The courageous outcry of Andrei Sakharov, calling from Moscow to the conscience of the West in an Open Letter to the U.S. Congress, came just at the time when the Ways and Means Committee began final deliberations on the Foreign Trade Bill. In response, strong expressions of concern were heard from all parts of the country - and the Committee voted 20 to 5 to deny Most-Favored Nation status to the USSR as long as it denies freedom of emigration to its citizens. Now the bill goes to the floor of the House for full debate, where Rep. Charles A. Vanik will press for a vote to cut off U.S. credit loans unless the President determines Soviet emigration policy has eased. Experts say the denial of credits and credit guarantees is far more important than the denial of MFN status.

OPEN LETTER TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

At a time when the Congress is debating fundamental issues of foreign policy, I consider it my duty to express my view on one such issue—protection of the right to freedom of residence within the country of one's choice. That right was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

If every nation is entitled to choose the political system under which it wishes to live, this is true all the more of every individual person. A country whose citizens are deprived of this minimal right is not free even if there were not a single citizen who would want to exercise that right.

But, as you know, there are tens of thousands of citizens in the Soviet Union—Jews, Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Estonians, Latvians, Turks and members of other ethnic groups—who want to leave the country and who have been seeking to exercise that right for years and for decades at the cost of endless difficulty and humiliation.

You know that prisons, labor camps and mental hospitals are full of people who have sought to exercise this legitimate right.

You surely know the name of the Lithuanian, Simas A. Kudirka, who was handed over to the Soviet authorities by an American vessel, as well as the names of the defendants in the tragic 1970 hijacking trial in Leningrad. You know about the victims of the Berlin Wall.

There are many more lesser known victims—remember them, too!

For decades the Soviet Union has been developing under conditions of an intolerable isolation, bringing with it the ugliest consequences. Even a partial preservation of those conditions would be highly perilous for all mankind, for international confidence and detente.
In view of the foregoing, I am appealing to the Congress of the United States to give its support to the Jackson Amendment, which represents in my view and in the view of its sponsors an attempt to protect the right to emigration of citizens in countries that are entering into new and friendlier relations with the United States.

The Jackson Amendment is made even more significant by the fact that the world is only just entering on a new course of detente and it is therefore essential that the proper direction be followed from the outset. This is a fundamental issue, extending far beyond the question of emigration.

Those who believe that the Jackson Amendment is likely to undermine anyone's personal or governmental prestige are wrong. Its provisions are minimal and not demeaning.

It should be no surprise that the democratic process can add its corrective to the actions of public figures who negotiate without admitting the possibility of such an amendment. The amendment does not represent interference in the internal affairs of socialist countries, but simply a defense of international law, without which there can be no mutual trust.

Adoption of the amendment, therefore, cannot be a threat to Soviet-American relations. All the more, it would not imperil international detente.

There is a particular silliness in objections to the amendment that are founded on the alleged fear that its adoption would lead to outburst of anti-semitism in the USSR and hinder the emigration of Jews.

Here you have total confusion, either deliberate or based on ignorance about the USSR. It is as if the emigration issue affected only Jews. As if the situation of those Jews who have vainly sought to emigrate to Israel was not already tragic enough and would become even more hopeless if it were to depend on the democratic attitudes and on the humanity of O.V.I.R. (the Soviet visa agency). As if the techniques of "quiet diplomacy" could help anyone, beyond a few individuals in Moscow and some other cities.

The abandonment of a policy of principle would be 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.

Such a denial would lead to stronger repressions on ideological grounds. It would be tantamount to total capitulation of democratic principles in face of blackmail, deceit and violence. The consequences of such a capitulation for international confidence, detente and the entire future of mankind are difficult to predict.

I express the hope that the Congress of the United States, reflecting the will and the traditional love of freedom of the American people, will realize its historical responsibility before mankind and will find the strength to rise above temporary partisan considerations of commercialism and prestige.

I hope that the Congress will support the Jackson Amendment.

(dated) September 14, 1973  (signed) Andrei Sakharov

HOUSTON COMMITTEE OF THE INTERRELIGIOUS TASK FORCE SUPPORTS SAKHAROV

What follows is an extract from the strong statement sent to Henry Kissinger
and to Texas representatives:

We extend our praise to Congressman Wilbur D. Mills, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who stated that he would oppose liberalization of trade with the Russians "if the price is to be paid in the martyrdom" of courageous Russian citizens such as Atomic Scientist Andrei Sakharov and Nobel Prizewinning Novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

The Administration argument not to meddle in domestic affairs of other nations, but to trade with other nations whenever beneficial to the U.S., despite flagrant abuses of the human rights of people, overlooks the fact that American trade concessions and credits do necessarily interfere in the domestic affairs of other nations by strengthening the regimes which use such tactics to stay in power. Even worse, if it really is profitable to extend American taxpayer credits and concessions, our society becomes poisoned because our prosperity then depends in part on the regimes which flagrantly abuse human rights to retain power.

We protest that the Administration position is a departure from the traditional American values of freedom and dignity of individual human beings.

We believe morality does not end at the water's edge. Isaiah said, "Righteousness exalts a nation; sin is a shame to any people." Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!"

We shall be deeply grateful for your support of American integrity in the world community. (John Wildenthal, Chairman)

NEWS AND VIEWS ABOUT SOVIET JEWSRY IN THE USA

Professor Andre LaCocque
Co-Chairman of the Task Force

"Wittingly or unwittingly, the Watergate affair throws its shadow on every issue of U.S. politics. It has struck the root of cynicism and nihilism in many hearts, thus granting a clear triumph to the Marxist theory of materialism and economic determinism. Every move of any country is merely a response to economic imperatives. The U.S. has today the opportunity of destroying that inhuman myth. It is not true that man or society are socio-economic robots. Our country would lose a great deal in not granting the MFN status to the USSR, but precisely the question is to know if this is the decisive issue. A cheap morality amounts to no morality at all. Your amendment stems from a philosophy of man on which stands or falls our very raison d'etre." (In a letter to Senator Henry Jackson)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Nobel Prize Winner

"The Western world, by its publicity, has already helped save many of our oppressed." (Radio report of the interview Solzhenitsyn gave in Moscow August 29, 1973)

Frankie M. Freeman
U.S. Commissioner on Civil Rights

"Let us make no mistake about it, basically the struggle of the Jews in the Soviet Union began as a civil rights struggle. What the Soviet Jews wanted was those rights guaranteed to all nationalities under the laws and the constitution of the USSR—the right to their own culture, language and traditions. It was only when it became evident that the Soviet government would not allow the Jews those rights granted to all other nationalities and minority groups, that the Jews came to the conclusion that they could not live as equals in the Soviet Union. They then demanded that they be allowed to exercise their basic human right to leave the country and live as Jews in Israel. The right to leave is also protected in the constitution of the USSR and is in accord with many international declarations, not least of which is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states, 'Every one has
the rights to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country!" (CIVIL RIGHTS DIGEST, Spring, 1973)

DID YOU KNOW THAT ....

In the past 60 years, the Soviet regime has closed 99% of the synagogues in the USSR. Over 3,000 have been boarded up, knocked down, or desecrated. Today there are only 60 left.

In Houston, Texas, the Christian community for the past two years has been inviting the city to attend a Christian Yom Kippur service at an ecumenical center. Special focus has been directed towards making atonement for sins of prejudice. The Holocaust was a main theme for the past two years; this year Babi Yar, the site of the massacre of thousands of Jews in the USSR, will be the principal theme. At the end of the ceremony, groups of Christians attend the Yom Kippur services at various synagogues.

OCTOBER 14: SIMCHAT TORAH - The Jewish community will hold special Simchat Torah observances on Sunday, October 14 to dramatize the cause of the Soviet Jews. This is a joyful holiday when Jews celebrate God's gift of the Torah to their people. Torah (Law) to the Jew signifies a whole way of life, not a legalistic view of life. As such, in Moscow, this has been the day when thousands of Jews, especially the young, have gathered outside the synagogue to dance in the street. Traditionally, there is a ceremony in which the men dance while holding the scrolls on which the Torah is written. Last year, for the first time in almost a decade, the gatherings of young Jews were disrupted in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere. In Philadelphia, members of the Christian community will participate in the Simchat Torah observance, a public march from the Art Museum to the Monument to the Six Million.

OCTOBER 25: BIRTHDAY OF SYLVA ZALMANSON - Give a gift of freedom to this Prisoner of Conscience by writing to the USSR Embassy in Washington, D. C. and urging Ambassador Anatole Dobrynan to seek the release of this Jewish woman who is ill and who faces 7 more years of an unjustly harsh sentence.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

In October the Leningrad orchestra will be in the USA, and in November the Russian hockey team will follow. Both types of events will draw large crowds, and probably the Jewish community will take this occasion to distribute literature about the discrimination against Soviet Jews in the USSR. This is a peaceful means of educating a large group of people, not a boycott or a picket line. The participation of Christians indicates the interreligious support for this human rights cause. Consult the local Jewish community to see when these activities are planned.

DECEMBER

In the week of December 10, Human Rights Day will be observed by Jewish Women's Organizations in all large cities of the USA. This year special efforts will be made to develop interreligious participation in this event. Sister Ann Gillen will speak in Miami, Baltimore and Indianapolis.
Sisters' Leaders Back Jews

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Resolutions supporting amnesty for draft resisters, the grape and lettuce boycotts of the United Farm Workers Union, and Soviet Jews wishing to emigrate from the USSR were among those adopted by a national organization of women religious superiors meeting here during their week-long assembly. The more than 500 superiors, provincials and administrators belonging to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) spent most of their time in workshops, although some took time to demonstrate for the farm workers and Soviet Jews.

Within the framework of the Gospel beatitudes, the nun-superiors studied and discussed in depth topics such as the use of congregational resources, the urban scene, prayer, ministry to the aging, non-violence, population problems and education.

They also heard a talk by Archbishop Helder Pessoa Camara of Olinda-Recife, Brazil, who urged the nuns to "live" the beatitude of meekness. He told them that meekness is "the inner security of someone who remains at peace, of someone ... putting herself in God's hands ..."

Another speaker was outgoing LCWR president Sister Margaret Brennan, I.H.M. superior general of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, Monroe, Mich., who said nuns must ask themselves if they are continuing "God's saving merciful love" or identifying with wealth and worldly power and thereby moving to "deny the Gospel and hold back the kingdom."

In the resolution on amnesty the LCWR assembly said that it "supports the position that amnesty be granted to all those in exile who by their action objected to the war in Vietnam."

Another resolution stated that the LCWR "continues its support of the cause of Soviet Jewry by urging U.S. senators and congressmen to pass the Jackson-Mills-Vanik legislation which would withhold 'most favored nation' status, credits and credit guarantees from the Soviet Union until that country allows for free immigration of its citizens."

For about 15 minutes each noon hour during the week-long assembly, groups of sisters ranging in size from six to 20 walked silently back and forth on the sidewalk in front of the Soviet Embassy here, some of them wearing their traditional nuns' habits (but carrying no placards, which are prohibited).

Sister Lynch said the nuns spent the time in silent prayer and meditation on the plight of Soviet Jews.

Do Your Part Today, Too

Urge your Representative to vote in favor of denying credits and credit guarantees to the USSR as long as it denies freedom of emigration to its citizens.

Sisters pray for Soviet Jews in silent demonstration across the street from the Russian Embassy in Washington — NC Photo.
WOMEN TO FORM PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE SISTERHOOD

This year, during the week of December 10, Human Rights Day observances will be held in all the major USA cities. At this time Jewish and Christian women will be asked to adopt Sylva Zalmanson as their Prisoner of Conscience Sister.

Arrested in June, 1970, Sylva Zalmanson was condemned to 10 years imprisonment under "strict regime", which means one visit per year after half the sentence is served, one food and clothing parcel and one letter per year is permitted.

Having had TB already, Sylva is now suffering the effects of malnutrition in the harshness of Potma prison, becoming deaf at the age of 29. The USSR authorities have been deaf to two appeals for clemency.

Unwanted by the U.S.S.R.

By Robert F. Drinan

WASHINGTON — On Aug. 2, I received confirmed reservations to travel to Kiev, Moscow and Leningrad from Aug. 20 to Aug. 31. On Aug. 15, a cryptic cablegram from Intourist, Russia's tourist agency for foreigners, canceled all my reservations because of "unforeseen circumstances."

My petitions and protest to the State Department and to Ambassador Dobrynin brought no recision and no reasons. I spoke personally on the phone with Henry Kissinger who assured me that he would bring up the cancellation of my visa with Ambassador Dobrynin that very afternoon. Mr. Kissinger's office later reported that he did bring up the matter and that Russia's Ambassador would cable Moscow.

I spoke with the highest officials of the State Department that I could reach. They asserted that they were protesting although their statements were vague and unconvincing. I got nowhere with my repeated request that Secretary Rogers personally intervene.

State Department officials recognized that I was the first member of Congress to be denied a visa to Russia. In February of this year a group of eight American clergymen, of which I was a member, saw their visas denied. It was openly known, however, that these clergymen were going to Russia as delegates of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry. My application this time mentioned tourism as the only reason for the trip.

The State Department did little to protest the affront to American clergymen in February. They did little more when I alone was barred from Russia in August. On Aug. 24, I gave up hope of traveling to Russia. Confusion dominated the office of Mr. Kissinger, now Secretary of State-designate. My phone calls to the State Department were not returned.

And so I became the first member of Congress to be denied a visa by the Soviet Government. My involvement in efforts to try to liberate Soviet Jews could be the only reason. Will the 280 other House sponsors and 75 Senate sponsors of the Jackson-Vanik amendment be subject to the same affront? Will they be denied entry to Russia while American and even Israeli athletes are admitted?

Christian churches in America have a deepening sense of guilt about their silence and inaction concerning the harassment of Russia's three million Jews. Will Russia now broaden its policy of keeping American clergymen out if these individuals have demonstrated a sympathy for Soviet Jews? And will the U.S. State Department acquiesce in such a policy as it did in February and again in August?

I expect to importune the Russian Government and the U.S. State Department until I am allowed to visit the Jewish communities of the U.S.S.R. I hope that millions of Americans will oppose trade with the Russians unless the Kremlin stops barring American Christians interested in Soviet Jews from visiting the Soviet Union.

Father Robert F. Drinan is a Democratic Representative of Massachusetts.