) had drawn its inspiration from Socrates, from the Magna Carta, and from the French Revolution's constitution. It could scarcely be seen as an ideological weapon. Indeed, the importance of the Jackson Amendment rests precisely in its tapping of the international community's principal standard as a source for American statutory law. The Amendment was probably the first piece of American legislation to be specifically linked to the Universal Declaration.

What had prompted Senator Jackson to undertake his historic initiative was a secret decision of the Kremlin in mid-August, 1972, clearly designed to halt the flow of Jewish emigrants to Israel which had begun only some 18 months earlier. An applicant for an exit visa would now have to pay an exorbitant "diploma tax," the size of which to be linked to the number of years he or she had spent in higher education. A scientist with an average annual income of 2,000 rubles might have had to pay a prohibitive 40,000 rubles for himself and his family. Leading Soviet Jewish activists saw the tax as establishing "a new category of human beings—the slaves of the twentieth century."

An emergency meeting of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry leadership was called in September, 1972 to respond to a brutal assault upon international standards. Senator Jackson addressed the group and promised urgent legislative action. The following month, with the cooperation of Senators Abraham Ribicoff and Jacob Javits, Jackson prepared a statute which would refuse trade benefits to a "non-market economy country" which denied its citizens the right to emigrate or which imposed more than a nominal tax on emigration. Three quarters of the Senate joined Jackson as sponsors.

The tough-minded Washington Senator would be obliged to reintroduce the statute on April 15, 1973, at the following legislative session. By then Congressman Charles Vanik of Ohio had submitted (in February) similar legislation in the House of Representatives with 237 co-sponsors. The expression of America's conscience could not be more clearly sounded. Its impact was extraordinarily quick and positive. On March 21, 1973, a Soviet journalist who had frequently acted as the mouthpiece of the KGB, Victor Louis, announced that the "diploma tax will not be enforced any more." He went on to acknowledge that the Kremlin decision was a result of congressional pressure and concluded that Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate "have won victory in the six-month war against the education tax." The revocation of a Kremlin edict was a rare phenomenon in a totalitarian state.

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For Soviet Jewish activists, Senator Jackson had become and would remain the champion of their rights and aspirations. Prominent Soviet non-Jewish dissidents were equally supportive. Especially important was the backing of the distinguished voice of democratic rights, Andrei D. Sakharov. Running a dangerous personal risk, the great scientist and humanist wrote an "open letter" to the U.S. Congress on September 14, 1973, urging that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment be enacted into law.

In Sakharov's view, the Amendment on the "minimal right" of emigration was absolutely essential for creating the required "mutual trust" needed to achieve détente. What Jackson-Vanik stood for, he said, was nothing less than a "policy of principle." Were Congress to reject it, the Nobel Laureate-to-be continued, it would signify "a betrayal of the thousands of Jews and non-Jews who want to emigrate, of the hundreds in camps and mental hospitals, of the victims of the Berlin Wall."

On December 20, 1974, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, together with the Trade Reform Act to which it was attached, were adopted by the U.S. Congress. The legislation was signed into law by President Gerald Ford on January 10, 1975. One day after the congressional enactment, the Kremlin launched a vast media campaign scathingly attacking Jackson-Vanik.

Yet, the denunciation, however intense, did not suggest that Moscow would never accede to the requirements of Jackson-Vanik. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1974, Soviet authorities, both directly and indirectly, indicated that they would meet the conditions of the Amendment. If they radically shifted their position in mid-December, it was because of the

congressional adoption of a totally separate piece of legislation—Stevenson Amendment (attached to a bill dealing with the Ex-ImBank, not with trade). That Amendment severely undermined the clear intentions of Jackson-Vanik by sharp limitations on Ex-ImBank credits to the USSR whatever it did.

Just a few years after the Kremlin's repudiation of Jackson-Vanik, it signaled clearly to Washington that it would welcome an agreement on most-favored-nation tariff treatment. In 1978, Soviet Jewish emigration jumped to 28,000 and in 1979 to an unprecedented figure of 51,000. While Moscow's main motivation for the removal of obstacles to granting exit visas was to win Senate approval of a SALT-2 agreement that was then being negotiated by the two superpowers, she was at the same time prepared to reach a new understanding on trade.

Thus, long before the massive recent exodus of Soviet Jews to Israel and the West, beginning in 1989, Jackson-Vanik had vividly demonstrated its great humanitarian value. Leverage through linkage of trade benefits to eased emigration was shown to produce practical results. This was not only the case for the USSR. When Romania, in 1982 sought to impose a burdensome education tax on would-be Jewish emigrants, Washington made it crystal clear to Bucharest that the MFN which she had enjoyed for several years would be withdrawn under the provisions of Jackson-Vanik. In June 1983, President Ceausescu revoked the offending decree.

No wonder then that a major Twentieth Century Fund-sponsored study on international emigration practices published by Yale University Press in 1987 lauded Jackson-Vanik as "the single most effective step the United States has ever taken against the new serfdom [of emigration restrictions]..." The validity of that judgment is even more apparent today as one observes a continuing large-scale exodus of Jews from Russia and the former Soviet Union twenty years after the draft amendment became law.

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II. "PRINCIPLED INTERNATIONALIST: THE FOREIGN POLICY AND
HUMAN RIGHTS LEGACY OF SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON"

Robert G. Kaufman

Senator Henry M. Jackson ranks among the greatest American statesmen of this century. Throughout his Congressional career (1941-1983), spanning the tenure of nine presidents, Jackson played a leading role in the pivotal debates that determined America's role in the world: the nature of the Cold War and the Soviet adversary; national security and arms control policy; the Vietnam War and its aftermath; the crude oil shortage and the economic crises of the mid-70s; the Middle East; the role of the intelligence community; and the opening to China. Perhaps the most enduring aspect of Senator Jackson's towering legacy is his framework for thinking intelligently about the proper relationship between power and principle in the conduct of American foreign policy.

The twentieth anniversary of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which Congress approved on 20 December 1974, marks an appropriate occasion to reconsider the Jackson legacy. Deeply influenced by the brutal Nazi invasion of Norway, the homeland of his immigrant mother and father; profoundly moved by his visit to Buchenwald concentration camp just a few days after the camp was liberated, Jackson correctly identified as the fundamental challenge of the twentieth century the moral threat totalitarianism posed to freedom and acted steadfastly on this conviction. Scoop thus became a prominent, authoritative advocate of maintaining a strong Western deterrent to Soviet totalitarianism. Rejecting isolationism as a dangerous option for the United States, he enthusiastically supported the Truman Administration's efforts, with the Soviet threat looming, to rebuild and protect the shattered democracies of Western Europe through the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He led the bipartisan coalition that perennially supported the American commitment to NATO in the face of mounting domestic pressure after the Vietnam war to reduce America's presence in Europe. In the vital region of East Asia, he recognized that there was no substitute for American power to maintain a tolerable geopolitical equilibrium conducive to American material interests and the possibility of expanding the zone of freedom. For Mexico and the rest of strategically important Latin America, he concluded that achieving stable liberal democratic institutions depended not only on

American security assistance, but also on economic aid to help overcome the serious poverty and social inequalities the communists exploited. Jackson proposed a Bipartisan Commission on Central America to address these problems, which had barely begun its important work when the Senator died.

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During the difficult period of the 1970s, as euphoria over détente and liberal guilt over Vietnam swept the country, Jackson, often standing alone, led and inspired the coalition that stopped the United States from forfeiting its role as defender of the free world. Jackson thus opposed bad arms control agreements and unilateral disarmament in the face of the Soviet Union’s massive military buildup. Rightly convinced that a strong, stable, liberal democratic Israel was a moral and geopolitical imperative, he opposed moral disarmament in the face of the UN’s squalid “Zionism as Racism Resolution” and the threat of OPEC blackmail. He also opposed abandoning our historic commitments to our friends in the face of unprecedented Soviet adventurism abroad and unwarranted despair about democracy’s vitality at home. He never forgot, nor did he let others forget, that the Soviet Union was dangerous not just because it was a powerful empire, but an evil empire.

Senator Jackson considered the extension and preservation of human rights of utmost moral and strategic significance. In his view, nations—especially geopolitically powerful ones—that systematically repress their own people are likely to threaten international peace. Also, the Senator empathized not just with humanity in the abstract, but with individual victims of repression. As a freshman Senator, Jackson had earned the reputation as a principled protector of American civil liberties for his role in discrediting Senator Joseph McCarthy. As a senior senator, Jackson seemed even more determined to serve as protector of those who courageously resisted Soviet tyranny: Andrei Sakharov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Simas Kudirka, Anatoly Shcharansky, Vladimir Bukovsky to name only a few of the individuals for whom Jackson personally interceded.

The Senator viewed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 as a powerful expression of American ideals and self-interest. Of all the rights affirmed in the UN Universal charter on Human rights, Jackson considered the right to emigrate the most fundamental. What catalyzed Jackson-Vanik was increasing internal pressure within the Soviet

Union for emigration to Israel following the 1967 Six-Day-War. Soviet authorities responded to this resurgent self-regard among Jews by slowly increasing the number allowed to leave. In 1972, however, the Soviets imposed a so-called education tax ostensibly to compensate the state for the cost of higher education but in reality designed to obstruct emigration efforts.

Senator Jackson, the consummate parliamentarian, seized on the opportunity presented when President Nixon and Henry Kissinger sought subsidized trade with the Soviets as part of their strategy of détente. In June 1972, he offered an amendment to the East-West Trade Act to grant Most Favored Nation Status (MFN) and official credits to the Soviet Union and other non-market economy countries only if they respected the right to emigrate. The Amendment applied to Jews, Christians, and others, without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or national origin. It did not affect U.S.—Soviet trade on a pay as you go basis. The introduction of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, in the fall of 1972, began a two-year legislative struggle that finally ended in its adoption as part of the Trade Reform Act of 1974.

Predictably, the Jackson Amendment still arouses controversy, even though it opened the way for thousands of Jews, Christians, and others to escape from Soviet and East European persecution and find freedom in the West. Critics of Jackson's approach invoke as evidence for their preference, "Quiet Diplomacy," the Soviet Union's repudiation in December 1974 of assurances it gave Kissinger, subsequent declines in Soviet emigration, and the collapse of détente itself. Yet such arguments misconstrue the fundamental nature of the Soviet Union and the dynamics of the human rights movement. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment expressed concretely Western support necessary to sustain and extend human rights behind the Iron Curtain, as Andrei Sakharov emphasized in his dramatic open letter to Congress on September 14, 1973 urging passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Sakharov believed that quiet diplomacy could only help a few individuals; it would betray the thousands of nameless others behind the closed doors of the Soviet Union. Then there are the hundreds of thousands who have gained freedom from non-market economies that have accepted the terms of Jackson-Vanik. Also, as George Will commented in the aftermath of the 1989 collapse of the Berlin Wall, the right to emigrate was a sharp chisel for cracking the concrete of Soviet tyranny.

For all its significance, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment represents only a small part of the Senator's mighty contribution to human rights. Far more important: The Jackson record offers a compelling approach to U.S. foreign policy that transcends the

cynicism of unalloyed realism or the illusions of utopian idealism. On the one hand, Jackson's active support for promoting stable liberal democracy and human rights abroad distinguishes his approach from that of classical realists such as George Kennan, who lament America's legalistic and moralistic tradition in foreign affairs. On the other hand, Jackson's appreciation of eternal human imperfection and the eternal dangers lurking in world politics distinguishes his approach from that of liberal idealists, who wrongly depreciate the importance of power and vastly overestimate the harmony of interests that exist among men and states. He shared, with idealists, for example, the desire to spread freedom throughout the world. Yet, in a world of sovereign states, where many seek actively to destroy democracy, Jackson recognized that often good statesmen and good states must choose the lesser evil to prevent the greater one. For this reason among others, the Senator championed the cause of Israel, a stable liberal democracy whose survival he knew depended on unremitting vigilance and the use of force against implacable, repressive, and ruthless adversaries.

Similarly, the Senator believed that American ideals and self-interest, properly understood, depended largely on American power and the willingness to use it. Unlike many liberals and some conservatives, Jackson also believed that American ideals and self-interest were largely complementary. The Senator became the most persuasive critic of President Nixon and Henry Kissinger's program of détente, which he argued tried to define American self-interest too narrowly without sufficient reference either to U.S. ideals or the moral and ideological dimensions of the Communist threat. He became an even more formidable critic of the Carter Administration's foreign policy, which he argued slighted the imperatives of geopolitics, military preparedness, and historical realities in pursuit of its ideals. For Senator Jackson, the Carter Administration's human rights policy was appealing in theory, but fatally flawed in fact: it applied human rights sanctions against rightist governments, partly as a pretext for scaling back dramatically American power and capabilities on which freedom precariously rested; meanwhile it ignored or down-played the more systematic human rights violations of America's more dangerous communist adversaries.

The collapse of the evil empire has vindicated Jackson's approach, rooted in a blend of geopolitics, a Judeo-Christian conception of man and morality, and a belief in the possibility of slow progress toward a more democratic, peaceful world.

In successfully waging the end game of the Cold War that resulted in an unprecedented extension of human freedom, the Reagan Administration faithfully followed the Senator's legacy just as Scoop followed President Harry Truman's. Neither the affinity between Scoop and President Reagan in foreign affairs, nor the prominence of so many Jackson Democrats in the Reagan Administration, seems paradoxical. Despite their differences over domestic policies, Senator Jackson and President Reagan always remained, in an important sense, Truman Democrats, for whom the abyss of the Holocaust and the lessons of Munich mandated principled, vigilant American internationalism that distinguished between our democratic friends and our totalitarian foes.

For those who wish to protect and extend the zone of democratic peace and prosperity, for those who wish to make sure that liberal democratic nations can meet the challenges that will inevitably confront freedom in the future, the Jackson legacy remains as important as ever. Its historic success contrasts starkly with the historic failures of the alternatives: Isolationism, naive moralism, or cynical realpolitik. So why abandon it? Felicitously, the Jackson tradition lives on robustly, not only in the Reagan-Kemp-Kirkpatrick wing of the Republican party, but among many people of intelligence and goodwill everywhere. The burden of our generation is to show that, like Senator Jackson, we have the will to stay the course.

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III. “JACKSON-VANIK IN HISTORICAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE”

Bernard Lewis

I first met Scoop Jackson in early 1970 and remained in touch with him from then until his death. We met on various occasions, mostly political—as when he asked me to testify before one or other Senate subcommittee, to participate in other meetings and discussion groups and even, on occasion, to discuss the Middle East in informal gatherings with colleagues. After I moved to the United States in 1974, I saw him more frequently and even had an opportunity to observe the early stages of his presidential campaign in 1976 and to meet various members of his inner circle.

I have, in the course of my work, met many politicians in many countries—and even a few statesmen. I cannot recall anyone concerning whom the word “greatness” comes so readily to mind. And not only greatness. There are other qualities, notably commitment and integrity, which are inextricably associated with his name. Each of these qualities is rare, the combination almost unique. And that is why even now, after so many years, I still feel that having met Scoop Jackson and enjoyed his friendship was one of the most rewarding and illuminating experiences of my life.

Meeting here in Jerusalem, it is appropriate to speak of one in particular of the causes to which he was committed and which he served—this one with conspicuous success. I refer, of course, to his efforts to secure the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union.

It will be recalled that Scoop Jackson’s concern with this question was often misunderstood, his method of dealing with it severely criticized. Why would a senator from a state with a small and politically unimportant Jewish population busy himself with this essentially Jewish issue? And if the aim was to persuade the Soviet authorities to let their Jewish subjects go, could this not be better accomplished by speaking sweetly to them rather than by what was described as a policy of threats and penalties? For those who conceived of politics primarily in electoral terms, as the play of interests and pressure groups, his dedication to this cause was indeed incomprehensible. But it made very good sense to any who understood his profound commitment to the basic human freedoms, including the freedom of movement and migration, which is at the basis of modern America. And as to his methods, let me quote the testimony of those who were primarily involved.

My recollections derive from two visits to Moscow, the first in 1960, the second in 1983. The one illustrates the desire of significant numbers of Soviet Jews to leave for a place where they could freely express their Jewishness; the other indicates their views on the best method of accomplishing this purpose. In 1960, I was in Moscow to participate in the International Congress of Orientalists. On Saturday morning I went with some of my colleagues to the synagogue. This was not, I must confess, my habit, but it seemed appropriate at that time and especially in that place. No doubt to avoid dangerous contacts, the foreign visitors were all placed together in a row apart from the local worshippers. Before long, however, some of these local worshippers sitting in the row behind us tried to speak to us. Carrying on surreptitious conversations in the synagogues is, of course, an old tradition of which I still retain some childhood experience. But this was a special circumstance—the

difficulties were greater, the penalties (for them though not for us) far more severe. The unknown persons behind asked first whether we understood Yiddish. One of us did. I offered Hebrew. To my surprise, I was answered in Hebrew and the rest of our furtive whispered conversation was carried on in that language. After warning us several times against the spies and informers who were stationed around, my interlocutor asked me where I was from. "From London," I said. "How many Jews are there in London?" he asked. "About a quarter of a million," I said. "Do you have more than one synagogue?" he asked. Normally, I would have assumed that either the question or the answer had been misunderstood, but in a city which at that time had six hundred thousand Jews and just one synagogue, I saw the point of his question. "Yes," I said, "many more than one." "How many?" he asked. "I don't know," I replied, "but certainly hundreds." He was astonished. Then came his second important question. "Can you go to Israel if you want to?" "Yes," I said. "You mean," he said, "that you can leave London at any time and go where you wish?" "Yes," I said. "I don't understand," he said. "Why are there still a quarter of a million Jews in London—what are you waiting for?" I tried to explain that those who wanted to could leave and those who wished to stay could stay and there was always the possibility of changing one's mind either way. He either didn't understand or didn't believe me.

"After warning us several times against the spies and informers who were stationed around, my interlocutor asked me where I was from."

My second impression from Moscow is more specific, and dates from when I visited the imperial city in 1983 for some bilateral discussions between experts on the Middle East. One evening our hosts arranged to take us to a performance of *Madame Butterfly* at the Bolshoi and this gave me the opportunity, during the first interval, to slip away, escape from my ever solicitous hosts, and go to a prearranged meeting with a group of refuseniks with whom I spent a rather tense evening. There are two recollections which I still carry from that meeting. One is of the reverential terms in which they spoke of Senator Henry M. Jackson—in the way that Jews in other times and other places had spoken of Lord Balfour, author of the Declaration, and of Cyrus the Mede who ended the Babylonian captivity and encouraged the first return from exile. For them, he was the undoubtedly the Cyrus and Balfour of our time.

My other impression was of their absolute and unanimous insistence on the rightness of his approach and the wrongness—the absurd wrongness—of those who opposed and criticized him. The so-called "diplomatic approaches," they agreed, were worse than useless. Such approaches did nothing to help them leave and made things worse for them while they

stayed. In this, as in other matters, such approaches were seen by those in power as expressing not good will, but weakness or unconcern, and they evoked not response but contempt. The senator, they said, had got it exactly right. His was the only way to get results, and he was getting results.

So much for my personal recollections of Scoop Jackson and of those who were the immediate and prospective beneficiaries of his endeavors. I turn now—as is the way of historians—from a personal to an historical prospective—to look at the broader significance of his achievement, and to put it into the context of Jewish history.

In the multi-millennial history of the Jewish people, there have been two major occasions when Jews were torn apart and split between two different worlds. One was in the early Middle Ages, when the rise of Islam and the resulting conflict between Islam and Christendom split the Mediterranean lands in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa into two mutually hostile worlds which remained separated and more often than not in conflict for many centuries. Each of these worlds—the world of Christendom and the world of Islam—had its Jewish minority. Between the two, there was very little communication. The Jews of Christendom and the Jews of Islam were, so to speak, disconnected, and they evolved along separate and increasingly different lines.

In our own time in Israel, we have seen the reunification of these separated branches of the Jewish people. The nature of this separation is sometimes misunderstood and the differences denoted by such terms as Ashkenazic and Sephardic or even Euro-American and Afro-Asian. These designations are really beside the point. The essential difference is between two cultural traditions, two entirely different histories, which now for the first time in fourteen centuries are being brought together. The meeting and coexistence between these two products of different civilizations is now being accomplished, with some tension and friction, but on the whole with remarkable success.

Another great division, in many ways comparable with that of the Middle Ages, was the tearing apart of the Jewish people as a consequence of the Soviet revolution. A significant part of the Jews of Europe and central Asia were included in the Soviet Union and later in the Soviet bloc, and therefore cut off from their co-religionists in the Western and the free world. Once

again, the Jews were divided between two distinct, separate and, for the most part, hostile worlds—encapsulated within states and societies that were not only contending power blocs but also competing civilizations.

If anything, the difference was far greater, the division much wider than between Christendom and Islam in the Middle Ages. Christendom and Islam were both religions, with shared values, a shared heritage and many common aspirations, so that a level of communication was possible between Christians and Muslims and therefore between the Jews of Christendom and the Jews of Islam that was rarely attained between the Soviet and Western blocs. But fortunately, this modern division, though in many ways sharper and deeper, was also of briefer duration. The very first breach in the wall separating the two segments of the Jewish people came with the emigration of Soviet Jews, which in turn made possible a new approach to a second and more comprehensive reunification of the Jewish people.

To no small extent, this was the achievement of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment—an achievement that goes far beyond the liberation of some tens of thousands of captives and refuseniks, important as that may be. It was a first step in cultural reunification, and perhaps a pilot project for a better relationship between the larger entities from which these minorities came.

“Jackson-Vanik was a first step in cultural reunification...”