The original documents are located in Box D32, folder “Rally for Soviet Jewry, New York, NY, December 13, 1971” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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I am very proud to be with you tonight. This mass demonstration is in the finest tradition of the United States. I say so because this gathering is positive in its approach rather than negative, constructive rather than destructive, and for a great cause rather than against such a cause. The cause advocated here is human freedom.

It has been brought to my attention that today is the first day of the Hebrew festival of Chanukah. I am told that this is an occasion when one is supposed to light candles to commemorate an ancient struggle for Jewish liberation. As a fellow American who is inspired by the deeds of Israel and the brave struggle by so many Jewish residents of Soviet Russia, and as the person responsible for the leadership of my party, the Republican Party, in the United States House of Representatives, I want to join in lighting some candles of hope. Let there be beacons of light that shine forth from this meeting to let the Jewish people of the Soviet Union know they have not been forgotten.

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I would make a particular point with the President that he place high on his agenda the liberation from Siberian labor camps of all persons jailed for Jewish activities. Also, there is no reason that a government which pretends to be civilized cannot for humanitarian considerations notify Israel, whether or not Israel is diplomatically recognized at this time by that government, of numbers and dates of departure of Jews to be released from Russia. Then the Jewish Agency and the Israeli Government Ministry of Absorption would be in a better position to make adequate preparations for housing, feeding, jobs, education, health and so forth. Now there is no notice whatever until the trains arrive in Vienna from Russia.

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In this country we have an American Psychiatric Association. I would recommend to the A.P.A. that it adopt a suitable resolution condemning the Russian psychiatrists when the association meets at its coming convention.

Perhaps educators, clergymen, scientists and people of various other professions in the public sector of American life could do likewise when Soviet policies involve a particular profession. This struggle must be waged on a people-to-people basis as well as a government-to-government basis.

I will return to Washington better equipped to see the President of the United States on the basis of the strong dedication to human liberty demonstrated by you here in this great meeting in the city of New York. I can bear witness that America cares. Over the harbor of this city stands the Statue of Liberty. It symbolizes the role of our nation as a champion of the oppressed and as a haven for those who seek to worship God in their own way. It is a light to the world.

Let our American values again demonstrate to the peoples of the world that we Americans have not changed in our devotion to the freedom and brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. I thank you.

# # #
We are gathered here tonight because the voices of oppressed and persecuted Jews cry out to us from the Soviet Union.

It is appropriate that we meet at this time, the first day of Chanukah (hahn-eve-cab). Again we mark the historic festival of liberation. We commemorate the time when small but dedicated bands of Jewish freedom-fighters battled to prevent religious and cultural genocide.

You are like those early freedom-fighters. They fought to perpetuate the Jewish people and the Jewish nation, and tonight we are gathered to help perpetuate the Jews in the Soviet Union.

Wednesday will be the third day of Chanukah and the anniversary of the first lightning strike. Tonight and every night from now on should see a tremendous outpouring of support for the 103 Jewish Prisoners of Conscience now being held in Soviet jails. And tonight and every night should be marked by a Herculean effort to free those prisoners and especially Sylva Zalmonson, who as you know is dying while being held captive—dying for the so-called crime of wanting to go to Israel.

For the more than 60 Jewish Prisoners of Conscience being held behind prison walls by Soviet oppressors the fight could be for more than just physical survival.

But there is more than just physical survival involved when we consider the plight of all Soviet Jews. The basic issue is the survival of Jewish identity, the right of the individual to decide how he worships his God, the right of freedom of choice.

It is fitting that the United States Government and citizens of all faiths identify with the Jewish observance of Chanukah (hahn-eve-cab). There is deep next May, and I will urge him to do so. I personally attach great importance to this matter.
concern in this country about the religious and cultural genocide being practiced on Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union by their masters.

The plight of Soviet Jews has not been--cannot be--exaggerated, not while there is even one Jewish Prisoner of Conscience locked up behind cold prison walls in the Soviet Union.

As for cultural and religious genocide, it has been documented that Soviet Jews suffer because of grossly inadequate religious facilities, pressures against synagogue attendance, lack of Yiddish or Hebrew teaching, tokenism in the publishing and staging of Yiddish works, quota restrictions on university entrance, and exclusion from careers considered sensitive and from important political jobs.

The charge of cultural genocide is fully justified. We all know that Soviet Jews are deprived of the ingredients needed to preserve their cultural and religious identity. And we have seen outbreaks of anti-Semitism from time to time in the Soviet Union, tied in with developments in the Middle East.
If Soviet Jews were not being discriminated against and oppressed, why would they wish so desperately to leave the Soviet Union?

The mere fact that nearly all Soviet Jews, like other Soviet citizens, are held prisoner in their native land is proof enough of oppression.

Individual applicants for emigration have been harassed. Jewish activists have been sentenced to terms in forced-labor camps.

It is no comfort that other Soviet civil-rights activists and minority-group militants have been subjected to similar reprisals. The fact remains that Soviet Jews suffer recurrent repressions simply because they are Jews. And this is unacceptable.

Are we to excuse Soviet pressures for assimilation? Cultural genocide is a crime.

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Nobody who values freedom of the spirit can make light of the arrests, trials and convictions of Jews in Leningrad, Riga and Kishinev this year merely for possessing Hebrew dictionaries and prayer books.

How can anyone say that Soviet Jews are not living in a state of fear?

It was just last December that the Soviet Union imposed death sentences on two Jews and commuted those sentences to lengthy prison terms only because of the pressure of world opinion.

They now are serving out those harsh prison terms, together with other Jewish Prisoners of Conscience clearly being terrorized. And it is the obligation of every member of Congress to protest the fact that the Soviets will not let them live as Jews or let them leave the Soviet Union.

So the Soviet Union's Supreme Court commuted the sentences of the two Jews who had been condemned to death. The world breathed a sigh of relief. But do we congratulate someone who stops murdering people and simply mass-murders them?
If conditions for Soviet Jews do not improve, should we say, "Wonderful, things could be much worse?"

I join with you in denouncing the Soviet Union for its brutal treatment of cultural and religious minorities and should halt immediately all repressive practices aimed at assimilating Jews into the life of the Soviet state.

I join with you in demanding that the Soviet Union let all Jews who wish to leave Russia depart for other lands freely and without harassment.

There are no words more meaningful than that brief utterance in Exodus, "Let my people go."

It is the finger of God which writes of the preciousness of freedom and the sacred right of religious liberty.

Let me tell you right now that I strongly support the Anderson-O'Neill bill, House Concurrent Resolution 471, which calls for the free exercise of religion in the Soviet Union and demands of the Soviet Union that it permit its citizens to emigrate to the countries of their choice.

There is hope, I feel, in the fact that the Soviet Union yielded to world opinion in commuting the death sentences after the Leningrad trials.

There is hope in the reports that the Soviet Union has allowed more than 1,000 Jews to emigrate to Israel this year under pressure from sit-ins, petitions and hunger strikes at home and public opinion abroad. This is admittedly a small number but is large in comparison with the allowed emigration of any other Soviet group. And it is the largest total for any one year to date.

The Nixon Administration stands solidly behind Soviet Jewry on the issue of emigration. Last January 11 President Nixon urged "freedom of emigration as explicitly provided in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" as well as "cultural and religious freedom at home and abroad."

Our Government recently told a Youth Mobilization for Soviet Jewry: We believe that free movement is one of the basic human rights of all persons. We have
expressed sympathy and support on many occasions for persons in the Soviet Union who wish to emigrate, often to rejoin their families elsewhere, but who are denied permission to do so. We shall continue to take every practical measure which could help to overcome the hardships suffered by such persons. Our Government regularly presents to Soviet officials at a high level the names of Soviet residents, including many Jews, who have been denied permission to join close relatives in the United States. Richard Nixon, when he was vice-president, inaugurated that practice in his visit to the Soviet Union in 1959. This year's list included the names of some 150 Soviet Jews.

The Soviet Union has permitted a small amount of emigration to the United States—about 250 persons a year. This year, through Oct. 31, our embassy in Moscow had issued 251 emigrant visas. Of these, 131 were issued to Jews. This compares with 1970, when the Soviet Union allowed only 78 Soviet Jews to emigrate to the United States.

It is just possible that the Soviet Union might suddenly alter its present policy and allow a much larger number of Soviet Jews to leave for the United States.

Because of that possibility, Attorney General John Mitchell has announced that under such circumstances he would exercise his discretion and would parole Soviet Jews who are able to leave the Soviet Union. This makes it unnecessary for Congress to consider legislation providing for non-quota visas for Soviet Jews. I applaud this initiative on the part of the Nixon Administration. Use of the Attorney General's parole power places no limitation on the number of Soviet Jewish refugees who can be admitted to this country.

There is another initiative I would like to see President Nixon take. I would like him to include the plight of Soviet Jewry on the agenda for his summit meeting at Moscow next May, and I will urge him to do so. I personally attach great importance to this matter.
I might mention at this point the fact that the Voice of America
increased the amount of its broadcasts in Russian on Jewish subjects in the
Soviet Union. I personally believe there should be Voice of America broadcasts in
Yiddish. Not only would this tend to enhance the Jewish cultural heritage
among Soviet Jews, but it also would be a symbol of U.S. support for Jews in the Soviet
Union.

The task that remains before us is to keep up an unrelenting campaign aimed
at bringing the continuing pressure of world opinion on the Soviet
Union. Pour it on! Only through such a campaign can we get the Soviet Union to lift
its restrictions on emigration of Soviet Jews and to abandon the terroristic
practices of firings and even arrest and imprisonment for those Jews who defy the
authorities in order to live as Jews.

We must press for an end to officially-sponsored and officially-condoned
anti-Semitism in Russia. We must seek full rights of religious liberty for Soviet
Jews. Our battle cry must be...liberation!

We have a great cause. Our cause is just, and I feel sure we will be
triumphant.

Our cause will prevail because “truth...is mighty above all things.”

Let every man and woman here be strong and of good courage. Let us move
forward in unity.

Let us live now the message of Chanukah (hahn-oo-ka-h)—that no power on earth
can crush the faith of man. As the prophet Zacharias said, “Not by might nor by
power”, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

It is that spirit which guides us tonight, as we look forward to the day
when the oppressor shall be lifted and the Prisoners of Conscience
shall be free both in body and in soul.
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