

FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE  
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FOR RELEASE IN A.M., DECEMBER 2, 1971

STATEMENT IN THE SENATE BY U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE

CONCERN FOR RUSSIAN JEWISH WOMAN BEING HELD IN SIBERIA

Almost one year ago today this body expressed itself unanimously in a matter of humanitarian concern to all. It expressed its concern over the systematic injustices perpetrated against the Jewish people in the Soviet Union, it called upon the President to convey the concern of the American people in this matter, to seek the commutation of the death sentences of two alleged criminals, and to urge fair and equitable treatment of Russian Jewish citizens.

Since that time we have seen strange honor done to the Jews of Russia. High Soviet officials have pointed out that to permit the departure of these Russian Jews who wish to go to their homeland would result in a brain drain which the Soviet state could not easily sustain. One can sympathize with this problem. Other nations have it. We can recognize, too, the vital contributions Russian Jewry apparently makes to its home in dispersal, and we must perforce wonder why a people so essential to the well-being of the state are not better served at the hands of the state.

SOVIET CITIZENS OPPRESSED

Since that time a year ago we have been told that in the refusal to permit a massive emigration of Jews, the Soviets are not being discriminatory -- that all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or other distinction, are subject to the convenience of the state, and none are readily permitted to leave Russia. In short, all Soviet citizens are equally oppressed. If the allegations of anti-Semitic state actions coming out of the Soviet Union do not support this contention, it is at least reassuring that the Soviet leaders are still sufficiently concerned with free world opinion to attempt to mislead it.

Finally, since that time, we have seen the death sentences in question mercifully commuted in accordance with the spirit of Senate Resolution 501. That act of commutation may have been a consequence of any one or any combination, or the sum of all possible considerations relative to this matter, but generous men might conclude that compassion alone dictated the decision which spared the two human lives then in jeopardy.

NOW, ANOTHER LIFE IN JEOPARDY

Now another life is in jeopardy if we may believe reports from Russia, and there seems little reason to doubt those reports. One of those implicated in the alleged plane hijack attempt last year was sentenced to ten years in a labor camp. She is dying in that camp. One report says she is dying of acute tuberculosis. She is 27 years old. Surely the mercy, the compassion, and the fundamental regard for human life which saved the lives of two men at the beginning of this year might now save the life of a single young girl at its close.

SILVA ZALMANSON IS DYING

Silva Zalmanson is dying. Her heart, it would seem, is in Israel. Her mother is in America. Her life is in the hands, and on the souls of the Soviet authorities. If it is not possible to permit Silva Zalmanson to emigrate to the land of Israel to live out her days, or to America, then may we implore the Soviet authorities to at least provide the medical care in Russia which may spare Miss Zalmanson's life -- to bring her out of the labor camp of Siberia and into a hospital where she may benefit from Soviet medical science. I know this must involve matters of precedent. But it is not a bad precedent to save a human life.

It is with this in mind, and with the urgency of the circumstances in mind, that I now submit this resolution.

(COPY OF RESOLUTION ATTACHED:)

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SUGGESTED SENATE RESOLUTION RELATIVE TO RUSSIAN JEWISH WOMAN  
BEING HELD IN SIBERIA

Resolved, that the Senate hereby expresses its grave concern for the life of Silva Zalmanson now held in a labor camp of the Soviet Socialist Republic for an allegedly treasonous act.

Sec. 2. The Senate respectfully urges the President (1) convey to the Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics the grave concern of the people of the United States and the Senate for the life of Silva Zalmanson -- a human being (2) urge the Soviet Government to take such immediate action as will most probably protect the life of Silva Zalmanson, and (3) urge that Silva Zalmanson be permitted, in these extenuating circumstances, to emigrate from the Soviet Union to a land of her own choosing.