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American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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April 3, 1986

ARL-CIO

Mr. Michael Novak
Ambassador
U.S. Delegation
Bern Human Rights Experts Meeting
Bern, Switzerland

Dear Michael,

I understand that at the forthcoming meeting in Bern to review compliance with the Helsinki Accord, the Soviet delegation intends to raise the issue of United States restrictions on visas for Soviets wishing to visit this country as "trade unionists." Inasmuch as the AFL-CIO has had a long-standing interest in this matter, I am taking this opportunity to set forth our views.

This issue was last raised in the summer of 1977, when the Congress enacted and President Carter signed legislation, known as the McGovern Amendment, removing barriers to the granting of entry visas to foreign communists, including Soviet "trade unionists." The purpose of the amendment was to dissolve any doubts as to U.S. compliance with the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement.

At that time, the AFL-CIO expressed to the State Department and the White House our view that there were no trade unions in the Soviet Union and that the visa applications from those purporting to be Soviet "trade unionists" were fraudulent. Our position was made clear in an exchange of letters between AFL-CIO President George Meany and Senator McGovern, which I enclose, and in Congressional testimony, which I also enclose.

The correspondence and the testimony emphasize that, in the words of the testimony,

"The AFL-CIO is not seeking to exercise thought control or to close our borders to people who don't agree with us. The enforcement of ideological conformity is not the objective of a labor movement which contains within itself many diverse viewpoints.

"It is, however, our objective to promote free trade unionism throughout the world--an objective we believe serves the interests of the

United States--and in the pursuit of this objective we consider it crucial that a clear distinction be made between genuine unions that represent the interests of their workers and labor fronts that serve as instruments of totalitarian states whether they be on the 'left' or the 'right.'

"This distinction is blurred and enfeebled by the issuance of visas to so-called Soviet trade unionists as trade unionists."

Nothing has happened since the passage and subsequent repeal of the McGovern Amendment to alter our view of Soviet "trade unions" as instruments of the state and of Soviet "trade unionists" seeking U.S. entry visas as agents of that state and not of the workers they purport to represent. We continue to believe that the visa applications of such agents are inherently fraudulent.

But we also made another argument in opposing the McGovern Amendment, and it seems even stronger to us today. Even as the Soviets are seeking to lift U.S. restrictions on entry visas for their "trade unionists," they continue to deny the AFL-CIO the right to receive visits from Soviet citizens, including real trade unionists, with whom we would like to meet.

In 1977, George Meany invited Dr. Andrei Sakharov and five other Soviet citizens, including genuine trade unionists, to attend our twelfth constitutional convention. The extraordinary steps taken by the Soviet government to prevent these individuals from receiving their invitations, and finally to deny them permission to leave, are detailed in my remarks at the convention, which are enclosed.

If the United States lifts its restrictions on entry visas for Soviet "trade unionists" while the Soviets continue their policy of denying exit visas for those whom we invite, the result would not be to advance the free flow of people and ideas promised at Helsinki. Rather, the practical effect would be to grant a special advantage to those on the margins of the American labor movement who are sympathetic to the Soviet system while discriminating against the mainstream of the labor movement which is hostile to totalitarianism. The pro-Soviet fringes could invite Soviet "trade unionists" who will sing the praises of Communism, while the AFL-CIO will not be able to receive Soviet citizens whose democratic views and activities on behalf of human rights would be more interesting to the vast majority of our membership and of the American people.

The AFL-CIO will not accept any arrangements with the Soviet Union that promote the free flow of their ideas while stanching the free flow of ours. Nine years ago, Congress mistakenly passed the McGovern Amendment in the hope of demonstrating American sincerity toward the Final Act of the Helsinki Accord and of encouraging reciprocal Soviet behavior. The Soviet response was to strip Mstislav Rostropovich and General Pyotr Grigorenko of their citizenship, put Vladimir Klebanov and his fellow workers in mental institutions for attempting to

form genuine trade unions, sentence Yuri Orlov, Anatoly Shcharansky and Aleksandr Ginzburg to cruel prison terms, and persecute countless others for the "crime" of seeking their government's compliance with the Helsinki Accord.

Today we are asked, this time in the name of "the spirit of Geneva," to make a unilateral concession to the Soviets by opening up a one-way channel for the flow of ideas--the flow of their ideas in our direction, while they maintain the intellectual equivalent of an impenetrable Star Wars defense against ideas they find distasteful. The hypocrisy of the Soviet position should not go unchallenged.

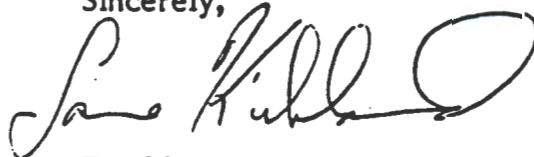
Unless our government wishes to return to a now discredited version of "detente" that brought one-sided advantages to the Soviets, it will dismiss Soviet demands for changes in our visa regulations until such time as the Soviets have demonstrated, in advance, that the effect of such changes would indeed be to promote a free two-way flow of people and ideas, in fulfillment of the commitments embodied in the Helsinki Final Act.

When the Soviet Union is prepared to allow Andrei Sakharov and those who share his democratic values to come to the United States, speak freely, and return home, the AFL-CIO would be prepared to consider reviewing its position with regard to entry visa regulations. But not before.

Please feel free to share these views with your colleagues and to make them known to the participants in the Bern meetings.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lane Kirkland". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name "President".

President

Enclosures

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September 14, 1978

The Honorable George S. McGovern
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator McGovern:

I have your letter of August 10, with whose opening paragraph I am in complete agreement: we do indeed "have a basic difference of opinion regarding the merits of the so-called McGovern Amendment."

But then you go on to say that I have gone "to great lengths to imply that this difference arises out of my inability to understand the deficiencies of the Soviet system in general and of Soviet 'trade unions' in particular. This is not the case..."

It is precisely the case, Senator, and virtually every word in your letter demonstrates that you still do not understand either the Soviet system or Soviet "trade unions."

Let us put aside for now "the deficiencies of the Soviet system in general" and turn our attention to the Soviet "trade unions," which you concede bear "no resemblance to the American trade unions."

The point, however, is not merely that Soviet labor fronts are different from our unions in their ideological cast or in their organizational structures. There are differences of ideology and structure between the American labor movement and many trade unions around the world.

In Great Britain, the trade unions are tied to a political party; the AFL-CIO is not. In West Germany, the trade unions believe in co-determination; we do not. In Israel, Histadrut owns enterprises employing large numbers

of people; we do not. In other countries, trade union federations are divided along religious lines; we have one all-embracing trade union federation. I could go on at great length. Within the non-Communist world there is great variety in the way unions are organized and in their political orientations. In international labor forums and in our bilateral relations with unions, the AFL-CIO frequently expresses its disagreements with them on this or that policy. But we do not question their legitimacy, nor do we demand that these unions conform to the American model. It is up to the workers of each country to determine for themselves the character of their own unions.

That, Senator, is the point. The structure and character of the Soviet "trade unions" is not determined by Soviet workers but by the totalitarian Soviet state, which has designated these organizations for the purpose of enforcing labor discipline--that is, for oppressing and exploiting the workers they pretend to represent. These structures, therefore, and in the profoundest sense, are not unions.

This is not a matter of "nomenclature". From the worker's viewpoint, the difference between American (and other democratic) unions and Soviet labor fronts is not nomenclatural but rather visceral. It's the difference between your shop steward representing you in a grievance procedure and your shop steward reporting you to the KGB. To the Soviet worker the distinction is not subtle.

I made these points, at some length, in my earlier letter. However, nowhere in your letter do you forthrightly accept our view that Soviet labor fronts are not unions. Your language on this matter is evasive. You speak of nomenclatural disagreements, of approval or disapproval of these organizations, and of their deficiencies. Why is it so difficult for you to come right out and say that Soviet labor fronts are not unions? Is it possible that the negative political judgements you have from time to time expressed toward aspects of the American labor movement--as is your right--have blinded you to the crucial distinction between a union you may disagree with and an instrument of the State?

Nowhere are the consequences of your failure to grasp this distinction more obvious than in your assertion that my position leads to the exclusion of Soviet "scholars," "parliamentarians," "journalists," "athletes," and performing "artists,"

because all of these are instruments of Soviet propaganda and everybody in the Soviet Union is tied into the State apparatus.

My position leads to no such thing. I am not concerned about Soviet propaganda. They have a right to their propaganda, as we have to ours. If Soviet scholars, parliamentarians, journalists, athletes, and performing artists propagandize for the Soviet Union, that's to be expected. Nor am I worried that significant numbers of American workers would be won over by such propaganda. But this is a smokescreen. The real issue is this:

An athlete is an athlete if he performs athletics-- whatever his political ideology or affiliation may be. A scholar is a scholar if he performs scholarly work--whether he espouses democracy or not. A parliamentarian is a parliamentarian whether he believes in democracy or not--and whether he is democratically elected or not. But a trade unionist is not a trade unionist unless he represents a trade union--i.e., an organization of workers and for workers. He is not a trade unionist if he represents an organization that is created by and serves the interests of the State. Nor is he a trade unionist if he represents the employer. If General Motors decided to call itself a union, that wouldn't make their chairman a trade unionist.

Your assertion that the logic of my position is that "our elected President should avoid any summit meeting with a Soviet leader who purports to be 'democratically' selected" is absurd. Is it not clear that there is a difference between a union and a government? We might prefer that all governments be democratic--that they govern with the express consent of their people and in the interests of their people. But the concept of democracy is not inherent in the definition of "government." A government is a government if it governs, with or without popular consent.

Now, in my view, how a government governs may determine its moral legitimacy. I do not believe that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has a moral right to rule, because my concept of political morality has to do with democracy. But as a matter of international law and practice, a government is a government if it governs. In this sense, the American government has a counterpart in the Soviet government. But our trade union movement has no counterpart in the Soviet Union.

You ask, perhaps facetiously: "Are you asking for one visa criteria for so-called trade unionists, misnamed or otherwise"--again, you can't quite bring yourself to accept that they are misnamed--"and another visa criteria for other applicants?"

My answer is yes. More precisely, we are not advocating a different set of visa criteria, but we are saying that there is something unique about the circumstances surrounding labor exchanges such that if a single test of authenticity is applied across the board, the result of that test would be to exclude Soviet trade unionists--as trade unionists. The result would not be to exclude ballet dancers if they can dance, athletes if they can run and jump, and journalists if they can write.

The trade union issue is indeed a special and unique issue. For twenty years our government recognized it as such by excluding labor exchanges from our cultural agreements with the Soviet Union, as I pointed out in my last letter. At least part of the reason for our government's past position was its recognition of the enormously important and unique role assigned to the international labor scene by the Soviet government--which spends many times more than we do in an effort to influence the labor field worldwide. Although our government has generally failed to recognize the potential importance of trade unionism on the international scene, the Soviets have moved to exploit it with massive resources. And one of their chief objectives is to win legitimacy for Soviet labor fronts. If they understand the importance of this goal, and if the American labor movement understands it, why don't our political leaders understand it? The Soviets understand the difference between an athlete and a trade unionist. Why doesn't the Senator from South Dakota?

Let me now turn to some of the other points in your letter.

As to whether the McGovern Amendment is required by the Helsinki Final Act, you say that "What is 'required' by the Final Act is, of course, not subject to precise definition"--a convenient interpretation from the Soviet point of view, inasmuch as if we don't precisely know what's required by the Final Act, we can't precisely tell when it is being violated. But in the absence of precise definition, you say

"I would agree with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe that past U.S. visa practices can scarcely be reconciled with the overall thrust of the Helsinki accord."

As I pointed out to you in my last letter, the basis of the Commission's reasoning is expressed in this crucial paragraph from its August 1, 1977 report, which you inserted in the Congressional Record:

"U.S. practice, in short, is discriminatory. The grounds for the discrimination--that Communist unionists are government agents and neither free nor true representatives of workers--reflect a mind-set the Final Act does not condone."

This is, quite simply, an outrageous statement by the Commission. I cannot believe it represents the thinking of Mr. Fascell. It must be the work of a thoughtless and sloppy Commission staffer. Does it represent your views? Do you believe that the characterization of Soviet trade unionists as "government agents and neither free nor true representatives of workers" is a violation of the Final Act? How is it that an agreement whose requirements lack "precise definition" can be so precise on this point? In any case, this statement by the Commission was in effect repudiated by the Conference Committee when Congressman Wolff asked the record to show that nothing in the Committee's discussion of the McGovern Amendment could be construed as conferring legitimacy on Soviet trade unions. The Committee is apparently in violation of the Final Act, according to the Commission. Let me suggest that the Commission's interpretation of the "thrust" of the Final Act with regard to visas for Soviet trade unionists is totally vitiated by its "mind-set" statement.

In your final paragraph you charge that:

"The effect of your position as advanced by Senator Baker is to deny visas except by a formal waiver request from the Secretary of State to members from Western European countries such as Italy, France and Spain, who in some instances have been independent if not outspokenly critical of Soviet policies."

Senator, it is hard for me to believe that you could write these words.

You were a member of the House-Senate Conference Committee which defeated the Baker Amendment. You were present when Senator Javits introduced a "compromise" version of the Baker Amendment which would have kept the McGovern Amendment in force for the

"citizens of a country whose procedures for the control of nonimmigrant entry and exit provide an equivalent degree of freedom of movement as do those in the United States." This language obviously would have applied a presumption of admissibility to the very Communist party members you are talking about--those from Italy, France, and Spain, and from many other countries as well. Not only did you refuse to support this compromise, but you denounced it in the committee. You said you would rather have "straight repeal" of the McGovern Amendment "instead of all this obscurantism."

We supported the compromise--despite the fact that we have irreconcilable disagreements with Communist trade unionists of Western Europe. We do not want to have anything to do with them; but they are not in the same category as Soviet labor fronts. The Communist-dominated unions of Western Europe are unions. This has more to do with the structure of political democracy in these countries than with the philosophy of the Communist trade union leaders, but in any case these are unions; they engage in collective bargaining, their leaders are elected by workers, they are independent of the State, and they go out on strike.

Our willingness to support the Javits Amendment is proof that the issue for us is not "ideological affiliation," as you put it, but of false credentials. You, on the other hand, were more anxious to pave the way for Soviet agents to enter the United States as trade unionists than you were to lift the obstacles to West European Communists. This is your prerogative of course, but it hardly entitles you to criticize me for allegedly opposing something you voted against!

I should like to raise another issue not touched on in your letter but the subject nonetheless of great controversy and confusion. I refer to the use of the McGovern Amendment to admit members of the PLO to the United States.

On July 26, in the course of the Senate debate on the Baker Amendment, Senator Stone declared that

"members of the Palestine Liberation Organization have been admitted to the United States specifically because of the McGovern Amendment. The head of the PLO's Washington office was admitted to this country even though he is a member of a proscribed organization specifically because the McGovern Amendment

allowed a presumption of admissibility to every person affiliated with any proscribed organization, including the PLO."

Senator Stone proceeded to insert into the Congressional Record a press briefing paper of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department which, as he said, "specifically confirms this fact." And indeed it did. The fact is further confirmed by a letter to Senator Stone from Mr. Leonel J. Castillo, Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I enclose a copy, in case you do not have it.

The record does not indicate any response by you to Senator Stone's charge. You did not respond on the day it was made. Nor did you respond on August 10, when you rose on the Senate floor to insert additional material on the McGovern Amendment controversy into the Congressional Record. Nor did you respond during the Conference Committee discussion of the Baker Amendment several days later, although you and the other Conference Committee members had been circularized with material on this matter and many of the conferees had received phone calls about it from representatives of Jewish and trade union organizations.

I enclose an article from The Jewish Week of New York, in which Congressman Stephen Solarz complains that he had "been deliberately and fundamentally misled" by the State Department with regard to the PLO. He states:

"I was unequivocally assured by the State Department that the McGovern Amendment had nothing at all to do with keeping PLO members out of the U.S...It now turns out that the PLO is one of the proscribed organizations. This is what I find so outrageous."

Mr. Solarz supported the McGovern Amendment in the conference committee on the basis of State Department assurances that it was not being used to admit PLO members. Having learned the truth, Mr. Solarz expressed interest in reopening the conference committee discussion of the McGovern Amendment.

At about the same time, you wrote to Secretary of State Vance complaining that

"It has come to my attention that the Department of State and the Department of Justice have both been describing the McGovern Amendment to last year's Foreign Relations Authorization Act (Section 112 of Public Law 95-105) as requiring that non-immigrant visas be granted to members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization."

This letter, dated August 25, a solid month after Senator Stone inserted the State Department press briefing papers into the Congressional Record, urges the State Department to

"Clarify its briefing papers in this matter, stating that whereas the amendment does mandate a change in the process of dealing with visa applicants who belong to proscribed organizations, it in no sense requires that visas be granted to members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization."

The timing of your letter suggests that you decided to address yourself to the PLO question after it appeared that there was a possibility of the conference being reopened. The fact is, Senator, that you knew, no later than July 26, not only that the McGovern Amendment was used to admit individuals connected with the PLO, but who these individuals were. In the July 26 debate, you said:

"Mr. President, I asked the State Department to prepare a list of the persons who have come to the United States over the past year who might be said to have come in under the terms of the McGovern Amendment....it can be said that in the past year approximately 40 persons have come to the United States who, in past years, according to past policies, would not have been allowed to come to the United States."

I have a copy of that list of 40 that you got from the State Department. It contains the names of four people connected with the PLO. I assume you read that list before you called your colleagues' attention to it. Why did you not speak out on this matter then? Why did you not respond to Senator Stone? Why did you not discuss this in the conference committee, when there was an opportunity to clarify the language of the McGovern Amendment so as to eliminate any ambiguity about the PLO?

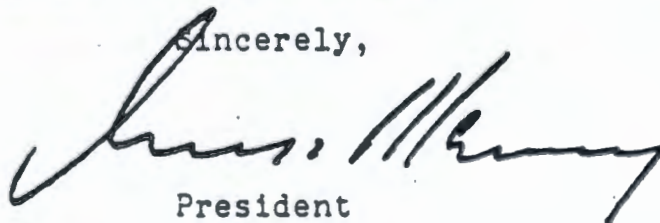
Your final, fall-back position on PLO question is that your amendment in "no sense requires that visas be granted to members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization," for the same reason, presumably, that it doesn't require that visas be issued to anybody: "my amendment does not affect the overall discretion of the Executive Branch on any applicant since it applies only to the recommendation of a waiver by the Secretary of State and not to the final decision of the Attorney General."

This, Senator, is simply a cop-out. You cannot escape responsibility for a policy you have promoted by arguing that the Executive Branch doesn't have to carry it out. Strictly speaking, the Secretary of State doesn't have to recommend the admission of excludable aliens, and the Attorney General doesn't have to accept the Secretary's recommendation. But to argue for your amendment on the grounds that it has no effect anyway strikes me as...peculiar.

If one takes the McGovern Amendment at all seriously-- and the Executive Branch clearly does--one must recognize that the PLO question and the Soviet trade union question are the same. I am not so worried about individual PLO members coming into the U.S. under the McGovern Amendment and engaging in acts of violence. We have the means to prevent that, notwithstanding your amendment. Similarly, I am not so worried about KGB agents coming here as "trade unionists" and engaging in espionage and subversion. I think we have the means to deal with that problem, too.

What I am concerned about is conferring legitimacy and respectability on either the PLO or Soviet "trade unions." You say the issue between us "is not the nature of our adversary but rather how we respond to that adversary." Again, I say you are wrong. We differ on how to respond to our adversary precisely because we differ on the nature of our adversary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James M. Henry".

President

-Enclosure

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 10, 1978

Dear Mr. Meany:

I think it now fair to conclude that you and I have a basic difference of opinion regarding the merits of the so-called McGovern Amendment.

Your letter of August second goes to great lengths to imply that this difference arises out of my inability to understand the deficiencies of the Soviet system in general and of Soviet "trade unions" in particular. This is not the case, for the issue is not the nature of our adversary but rather how we respond to that adversary. You are obviously offended by the use of "trade unionist" to describe a Communist representing an organization which bears no resemblance to the American trade unions you lead. This is understandable. But I disagree entirely with your conclusion that because this nomenclature is offensive — because such a person is not really a trade unionist but rather part of the Soviet governmental structure — he should be barred from a visit to the United States.

The logical consequences of such reasoning are fairly obvious: Since most Soviet institutions are, in some sense, a part of that structure, then other persons — not just "trade unionists" — should also be barred from our country if your logic is to be applied consistently. Soviet "scholars" would have to be kept out because their scholarship is often used to buttress Marxist dogma. Under your logic, the Soviet "parliamentarians" (from the Supreme Soviet) who visited Congress earlier this year should have been rejected. Soviet "journalists" here should be expelled. We should cease contacts with state-supported Soviet "athletes" and performing "artists," who are instruments of propaganda. And most surely, our elected President should avoid any summit meeting with a Soviet leader who purports to be "democratically" selected.

RECEIVED

AUG 14 1978

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

I cannot see how our national interests would be served if American scholars, parliamentarians, journalists, athletes, artists, and Presidents adopted your reasoning and insisted on shunning any U. S. contact with their "illegitimate" counterparts. Are you asking for one visa criteria for so-called trade unionists, misnamed or otherwise, and another visa criteria for other applicants?

Your letter raises four points you feel require clarification:

(1) The first concerns the discrepancy between my figures and yours on persons who have come to the U. S. under the McGovern Amendment. The figures I used were supplied by the State Department and I presented them without distortion. As I stated in my remarks on the Senate floor, however, this is an inherently imprecise matter, because the McGovern Amendment did no more than mandate the Secretary of State to use, in certain circumstances, a waiver-recommending authority he already possessed. Since this Administration was intent upon exercising that authority quite frequently even in the absence of the McGovern Amendment, its effect was to encourage and formalize a trend already in effect.

(2) You argue that the McGovern Amendment is not required under the terms of the Helsinki Act because the Act makes no mention of trade unionists and because the United States indicated at Helsinki its long-standing policy of excluding Communist trade unionists. What is "required" by the Final Act is, of course, not subject to precise definition, but I would agree with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe that past U. S. visa practices "can scarcely be reconciled with the overall thrust of the Helsinki accord." Moreover, the McGovern Amendment is not directed at trade unionists in particular, but at affirming an important general principle — that United States visa policy should not discriminate solely on grounds of organizational or ideological affiliation. You charge that, by causing us to "recognize as legitimate trade union institutions that repress workers" and by encouraging

"relations and contacts with the representatives of these institutions," the McGovern Amendment represents an Orwellian interpretation of the Helsinki Act. I would say that yours is an Orwellian interpretation of the McGovern Amendment. It has nothing to do with recognizing an organization as legitimate. Nor does it encourage relations between legitimate and illegitimate trade unions. It is neutral on both points.

(3) Regarding the value of exchanges that do occur, you speak disparagingly, citing Soviet "trade unionists" who, after visits to the United States, have not returned to the Soviet Union openly praising the merits of the American system. I wonder why you would expect otherwise in a society as repressive as you know the Soviet Union to be. The absence of immediate and obvious gains is hardly an adequate basis for repudiating the value of expanding human contacts. The whole premise for exchange-of-persons activities is that they work over the long-term, steadily increasing the number of people with firsthand knowledge and thereby slowly eroding ignorance and misperception.

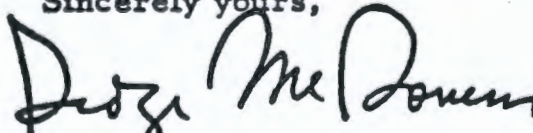
(4) You object to my saying that I did not realistically expect the Soviet Union to comply with all of its obligations under the Helsinki Final Act. I stand by that and reiterate that only a dreamer would have. What the Final Act did was set a standard to which we and others can be held accountable. We sacrifice nothing by abiding by the spirit of Helsinki. On the contrary, we greatly strengthen our ability to win admirers around the world and also, by our example over the long term, to foster change in the Communist systems of which neither you nor I approve.

I am sorry that the Senate's passage of the repeal amendment, which you so actively supported, has provided grist for propaganda against the United States by Communist countries which, embarrassed by their own deficiencies in meeting the

Helsinki standard, were pleased by the opportunity to excoriate the United States for hypocrisy. In that this embarrassment for the Administration's human rights effort was quite predictable, I regret that your determination to express disapproval of Soviet "trade unions" took priority over your concern for our country's international standing.

There is one final point: The effect of your position as advanced by Senator Baker is to deny visas except by a formal waiver request from the Secretary of State to members of all Communist parties around the world — including party members from western European countries such as Italy, France and Spain, who in some instances have been independent if not outspokenly critical of Soviet policies. I have enough confidence in American democracy to believe that our people can withstand contact with visitors whose ideology differs from ours. I even believe that our way of life is appealing enough so that we might modestly influence the thinking of some of our Communist visitors. I see no reason to make a "federal case" out of every visa application from those whose views and party affiliation differ from yours and mine.

Sincerely yours,



George McGovern

George Meany, President
AFL-CIO
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July 25, 1978

TO: The United States Senate

Dear Senator:

I am writing to urge your support for a bipartisan amendment to the Foreign Assistance Bill which would repeal the so-called McGovern Amendment passed last year.

The McGovern Amendment, you will recall, lifted virtually all restrictions on the issuance of entry visas to Communists in the name of encouraging the U.S. and other signatories to the Helsinki Final Act to comply with its provisions. For example, this amendment permits Soviet agents to come to this country in the guise of "trade union" representatives, despite the fact that Soviet "unions" are not genuine workers organizations but instrumentalities of the Soviet state designed to enforce labor discipline.

The McGovern Amendment has clearly failed in its purpose of encouraging Soviet compliance with the human-rights provisions of the Final Act. No sooner was the Amendment passed than Soviet authorities denied exit visas to Dr. Andrei Sakharov and five other Soviet citizens invited to the AFL-CIO convention in December.

Since then the Soviet Union has stripped Mstislav Rostropovich and General Pyotr Grigorenko of their citizenship, put Vladimir Klebanov and his fellow workers in mental institutions for attempting to form genuine trade unions, sentenced Yuri Orlov, Anatoly Shcharansky and Aleksandr Ginzburg to cruel prison terms, and persecuted countless others for the "crime" of seeking their government's compliance with the Helsinki Accord.

For the United States to go far beyond the requirements of Helsinki, as the McGovern Amendment does, while the Soviet Union not only fails to live up to the accord but jails those of its citizens who think that it should, is to accept and perpetuate an imbalance in U.S.-Soviet relations that the American people should not tolerate. How much longer should we acquiesce in an arrangement by which KGB agents disguised as "trade unionists" can visit the United States, at the invitation of Americans sympathetic to the Soviet system, but men like Andrei Sakharov and other voices for human freedom in the Soviet Union, invited by mainstream American organizations like the AFL-CIO, are not permitted to come here?

Repeal of the McGovern Amendment would be a specific, reasonable and moderate response by our government to the accelerating Soviet violations of the Final Act. It would reassure the American people that their government intends to deal with the Soviet Union on the basis of reciprocity. It would serve notice on the Soviet Union that we do intend to hold them to the provisions of the Final Act. And it may give fresh hope to the Orlovs, Sakharovs, Shcharanskys, and Ginzburgs that the United States will not passively observe their persecution without exacting any penalty from their persecutors.

Sincerely,

President

STATEMENT OF KENNETH YOUNG, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION,
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS,
BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 5, 1979

My name is Kenneth Young. I am the Legislative Director of the AFL-CIO, and I welcome the opportunity to appear before this distinguished commission as it reviews our government's compliance with the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

For the last two days, Mr. Chairman, your sessions have been devoted to "reviewing the U.S. performance in the areas of civil and political and economic, social and cultural human rights." I do not believe that I need to review for this body the range of activities through which the American labor movement has sought to extend and perfect our Government's performance in all of these areas.

Surely, no group has given more vigorous support to the President's human rights campaign. No group has been more conscious of the profound interconnections among the social, economic and political dimensions of the human rights struggle. No group has insisted more forcefully on a single standard of compliance with the provisions of the Helsinki Accord, regardless of whether the violators of human rights line up on the left or the right side of the aisle.

Having said this by way of introduction, Mr. Chairman, I should like to turn to the specific issue on which you have invited our views: Helsinki-related criticism of U.S. visa laws and procedures.

Two years ago, as you know, the Congress adopted the McGovern Amendment, which lifted virtually all restrictions on the issuance of entry visas to Communists in the name of encouraging the U.S. and other signatories to the Helsinki Final Act to comply with its provisions. Last year, the Senate voted to repeal the McGovern Amendment, but this action was overturned in conference. The AFL-CIO supported the Senate action, and we shall again seek a change in the law from this Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I shall not rehearse the arguments that persuaded the Senate that the McGovern Amendment had failed to achieve its purpose of encouraging the Soviet-bloc signatories to comply with the Helsinki Accord. In the wake of the Scharansky, Ginsburg and Orlov trials, no one was prepared to defend the McGovern Amendment on that ground. Rather, the supporters of the Amendment agreed that this change in our visa laws was required to bring the United States into compliance with the Helsinki Accords.

The AFL-CIO is not seeking to exercise thought control or to close our borders to people who don't agree with us. The enforcement of ideological conformity is not the objective of a labor movement which contains within itself many diverse viewpoints.

It is, however, our objective to promote free trade unionism throughout the world -- an objective we believe serves the interests of the United States -- and in the pursuit of this objective we consider it crucial that a clear distinction be made between genuine unions that represent the interests of their workers and labor fronts that serve as instruments of totalitarian states whether they be on the "left or the "right." This distinction is blurred and enfeebled by the issuance of visas to so-called Soviet trade unionists as trade unionists.

We believe, Mr. Chairman, that totalitarian labor fronts have absolutely no interest in the human rights of workers. Certainly, they have no interest in recruiting these workers to organize independent unions representing worker interests as contrasted to government interests.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, this Commission has contributed to the problem. We were greatly disturbed to read in your August 1, 1977, report the following:

"U.S. practice, in short, is discriminatory. The grounds for the discrimination -- that Communist unionists are government agents and neither free nor true representatives of workers -- reflect a mind-set the Final Act does not condone."

If it is the judgment of this Commission, Mr. Chairman, that the long-held view of American labor -- that so-called Soviet "trade unionists" are not true representatives of workers -- is a state of mind rendered impermissible by the Helsinki Accords, then we stand guilty of violating the Accords.

We believe, however, that the contrary is true, and that the statement quoted above subverts the overall thrust of the Commission's work, which we have applauded repeatedly in the past. The promotion of human rights compliance -- the implicit purpose of this Commission -- flounders once the distinction between free and unfree institutions is lost.

The AFL-CIO position is clear and uncomplicated. If a leader of a legitimate trade union -- a union which engages in collective bargaining on behalf of its members -- happens to be a Communist,

we do not on that ground demand that he be denied a visa. We, as democratic trade unionists, may decline to have anything to do with him -- as is our right -- but we are not a priori demanding that the Government bar him. What we do seek simply, is the restoration of the ban on representatives of totalitarian labor fronts. It is not the ideology of the individual but the character of the institution that concerns us.

We are adamantly opposed to the U.S. Government conferring trade union legitimacy on organizations which serve as instruments of the state for the purpose of enforcing labor discipline and negating the rights of workers.

Whatever this Congress may decide about the future of the McGovern Amendment, the AFL-CIO will not betray the workers of the Soviet Union by breaking bread with their oppressors.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I also append to my testimony letters to President Meany from Anatoly Marchenko and Vladimir Borisov -- Soviet workers who were prevented by Soviet authorities from accepting our invitation to attend our convention. I request that these letters be made a part of the record. Mr. Borisov has recently been arrested for trying to form an independent workers organization. I also attach information from our monthly international affairs publication, The Free Trade Union News, on the efforts of Vladimir Klebanov to form a workers organization -- efforts repaid by incarceration in a mental institution. The efforts of these workers to form independent workers organizations speak more eloquently and directly than our own statements to the real character of the official Soviet "trade unions."

We are astounded that the Soviet crackdown on these heroic workers should be rewarded by an American governmental policy that would confer an increasing recognition and respectability on the fraudulent institutions that oppress them.

For the AFL-CIO, a crucial issue before this Commission must be the distinction between genuine -- even if imperfect -- trade unions and totalitarian labor fronts. Maybe businessmen, academicians, churchmen, government officials, military men and others have counterparts in the Soviet Union or China. We do not.

There simply are no free trade unions in totalitarian states. It is important for this Commission to recognize this fact and to deny legitimacy to those who would masquerade as genuine trade unionists. This is all we ask.

Dear Mr. Meany,

I would like to express to you my belated gratitude for the honor you have bestowed upon me by inviting me to the AFL-CIO convention. The Soviet authorities refused to give me permission to visit the United States, stating that the millions-strong working class of the United States does not have the right to invite me as a private person, and if it did have this right then it could only do so through the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS) of which I am not a representative,

Indeed, not only am I not a representative of the VTsSPS, I am not even a member of this appendage of the state-party apparatus, which the VTsSPS constitutes in our country. This is because I withdrew from this organization many years ago, when I became convinced that official trade unions in my homeland not only do not defend the rights of workers, but objectively facilitate the enslavement of the working class as well as . . . the entire population. Under such circumstances I can place my sole hope on the new independent trade-union and workers' movement which is undergoing its birth pangs.

Today this movement finds itself in a stage of formation, but the objective necessity for such a movement, its timeliness (which is expressed if only in the fact that its ideas are arising independently in the minds of many people scattered throughout the vast reaches of our homeland, and which are finding resonance in the hearts of many, despite our very low level of legal consciousness), strengthens the certainty that this movement will grow and shall become one of the decisive forces for bringing about significant change in our country. It is a movement that is capable of compelling the authorities to respect the rights of workers, as well as human rights in general.

But today, I repeat, our independent trade-union and workers' movement is undergoing a very difficult period of formation, a period when the movement, without having yet grown strong, without having been able to stand firmly on its own two feet, is attacked by the full punishing force of the totalitarian state-employer, a state which is the exploiter and absolute monopolist in the realm of prices as well as wages. We are in a period when, one after another, the activists of our workers' movement are arrested and thrown behind prison bars or special psychiatric prison hospitals.

Recently, on October 13, 1978, one of the most energetic activists of our independent trade-union movement and a fighter for the revival of the workers' movement, Vladimir Skvirsky, was arrested on charges fabricated by the authorities. Having been humiliated by the trials of last summer (those of Aleksandr Ginzburg and Anatoly Shcharansky -- trans.), the authorities decided not to confront him with political charges, but fabricated a trumped-up criminal case, in accordance with a well-honed technique, as was done in the cases involving Malva Landa, Kirill Podrabinek, Felix Serebrov, Vladimir Slepak, Valeria Makayeva, and many others. A week before his arrest, Skvirsky was

dismissed from his job, after members of the KGB visited his supervisors. Since the late 1950s Vladimir Skvirsky linked his personal fate with the struggle for human rights; he took part in the democratic movement and helped facilitate the birth of the workers' movement. Consequently, by arresting him, the authorities have dealt a severe blow to the independent trade-union movement.

This is a time of great difficulty for us, and I, as a person who bears a direct connection to the workers' and independent trade-union movement, turn to you and, through you, to the working class and the trade unions of the United States with a request that you give us active help. I turn to you with a call for international solidarity among workers.

Basing my observation on those scanty sources of information which we are able to glean at no small effort, on the developments in world affairs, and the ideological and political conflicts which are taking place, I have become increasingly convinced that in our struggle it is impossible to hope for the support of those political leaders and governments whose viewpoints and actions depend almost totally on the political, economic, and tactical gains of the moment, and whose blindness was so accurately noted by Lenin in 1921 (I have in mind the passage from Lenin's writings which you quoted during your testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a quote which eloquently reveals the entire essence of the USSR's foreign policy and, in some measure, its internal policies in the decades ahead).

At the same time, I am convinced that the working class and the trade unions of the entire world are much more capable of soberly understanding the essence of events which are occurring throughout the world. The aspirations of trade-union and workers' movements toward a solidarity between workers of all countries, toward a solidarity among peoples, which flows out of the very idea of the trade union, along with the struggle for the unfettering of the oppressed and the struggle for human rights in general, assure us that we will not stand alone.

Once again, I turn to you, as the representative of the largest trade-union association in the United States, and through you to the workers of the entire world, with a call to solidarity, with a call to demonstrate your active help and support for the fledgling trade-union movement in the USSR. I turn to you in the name of our freedom and yours, in the name of the implementation of workers' rights and of rights throughout the world.

Mr. Meany! Since I do not have the means for disseminating information, I ask you, in our name, to forward our appeal to the workers of all countries:

Workers of the World!

The governments of your countries, as your representatives,

have concluded international agreements with the Soviet Union in the sphere of human rights, as well as in the area of workers' rights. Yet, they have shown themselves to be powerless in forcing the Soviet Union to honor its own obligations. They are much more interested in momentary political expediency, and for this sake they allow the precisely delineated international obligations assumed by Soviet party and state leaders to be turned into amorphous, and in no way binding, declarations!

Compel the Soviet Union to respect your own rights, the rights given you by the obligations which the Soviet Union has assumed

We believe that you have greater strength, possibilities, and determination than your governments!

Give your active support to the independent trade-union movement in the USSR and win the freedom of Vladimir Skvirsky and all arrested members of the workers' movement in my homeland!

Dear Mr. Meany!

For quite some time now, I have wanted to send you a simple, personal letter, but each time I sat down to do so the immediate problems of our eventful life tore me away from my writing paper. These same circumstances have now compelled me to address an open, public letter to you, rather than a letter of a personal nature. Please try to understand and forgive me!

With profound respect for you and your long-lasting struggle for human rights throughout the world,

Sincerely yours,

Vladimir Borisov

October 1978

Dear Convention participants:

By listening to a foreign radio, I learned that I was invited by you as a guest. I thank you for the invitation. I was not able to accept it, since I did not even receive it. One of those invited along with me -- Vladimir Borisov -- did receive his invitation but could not get an exit visa. He was told that "he did not represent anybody."

Recently some of our citizens visited the U.S. as invitees of the American National Committee of Labor Union Action for Democracy. At first they had certain problems with their U.S. entry visas, but they received Soviet exit visas with no difficulty. Whom do they represent? Metallurgists, school-teachers, the trade union masses in general? Not at all. They are the eyes, ears, and mouthpiece of our regime.

They told us about the desperate situation of one black woman worker; that American teachers beat their pupils and that some American highschool graduates don't know how to read; that there is inadequate industrial safety technology in American mines; and that American workers have a friendly attitude toward the USSR. That was all they derived from a two-week trip through the U.S.

How much does that poor black woman make, and what can she buy for her pay? Are her five children in school, and how does she pay for their medical care? Where, how, and in what schools did America train its scientists, who year after year have come away with most of the Nobel prizes? Perhaps they are semi-literate? What is the accident rate at an American mine? There was nothing concrete -- only a general and grim picture.

If Semyonova had not visited you as a representative, she might have possibly shared with your teachers the fact that in our schools there is also a low level of education -- I know more than a few semi-literate

people who have recently graduated from our schools. And the miner Gatsenko, perhaps, might have told about the systematic practice we have of not registering on-the-job injuries so as not to spoil the statistics and not to deprive a shop or a team of its bonuses. But our representatives, judging by the newspaper account, did not see a single positive feature in the life of working America, and enriched you with the information that we walk around in shoes and our women use cosmetics.

The reporting of their trip is published in the column "Chronicle of Detente." Apparently this means that now you and we, American and Soviet working people, know each other better. But we used to read the same sort of stuff about America thirty years ago in the worst years of the Cold War.

If I could visit America, I would not only demonstrate my shoes, but: I would tell you that I paid a fifth of my monthly wage for them. I would tell you what the concept of "general employment" means to us, and what, other than cosmetics, the workers are concerned with. In all this I would base myself on my own recent experience of work at a timber-processing enterprise in the Siberian settlement of Chuna. This experience is typical enough of our system of production and does not contradict official statistics.

It was not your fault or mine that I was unable to visit you. Still, I would like my short statement to be heard at your convention. And so let me tell you about the workers' life in a Siberian settlement, Chuna. Of course, I will not try to describe all aspects of this life; I will touch on three questions only.

The average pay of our workers is approximately at the level of the official average pay in the whole country, that is about 160 rubles per month. How does the worker earn this salary? In the drying section, the

sorting and stacking of boards is done only by hand. Mostly women are used for this work. The damp boards coming in from the lumber mill measure five meters in length, and 19-60 mm. in thickness. The production quota for each worker, be it a man or a woman, is from 10-17 cubic meters per shift, paid for at the rate of 23-40 kopeks per cubic meter. Thus a worker can make no more than four rubles per shift, or not more than 120 rubles a month. Added to this is a "distance coefficient" of twenty percent. If the plan is overfulfilled (more than 400 cubic meters per person per month) a bonus is added. All this barely reaches 160 rubles per month. But this salary is not guaranteed. In the first place, because of bad organization of labor the fulfillment of the plan does not at all depend on the worker himself. Secondly, the bonus is awarded only when the monthly plan is met by the whole section or shop, but not by the individual worker. And there are a thousand reasons why the section might not meet its plan, and these also do not depend on the worker. In order to fulfill the plan and receive the bonus, at the end of the month people have to work not the one shift of seven to eight hours, as established by law, but two shifts in a row, even including days off. These extra hours are not registered and no overtime is paid for them. The management of the trade union, together with the plant administration, organizes these illegal extra shifts. This happens because the trade union does not defend the interests of the workers but the interests of the state, while the fulfillment of the plan is the chief indicator of its work.

I chose not to work additional shifts, and I was fired from the plant for "breaking labor discipline" on the decision of the union and plant committees.

The workers of the drying section work in any weather under an open

sky, that is, in winter in temperatures lower than minus 40 degrees Celcius. The law states that extra pay, the so-called "below-freezing coefficient," must be paid under such conditions. But this is not paid to us, with the knowledge and approval of the trade union.

Often the weight of the boards exceeds the maximum weight limit set for women or adolescents. Adolescents are put to work in pairs with adults, that is, on an equal basis with them. I refused to work with an adolescent, and the shop foreman punished me by transferring me to other work.

In the settlement there are a lot of people from elsewhere, for instance, from the Ukraine; a round trip takes them 12 to 14 days. Most of the workers at the plant receive 15 days paid vacation. This means that relatives are separated for years.

The whole plant, except for the drying section, works in two shifts. Working these shifts are also women with small children, of whom there are very many at the plant. All the kindergardens and nurseries in Chuna are operated in the daytime only. In order not to leave the children alone, married people arrange to work different shifts, and they see each other only on days off. It is even worse for mothers without husbands: they are forced to leave their small children at night completely alone. An acquaintance of mine tells me that her children (aged seven and ten) don't go to sleep until she returns from the second shift, that is until two o'clock in the morning.

Women go to work under such conditions because a family cannot live on one average salary. (Incidentally, our statistics are silent about the minimum wages necessary to live in the Soviet Union.)

Can a family live on 160 rubles per month? The following things can be bought for this sum of money: one and a half decent suits; one third of

a black-and-white television set; one round-trip ticket from Chuna to Moscow by air; two wheels for the subcompact car "Moskvich"; or three to five children's overcoats.

A kilogram of meat in the store costs two rubles; a kilogram of dried fruit -- 1.60; milk -- 28 kopeks; eggs -- .90 to 1.30 for ten; butter -- 3.60 per kilogram. But most of the time none of this is available in the stores. If one is able to buy anything privately, one must pay almost twice as much: a kilogram of pork costs four rubles; milk -- 40 kopeks per litre.

Judging from all this, you can see for yourself how far our average monthly pay goes to cover the minimum needs of the family. We may not have unemployment, but the average pay of a worker here is probably less than your unemployment compensation.

It is said that our rents are the lowest in the world; rent for an apartment is only one eighth or one tenth of an average salary. My friend pays 17 rubles a month for his apartment. He and his wife, two working daughters, and a highschool senior son live in a two adjoining room apartment (16 X 12 sq. meters) with a tiny, hardly passable corridor, a same size kitchen and a combined bathroom. Their house, which contains many apartments, has facilities: central heating, an electric stove in the kitchen, hot and cold running water, and indoor plumbing. That is the maximum of conveniences known to us.

About a quarter of the Chuna population lives in houses like this. Half of the two-story, sixteen-apartment buildings have no facilities: common lavatories -- cold wooden outhouses in the back yard, water at a street pump, heating by stoves. The rest of the settlement's people live in their own or

government owned huts, also without, of course, any facilities whatever; often there is not even a water pump, but a manually operated well, several hundred meters from the house. We have no standards by which a dwelling may be declared a hovel unfit for habitation. If people live there, it means it must be usable. Such living is guaranteed for us in the 21st Century also: "In the Tenth Five Year Plan it is planned to create for the use of more than ... 60% of the population well-equipped housing with heating, water, and plumbing." This is the report of the chairman of the Chuna regional executive committee, G. M. Krivenko, at the eighth session of the regional soviet. (Kommunisticheskiy Put' (Communist Way) 28 August 1977). This means that the remaining 40% of the people will go on using board outhouses at 40° below zero.

What part of our people is provided with even housing such as this is unknown. In Chuna families wait for years to get an apartment, and meanwhile rent what they can get privately: a summer outside kitchen, a bath, a room or a corner in the owners' room. And the rent here is not just symbolic: for a tiny room of six square meters they pay 10 rubles; while in Moscow rent for a one-room apartment reaches 50-60 rubles per month.

All our citizens have equal rights, including rights to the amenities of life. But recently I learned from an article written by the First Secretary of the Minsk City Committee of the CPSU, Bartoshevich, that among the equals there are those who are "most equal," to whom these amenities are given at top priority. I know this myself in practice. Everyday I pass by Shchors Street. On one side of the street there are modern private houses with large windows, naturally with all facilities, and with a telephone. They are inhabited by the regional and factory bosses, and they don't have five square

meters living space per person, such as is available to my friend, a driver. The people who live on the opposite side of the street drag sleds with containers to the nearest pump, and each backyard there is decorated by a collective outhouse. Obviously, there were not enough water and sewer pipes to go around.

If anybody from the "most equal" set gets sick, he also gets special medical attention. He will have a place in a separate ward, and he will receive scarce medicine and food, and not half a ruble a day's worth, as in the case of any ordinary patient.

The "most equals" will know only by hearsay whether there is meat or milk in the stores. Everything they need is delivered to their homes, and there is always enough for them of everything, from food to books.

In this way the principle of pay according to work performed has been transformed into amenities given for service to the state and one's place in the state hierarchy. Our whole society is riddled with hierarchy. With permanent shortages of the most necessary goods, this principle reaches ludicrous heights. In our settlement there exist several distribution systems in addition to the one for the bosses. Lumberjacks can buy fur jackets, and the other residents of this Siberian settlement get them only if any remain. Today they brought eggs to the store for the workers of the Baikal-Amur Mainline; the workers at the plant get only canned pressed meat; it is handed out right at the plant, so that outsiders cannot somehow get at it. People living on pensions will get neither one nor the other.

You can replace a fur jacket with a padded jacket, but you cannot replace a child's eggs with potatoes.

In the women's dormitory on the Baikal-Amur Mainline project, "the most essential things are lacking: a kitchen table, rugs on the walls to

prevent the cold from seeping through, a dresser. The girls sleep in blankets without^{top} sheets. It seems that they don't exist in any of the other dormitories either, with a few exceptions.

'We issue them only to exemplary individuals. Those who behave themselves,' is the explanation of A. Ya. Ostrolutsky, chief of the Housing department."

The preceding quote was taken by me from the regional newspaper, Communist Way, dated 7 May 1977.

And thus the principle of hierarchical distribution of goods extends to everything: from sheets to cottages equipped with toilet paper.

Such conditions for the working people of our huge country are possible only because we are totally without rights in our own home. In the USSR the administration, the labor union, the organs of power and those of repression are all links in one chain, which has totally fettered our whole people. All organizations, including the church, are under the control of a small group of rulers and are subordinate to them. Let our sixty years experience serve as a warning to other peoples!

I can understand those Americans who may be dissatisfied with the political, social, or even economic conditions in their country. I sympathize with their striving for a better life. But when I read the ecstatic reports of your compatriots about my country, I would like to address them with the words of our contemporary song: "If you envy this, you can come and sit next to me." Yes, next to my stove, next to me on a bed without sheets, next to me in a communal outhouse (preferably in the winter time).

I invite as my guests to Chuna Messrs. Mike Davidoff, Gus Hall, and anybody else, together with their families. If they agree, I will file official invitations for them. I also invite any delegate of your convention who is willing to visit me, and I ask you to communicate his name to me so

that I may put together an official invitation.

Please accept my greetings to the convention and my best wishes for your successful activities for the well-being of American workers, in the name of further successes for the United States of America.

Chuna settlement, Irkutsk Oblast', 18 Chapayev Street,

A. MARCHENKO

1 December 1977

SEE ESPECIALLY PAGES

320 to 328.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TWELFTH
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONVENTION
OF THE
AFL-CIO

DAILY
PROCEEDINGS
AND
EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL
REPORTS

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 8-13, 1977

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND
CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Seychelles

Margaret Baptiste, Treasurer, Seychelles Workers Education Committee

Togo

Awute Folikpo, State Secretary for the Public Sector, Togo Workers National Confederation (CNTT)

Tanzania

Leopold U.C. Pallahani, Assistant General Secretary Civil Servants Union (NUTA)

Liberia

Frank G. Walker, Secretary General, United Workers Congress

Mali

Seydou Diallo, Secretary General, National Workers Union of Mali

Mauritania

Malik Fall, Honorary President, Confederation of Workers of Mauritania (UTM)

Niger

Boureima Mainassara, Secretary General, Trade Union Confederation of Workers of Niger (USTN)

Lesotho

Simon Molestane Jonathan, Lesotho Council of Workers

Zambia

Silvester Munda, Amalgamated Railway Workers Union

Botswana

Pelotelele Thaodi, Deputy General Secretary, Botswana Federation of Trade Unions

Ghana

Adelaide Asihence, Branch Secretary, Veterinary Services Branch, General Agricultural Workers Union

PRESIDENT MEANY: At this time I want to present a speaker who I'm sure you will listen to with a great deal of interest, Vladimir Bukovsky. He is 35 years old, and he has spent 11 years of that 35 years in prison for his human rights activity, for speaking the things that he wanted to speak about, even for thinking the thoughts that did not square with the philosophy of the communist dictators. He was freed a year ago in exchange for a Chilean communist leader, Corvalan, who was in prison in Chile, and he was released to the Soviet Union and Bukovsky was set free. He has been in America for some months now. He has talked to a number of our organizations throughout the country. I'm sure he has a human interest story that will keep you at attention for a few minutes, Vladimir Bukovsky. (Applause.)

VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY USSR

President Meany, Mr. Kirkland, Delegates and guests at this great Convention of free workers:

Recently, during the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Soviet power in Moscow, somebody made a very shaky compliment to Mr. Brezhnev, "Comrade Brezhnev," he said, "In your seventy years, you look much younger than your country at sixty."

And, really, sixty years of Communist power has brought the country to a desperate situation—backward technology, devastated agriculture, the lowest living standard in Europe, and the absence of human rights. Crime and alcoholism have reached unbelievable heights.

Given this record of failure, how can we explain why the Soviet regime not only remains in power but holds half of the world in fear and forces you to spend billions of dollars in armaments?

For one thing, the psychological situation created by Soviet propaganda has not changed much since Stalin's time; as before all Soviet citizens from childhood on are saturated with the idea that the Soviet Union finds itself in a capitalist encirclement, hostile and aggressive. It is enough to point out that any person who tries to flee abroad or refuses to return to the USSR is considered by Soviet law to be a traitor, a deserter who has gone over to the enemy. The Soviet Union, loudly demanding a cessation of the so-called "cold war," when talking about Western Countries, fully preserves the climate of the cold war within its own borders. For decades the idea has been suggested to Soviet man that he has no right to demand improvements in the conditions of his life, no right to demand the observance of human rights, since this is "grist for the enemy's will" and is used by the enemy to weaken the country. Such an artificially created atmosphere is vitally essential to uphold the Communist dictatorship and is inseparable from it.

In 1962 in Novochoerkassk the workers went on strike because their pay was cut and prices were raised on food at the same time. The workers and their families went to the City Soviet building with a petition. This was a totally peaceful procession, but it was met with machine gun fire. Dozens of people were killed and wounded. The organizers, including the women among them, were later condemned to be shot or to 15 years of imprisonment.

In 1976 in the city of Riga, four workers were sentenced to up to three years after a strike called forth by the lack of meat in the stores.

The Soviet Union has signed various international conventions recognizing the right of workers to strike, but it has not bothered to formulate this right in its own legislation. Moreover, a strike is regarded as a "gross group violation of public order," for which one can be imprisoned for up to three years. This is for a completely peaceful strike, merely for refusal to work. But methods of struggle such as sit-downs, picketing, etc., are punished according to the article entitled "mass disorders," with sentences up to fifteen years or the death penalty.

The fictitious Soviet labor unions exist to prevent a real workers' movement from springing up. They do not protect the workers from hunger, arbitrary rules, and exploitation. The labor unions in the USSR are part of the party and governmental apparatus and they are not concerned with the protection of working people but with the carrying out of party governmental plans.

More than anything else the Soviet press writes about strikes and unemployment in the West, creating a strange impression among Soviet workers. Many of them seriously believe that you are dying of hunger, because in the Soviet Union only a person facing death from starvation could decide on such a desperate measure as a strike. And to be paid for not working—that is unbelievable. The authorities consider that a person is himself at fault if he cannot find work. Such people are declared to be "parasites" and are sent to Siberia to work at low-paid labor.

During its sixty years of existence, the Soviet regime has destroyed more than sixty million people—an average of one million people a year. Because of this, as you might well imagine, the spirit of Soviet workers has been to some extent broken.

The following anecdote is very popular in the Soviet Union:

One Western trade unionist, visiting the USSR as a guest, could not understand why Soviet workers don't strike.

"They don't want to," Soviet officials explained to him. "If you don't believe us, go and talk to them yourself. Try to provoke them into striking."

The workers at one factory were called together, and the foreign guest addressed them as follows:

"Beginning tomorrow you will work twice as hard and will be paid half as little. Who votes in favor of this?"

Everybody voted in favor.

"Who is opposed?"

Nobody was opposed.

The Western trade unionist was surprised, but continued the experiment. "In view of the fact that under this new system

we won't need so many workers," he said, "Half of you will be discharged. Who is in favor?"

Everybody was in favor. At this point the trade unionist lost patience completely. "But we will not be able to feed those who don't work, and thus everybody who is discharged will have to be hanged. Who is in favor?"

Again everybody voted in favor. Suddenly one of the workers raised his hand and requested permission to ask a question.

"Only one thing isn't clear to me," he said. "Will the rope for the hangings be provided by the government or must we bring our own?" (Applause.)

This is a very sad joke, but what do people have to console themselves with other than bitter jokes about their own situation?

Accustomed to lack of rights, Soviet workers prefer to steal from their place of work anything that can be sold on the black market, in order somehow to feed their families, but they do not dare make open demands. This is very useful to the authorities, because in this way everybody is guilty and everybody can be tried, not for his political convictions, but for theft. In general, crime in the country is very widespread, and alcoholism, drug addiction, and prostitution flourish.

In all there are 3,000,000 prisoners in the country, a little more than one percent of the population. Such a high percentage of convicts is artificially supported by the government, mainly out of economic considerations.

A prisoner is cheap labor, which can easily be shifted by the authorities from one branch of the economy to another, sent to do the most difficult and unprofitable work in underdeveloped parts of the country with a difficult climate, to which free labor could be attracted only by offering very high pay.

But what makes possible the long existence of this huge concentration camp called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? Is it only terror and the denial of rights?

I doubt that the creators of the theory of convergence supposed how literally their theory would realize itself!

Soviet prisoners, forced into slave labor, cut down trees and make lumber. The Shah of Iran buys this lumber and uses it in mines where Iranian prisoners work. The British government gets a loan from the Shah of Iran and lends the greater part of it to the Soviet government. For us, however, such paradoxes are no longer news. Beginning with almost the first years of the Soviet regime, over fifty years ago, Western businessmen have been helping the Communist leadership strengthen its power.

You know better than I, that the greatest building projects of the first Five Year Plan were created exclusively with the help of western technology. Every time that the Soviet Union's inefficient economy experiences need—in re-equipment, in support—western countries readily come to its aid. On the one hand—millions of slaves behind barbed wire eating crusts of bread and in fear of death. On the other hand, well fed businessmen are completely voluntarily building, strengthening, and enriching this monstrous system of oppression, impossible to compare with anything in history. Why? For what?

My companions in prison refused to work for the Communist system. We, a handful of defenseless people without rights, understood that we could not look people in the eye if we did not refuse to participate in the building of this system. We were deprived of food, we rotted in solitary, we were killed, but we did not back away from our decision. We knew that each ruble they squeezed out of us would turn into bullets—against you in the West—would turn into jails and concentration camps in Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and, it may be, in France, in Germany, in Switzerland. Forgive me my directness and frankness, but I think that I have earned the right to it. I speak for millions of prisoners dying from hunger or scurvy or just killed, and I want to know: What for?

After decades of unheard of terror, after several generations of people in the USSR have grown up in fear and conviction that they are surrounded by fierce enemies who thirst for their destruction, and that every demand for natural human rights is treason. Now in the USSR and in the countries of the Communist world there have appeared people who by their actions and their lives are dissipating this fear. With every year, with every passing day there are more and more of them. These are no longer just separate people but a whole movement which the authorities have to reckon with.

The Communist tyranny has built a unique machine of repression, capable of destroying any plot, any invasion or revolt. But this machine can do nothing with people who simply refuse to obey it. We are not trying to change the system by force or create some sort of pre-conceived model of society. We merely want to insure for the people the opportunity of making their will known, of freely expressing their likes and dislikes. We know full well how easy it is to lose freedom and how agonizingly hard it is to get it back. We know that initially democracy is born in the minds of men and only later becomes a fact of life in society. It is a slow-appearing and brittle growth, requiring tender, attentive cultivation and care. So please help it. Trade and economic relations are a powerful weapon of interference in the life of a country. So interfere, but interfere on the side of the people and not on the side of the tyrants! This, after all, is in our common interest!

Some people here in the West try to prove that for people in backward countries the problem of human rights is not as essential as the struggle with poverty. I do not think that these two problems can be separated, because lack of rights gives rise to poverty, and poverty strengthens the lack of rights.

Precisely for this reason the movement for human rights in the Soviet Union, along with purely intellectual rights, defends the rights of workers. More and more workers are joining our movement. They understand that only thus can the vicious circle of lack of rights and poverty be broken.

Last week, half a dozen workers gathered in a small apartment in Moscow to tell their experiences when they tried to exercise their "right of complaint."

They were ordinary workers—among them a waitress, a coal miner, a locksmith and a housing maintenance man. They turned, as a last resort, to the western press to expose the wrongdoings they had experienced.

"Our unions don't defend our rights," said the miner.

"Our unions aren't like western unions," said the locksmith.

"Our unions have no power," said the waitress.

We are witnessing the beginning of a process which will lead us to freedom, a process of working people recognizing their rights and their human dignity. Now the fate of our peoples will depend on your positions, on your solidarity and support. In the last analysis the fate of the whole world depends on this.

Approximately a year ago, I was released from prison. Since then I have been traveling and making appeals to Western trade unions, to their sense of solidarity with oppressed workers everywhere. Unfortunately, only infrequently have I seen a readiness on their part to express this solidarity with Soviet workers. Some English laborites explained to me that they did not want to destroy their workers' illusions about the happy life in the Soviet Union.

Earlier this year a prominent leader of the British Trades Union Congress made a trip to East Germany and reported that he felt "quite at home" there. I wonder whether he would feel himself "quite at home" in my prison cell.

Another British laborite, Alex Keatson, went to the Soviet Union for the 60th Anniversary celebration and said: "How pleasant it is to be in this country, where the situation is quite different than in my country. Long live the October Revolution and unions in the USSR."

I would like to know what is the solidarity of these people

who still regard themselves as the defenders of workers and their interests.

Such irresponsible behavior cannot help our workers. It only makes men bitter.

It is completely evident that Western capital investments in the USSR, which are calculated to exploit cheap labor, are directly harmful to the interests of Western workers. I am certain that western labor unions at least have the right to investigate all cases of investment of western capital in the USSR and the conditions of labor and pay in the areas where this capital is applied, and I hope that they will not allow profit to be made from the lack of rights of Soviet workers. After all it is no accident that the Final Act of the Agreement on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki, links economic relations with the observance of human rights.

The Helsinki Agreement has created in the USSR and the other countries of Eastern Europe a broad movement for its strict observance. In Moscow, in the Ukraine, in Lithuania, in the Caucasus groups to monitor the observances of the Agreement have been created. Because we knew that the Communist countries from the very beginning had no intention to observe the articles dealing with human rights, the members of the Soviet Helsinki groups collected a considerable body of information on the violations of human rights in the USSR and presented this material to the governments of the 35 countries signing the Agreement. At present more than half of the members of these groups have been arrested for their activities—such outstanding defenders of human rights as Yuri Orlov, Alexander Ginzburg, Anatol Shcharanski, Mykola Rudenko, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Oleksa Tykhyi, and Merab Kostava. I am happy to tell you that a group of Norwegian and Belgian members of parliament have nominated the members of the Helsinki Movement for the Nobel Peace Prize for the next year. (Applause.)

But that is the attitude of world public opinion, not government. At present, when the Belgrade conference is in session to discuss the observance of the Helsinki Agreements, one gets the impression that the delegations of most of the western nations have completely forgotten why they gathered there. Precisely at the moment when an account should have been demanded from the Communist oppressors, the western governments became remarkably bashful in their statements about human rights.

It looks as if the western countries signed the Helsinki Agreements just for fun, to cover their deals with the Soviet Union with those vague formulas!

Only one voice spoke out in defense of human rights—Chick Chaikin, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, and your representative at the Belgrade Conference.

Most of the western representatives at Belgrade appear bent on pursuing a policy of detente which necessarily leads to limited sovereignty for some countries. For what else can one say of a policy which sees war or slavery as the only alternatives? If we want to avoid war, we are told, we must accept some forms of slavery.

An equal exchange of people and information is one of the basic principles of the Helsinki Agreements. And we have always consistently demanded its observance. But we demanded a real exchange not a fictitious one.

Delegations of western parliamentarians, genuinely elected by their peoples, travel to the Soviet Union. Labor union leaders genuinely representing the interests of the workers go there. and who are they trying to saddle you with—under the guise of Soviet Parliamentarians and labor leaders? Party officials, KGB agents, that is, the executioners of our people, those who shot down the workers at Novocherkassk, those who keep the members of the human rights movement rotting in jail. Since when do the hangmen represent the hanged?

Who needs such an "exchange of people?" It merely lends a respectable coloring to phony Soviet institutions, but it does not help our nations better to understand each other.

The AFL-CIO and your President, George Meany, have always fought on behalf of human rights. I would like to thank the American workers for their support, of which we have always been conscious. It was the strength of your solidarity that swung open the doors of my prison cell.

It is your solidarity along with our growing movement that will eventually lead us to freedom. We are witnessing the beginning of a process, a process of working people recognizing their rights and their human dignity. In the last analysis the fate of the whole world depends on this.

In the name of my comrades in the struggle for human rights—the Soviet workers Vladimir Borisov, Anatoli Marchenko, and Valentin Ivanov, the physician Aleksandr Podrabinek, the writer Nadezhda Mandelstam, and the scientist Andrei Sakharov—who were not allowed to accept your invitation to attend this convention, I thank you. (Standing ovation.)

PRESIDENT MEANY: Thank you very much, Brother Bukovsky.

Brother Bukovsky mentioned in his talk the Helsinki Agreements. These agreements signed about two years ago, by the Soviet Union, the United States and a couple of dozen other nations, made specific guarantees in the field of human rights.

One of the guarantees was the right of anybody to leave his own country whenever he felt so inclined, and to return without interference from any official source.

In keeping with that agreement, the United States Congress amended one of its laws, which was on the books about twenty-odd years, to allow Communist labor leaders to visit this country.

In keeping with the agreement, the AFL-CIO invited Andrei Sakharov and five of his well-known compatriots, who have an international reputation as fighters for human rights, and, of course, are looked upon by the Soviets as dissidents.

I would like Secretary-Treasurer Kirkland to give you a run-down of the attempts that we made to get Andrei Sakharov and his companions to come to this Convention in accordance with the terms of the Helsinki Agreement.

Brother Kirkland.

SECRETARY-TREASURER KIRKLAND: Brothers and sisters, I would like to give you just a seriatim, blow-by-blow account of the events of our effort to secure the attendance at this Convention of this great man, Andrei Sakharov, and his colleagues.

The Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement, as President Meany has pointed out, affirms directly and by reference the principles and obligations set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Charter of the United Nations.

Among those enumerated rights, stated very plainly is the right of every person, every person, not just some selected or privileged person, to leave and to return to their native land.

In signing the Helsinki Agreement, the Soviet Union formally acknowledged this right as an international obligation, not an internal affair. Yet the USSR continues to require and to arbitrarily withhold official permission for its citizens to leave and to return to their country.

The Soviet Union is also a signatory to the Universal Postal Convention, guaranteeing the delivery of mail, and is a member of the Universal Postal Union, which oversees compliance with that solemn international obligation.

During this past summer, the Congress of the United States enacted, and President Carter signed, legislation designed to remove any possible questions as to U. S. compliance with the Helsinki agreement.

This legislation, the McGovern amendment to an appropriations bill, removed all barriers to the granting of entry visas, to foreign communists, including Soviet trade unionists. That is to say, agents of the Soviet system of labor control.

The amendment declared as one of its purposes, encouraging other signatory countries to comply more fully with those provisions of the Helsinki Agreement.

At this time, the AFL-CIO expressed to the State Department and to the White House our continuing view as to the fraudulent nature of visa applications from agents of Soviet repression disguised as trade unionists.

We stated our reservations as to the value and effectiveness of such a one-sided, unreciprocated step, and we suggested that this measure be conditioned on compliance by the USSR by ending its practice of restricting exit visas to a favored few.

Our views and our advice were rejected. Shortly thereafter, the State Department granted entry visas to four designees of the All-Soviet Congress of Trade Unions, representing themselves as typical, simple, unspoiled, loyal production norm-breaking Soviet workers, without any background investigation, and with no restrictions or even inquiry as to their itinerary. They were received, entertained, and proudly displayed by various groups and individuals whose view of Soviet labor practices might conservatively be described as uncritical, if not admiring.

At this point, your officers decided that we should ascertain whether this new freedom was a privilege confined to those Americans who feel some affinity or warmth toward the labor apparatus of the Soviet Politburo. We decided to find out whether an organization in the mainstream of American democratic thought could also successfully invite Russian guests of the kind that we would like to meet.

Accordingly, on October 7th, President Meany addressed a letter to six citizens of the Soviet Union, inviting them to come to Los Angeles to observe this Convention of the AFL-CIO.

Our six invitees were Nadezhda Mandelstam, the widow of a well-known Russian poet; Aleksandr Podrabinek, a psychiatrist; Anatoli Marchenko, a building tradesman and an author; Vladimir Borisov, an electrician; Valentin Ivanov, also an electrician, and Andrei Sakharov, physicist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

They share in common a deep and an eloquent concern for human rights. That is their only crime. They have not been arrested or charged with any offense, at least at that time, and they should be entitled to all of the rights technically spelled out in the Soviet Constitution, as well as the Helsinki agreement.

To improve the chances that one might slip through, we sent each of them seven separate copies of this invitation, in separate envelopes, the last by registered mail.

In the letters President Meany said, and I quote, "Since its very inception the modern American labor movement has had a broad international outlook expressed repeatedly in a concern for workers' rights everywhere. History has taught us that workers' rights are inseparable from human rights generally; that neither can survive outside of the framework of democracy. Because American trade unions constitute one of the most democratic of our mass institutions, and because they have played a significant role in the defense of human rights, both at home and abroad, I believe that you would find our Convention proceedings of great interest.

"In keeping with the spirit of the Helsinki Agreement and its key objective of encouraging a freer flow of people, ideas and information, the AFL-CIO would like you to have the opportunity to observe our proceedings firsthand."

Copies of these letters were sent to President Carter, Secretary of State Vance, and Ambassador Goldberg representing the U. S. at the Belgrade Conference on the Helsinki Agreement.

Secretary of State Vance replied for the President, advising us that our embassy in Moscow had been instructed to support our invitations and to make such representations to the Soviet government.

A copy of his letter is contained in the latest issue of the Free Trade Union News, which has been distributed to all the delegates here.

Weeks passed and the letters were not delivered. The registered letters produced no receipts.

In November we filed a protest through the Postal Service to the Universal Postal Union. Our embassy in Moscow sent a formal diplomatic note to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, officially urging that our invitees be granted permission to visit this convention. The note was returned without a reply. Surely the most insulting response.

Late at night, on November 11th, our embassy in Moscow reached Andrei Sakharov by telephone.

He advised the Embassy that he had not received the invitation, although he knew about it from western press inquiries. He had received an envelope from the United States which he was personally sure had come from President Meany, but the contents had been removed and replaced by a crude cartoon of a dinosaur. He further stated that he was sending President Meany a reply by group letter signed by each of the invitees whom he had been able to reach.

On November 15th Vice President Sol Chaikin, attending the Belgrade Conference as labor's representative on the American

delegation, took the floor and recounted the fact of our undelivered letters of invitation, and in simple, straight-forward terms described the multiple violations by the Soviet Union of the Universal Postal Convention as well as the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement. The reply of the Soviet spokesman typically was, "What about the Wilmington 10 and the unemployed in America?"

The original of Sakharov's group letter to President Meany has yet to be received except, no doubt, by the KGB. What we have received is a copy which Sakharov personally delivered to our Embassy in Moscow, and which the State Department has transmitted to us earlier this month.

Here is what the letter says, and I would like to read it:

"Dear Mr. Meany:

"Thank you very much for your invitation to visit the Convention of the American trade unions.

"We would like very much to go to Los Angeles, provided the Soviet authorities would give us exit visas and sufficient guarantees that we will be allowed back into the USSR.

"Unfortunately, only Vladimir Borisov has so far received an official invitation to the Convention."

That, incidentally, he got, because we addressed it to his wife rather than to him.

"He was told at the Visa and Registration Section of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, that invitations from such organizations to private individuals are not even considered by this Section.

"Instead of an invitation, A. D. Sakharov found in the envelope a clipping from some journal. The other invitations have not arrived, apparently because of the Soviet 'mail.'

"Dear Mr. Meany, we greatly appreciate this activity directed, in particular, to protect human rights. We hope that your own prestige and that of the AFL-CIO will help overcome all the difficulties and that we will end up, despite everything, among your guests.

"Respectfully, A. D. Sakharov, Aleksandr Podrabinek, Vladimir Borisov, Anatoli T. Marchenko."

There is a footnote to the letter in which they say, "Marchenko could not affix signature because he is exiled in Siberia, but he asked over the telephone that his name be included."

The final chapter of this story opened early on a Sunday morning, November 27, when, as here, there are no mail deliveries. A person who purported to be an employee of the Soviet

mail service appeared at Sakharov's apartment and gave him George Meany's letter of invitation.

On Monday, November 28th, Sakharov went to the appropriate Soviet ministry, presented the letter of invitation and requested an exit visa. Later that same day he received a telephone call from someone at the ministry who advised him that the form of the invitation was inappropriate and unacceptable. He was told that while an invitation to visit Mr. Meany as his personal guest would be in order, an invitation to participate in a meeting of an organization of a "transitory nature" could not be approved. (Laughter.)

Sakharov promptly reported these facts to our Embassy requesting that they be passed on to President Meany.

The following day President Meany dispatched a telegram to Sakharov and to our Moscow Embassy inviting Sakharov to visit the United States as his personal guest without reference to the AFL-CIO Convention, that transitory organization. The Embassy promptly passed this to Sakharov who applied once again to the Soviet ministry for an exit visa. Sakharov was given a bundle of elaborate questionnaires to complete, and instructed to secure a letter of consent from his wife and an endorsement of his application from the Soviet Academy of Science. So at long last the ultimate Catch 22, the final snare, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, that is to say the KGB, which is to say the Soviet system of engineering and control of the human soul, refused to approve his application.

We have been informed today that on Friday night another of our invitees, Aleksandr Podrabinek, was arrested by the KGB and is now in prison. So Andrei Sakharov and his colleagues will not be here in person, but they are very much here in spirit. Andrei Sakharov has sent to us outside the channels of the Soviet dead letter office a message to all of the delegates at this AFL-CIO Convention, which he has asked President Meany to deliver in his stead. After you have heard it he intends to release it in Moscow to whoever will pay attention there.

I don't propose to editorialize or expound further as to what this all means about the value of Soviet agreements, of Soviet promises and of Soviet life. The facts and eloquent words of Andrei Sakharov which you will hear speak for themselves.

PRESIDENT MEANY: Incidentally, last Saturday was the 29th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations, a declaration which the Soviet delegate signed with great fanfare. An observance of this date was planned in Moscow. They planned what they called a silent demonstration: No speeches, no flags. They just planned to march around Pushkin Square in order to let the Soviet citizens see that they still believed in the Declaration of Human Rights.

Saturday morning 20 of the most prominent dissidents in Moscow were placed under house arrest.

I have here in Russian a copy of the speech that Andrei Sakharov planned to read to this Convention, and I will now read an English translation of that speech. Please keep in mind that while it is my voice you hear, these are the words of Andrei Sakharov.

... President Meany read the following informal translation of Andrei Sakharov's intended remarks:

The opportunity to speak here is a great honor for me. I want to express my gratitude to you and to your Chairman.

We in the USSR know of the influence on internal and international affairs which the AFL-CIO has in your country. We have great respect for your evaluation of such vital matters as the proper tasks of foreign policy, of economic, scientific-technological and cultural ties, and of aid to developing countries. We also greatly respect your responsible understanding of the tasks of U.S. economic prosperity and national security—on which depends the future of not only the American people—as well as your approach toward the defense of human rights. This role of your organization, which represents the interests of the broadest strata of working people, is one of the manifestations of the pluralistic nature of American society which is surprising to us, surprising because these manifestations are in striking contrast to what we see in our own country. In this pluralism, or, to put it more simply, in democracy, lies the enormous, real power of your society, the profound source of its successes. It is, of course, true that our single-party, single-ideology, closed caste society is in many ways different from your society. And yet, not so different that we cannot understand your problems, and you ours; not so different that we cannot try to work out some sort of a common course of conduct.

It is said that the character of the American people, its active and practical goodwill and feeling of its own worth, is expressed in the question, which has become a national tradition—"how can I help you?" It seems to me that in inviting me to this meeting, you are in effect also asking me this question. I will try to answer it, for we are dealing here not simply with help to us, but above all with the defense of universal human values, the universal future of mankind, universal human security—in other words, we are not dealing with interference in our internal affairs.

First of all, I want to speak of the question of communications, which is decisive for the whole struggle for human rights in the USSR and for my public activity. The only weapon in our

struggle is publicity, the open and free word. Inside our country, all channels of mass information are in the hands of the party-state apparatus. During this era of detente and a broadening struggle for human rights, ties with the West, acquisition in the West of information about violations of human rights, and the most effective, exact utilization of this information, have acquired enormous importance. Authorities in the USSR undertake the most shameless measures to cut off channels of communication with the West, and it seems to me that only by actively opposing this can we anticipate successful cooperation in the struggle for human rights.

Are you aware that hundreds of people wishing to emigrate do not receive the required invitations from abroad, invitations which the authorities always arbitrarily require, in violation of the right of free choice of country of residence? Because of this, such people are not even officially included in the number of those wishing to emigrate. Many of those with relatives abroad are deprived of the opportunity to talk with them. Letters, telegrams, books, packages and other international postal materials do not reach addressees. The authorities temporarily or permanently shut off the telephone of people who allegedly have undesirable international conversations over the telephone, thereby making clear that the KGB listens to conversations.

Even the invitation to today's meeting was marked by such violations. Mandelstam, Aleksandr Podrabinek, Anatoli Marchenko and I did not receive letters with invitations. Rather, I received an envelope with a mocking drawing of the extinct monster Brontosaurus. The KGB evidently had in mind those they call reactionaries, perhaps you, Mr. Meany, and, of course, me. But in actual fact the Brontosaurus is the repressive system which spawns such illegalities. The morning of November 27, after already having discussed the missing invitation aloud with my wife in our thoroughly KGB-bugged apartment, I finally received your invitation.

What actions do we expect from you:

Facilitation of a broad campaign in the press and in Congress against violations of the freedom of exchange of information.

Facilitation of the solution of this question on the level of intergovernmental negotiations.

Measures to increase the effectiveness of radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. In particular, it is very important that the Voice of America have its own permanent representative in the USSR, so that this station can transmit more often, in full and without annoying distortions, the documents it receives on human rights violations.

Attainment of unhindered, international television broadcasts from communications satellites.

I rely upon the AFL-CIO to continue its active support of the struggle for free choice of country of residence, because in my view this is a key problem in the larger struggle for individual freedom from the arbitrariness of the state. I remember with gratitude President Meany's decisive speeches in support of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

The following eminent participants in the human rights movement are now in prison or exile in the USSR: Sergey Kovalev, Semyon Gluzman, Anatoli Marchenko, Andrey Tverdokhelebov, Mal'va Landa, Mikola Rudenko, Oleksa Tikhiy, and many others. Awaiting trial are Gamsakhurdiya, Gayauskas, Ginzberg, Kostave, Marinovich, Matusevich, Orlov, Pailodze, Pyatkus, and Shcharanskiy. The priests Vins and Pomanyuk, many dozens of religious believers, and the leader of the All-Russia Social-Christian Association for the liberation of People (VSKHON) Igor' Ogurtsov, are in prison. Many who tried to leave the country—participants in the so-called Leningrad Airplane Affair, Zosimov, Fedorenko and dozens of others—are in detention and in psychiatric prisons, on the illegal charge of treason to their country.

It should be a matter of honor for America to achieve the release of Ukrainian artist Petr Ruban, convicted for preparing a commemorative present—a wooden book with a model of the statute of Liberty—as a gift to the American people in honor of the 200th anniversary of their independence.

Recently the Association of American Scientists and Engineers working in the field of computer technology adopted the decision to end contacts with their colleagues in the USSR if Anatoli Shcharanskiy should be convicted. I expect similar steps in the cases of unjustified rejection of requests by Slepak, Meyman, Gol'fand and many others to emigrate. I consider that steps such as rejection of contacts are justified in the struggle for each individual human life and fate.

Detente is not only the attempt, through establishing contacts, trade, technological and cultural ties, to weaken the threat of universal destruction. It is also the complex, many-sided antagonism of two systems against each other at the basis of which lies the contradiction between totalitarianism and democracy, between violations of human rights and their observance, between the striving to close society and the striving to open it. On the outcome of this struggle depends the convergence of our societies—which is the alternative to the collapse of civilization and to general destruction.

Since the time of the Helsinki Conference, which officially proclaimed this mutual interdependence, the struggle for human

rights has been constantly strengthened. America can be proud that its President proclaimed the defense of human rights as the moral basis for U.S. policy. New forms in the struggle for human rights have arisen in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other countries in Eastern Europe. In Western countries, the ideas of this struggle increasingly penetrate public consciousness, uniting the most varied people, from conservatives to Eurocommunists. A few days ago we heard, with a feeling of profound joy, of the political amnesty in Yugoslavia, the first, to our knowledge, in the history of socialist countries. This daring and humane step is evidence of an irreversible moral victory of the ideology of human rights over the ideology of totalitarianism. Now it is a matter for the governments of other countries—from the USSR to Indonesia!

I am convinced that the AFL-CIO, with its enormous influence upon the internal and international policy of the USA, can become one of the centers which coordinates and directs actions in defense of human rights throughout the world, in defense of our common future. Thank you for your attention. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT MEANY: Now, at this time I'm going to present another delegate from the British Trades Union Congress for an address, Brother Leonard F. Edmondson of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

Brother Edmondson. (Applause.)

LEONARD F. EDMONDSON
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
British Trades Union Congress

Mr. President, fellow trade unionists: It is with extreme pleasure that I convey to you fraternal greetings from the British trade union movement, greetings in the common struggle to surmount many of the common problems which are facing the trade unionists of both countries because, sitting here during this Convention, I have been greatly impressed with the similarity of the problems which are facing us in Britain and the problems which are facing the trade unionists in America. And also the common solution which we are all seeking to surmount these problems, and how it has become abundantly clear to the trade unionists to both sides that we cannot surmount these problems merely by the collective bargaining process with employers, but must go down the road of seeking to influence governments and having introduced the legislation which will lead to the solution to some of the problems and will bring beneficial results to the working class whom we represent.

In Britain at the present time, the burning problem is similar to the one in your country—unemployment and the manner in

which unemployment has been rising. We have more than one and a half million unemployed. I believe that the statistics are more accurate than those which are officially published because we have included within those statistics.

I refer, for instance, to the school children who have been placed in school because they have been placed in school rather than to join the unemployed. Large numbers of married women are receiving Security benefits and, therefore, are included in the statistics of unemployed.

In our country we have at the time of our choosing, a labor government which has been involved in many discussions. It has put in money in an endeavor to create new job creation schemes, work experience schemes, but it is merely tipping the top of the iceberg. The way coping with the problem of unemployment.

We had, therefore, the Trades Union proposals to the government that if there is investment, there must be a reflation of the economy. It must be an expansion of industry, and an increase in productivity if we are to surmount the problem. It is rather farcical, though, when we talk for Economic Cooperation and Development that an industry such as shipbuilding in capacity whilst at the same time the OECD countries are providing financial assistance to create and build shipbuilding in developing countries to compete against the developed countries and, in the process, where the workers will be employed in the right of association, the rights of

In company with some of the unionists I attended an international shipbuilding conference. I attended an international shipbuilding conference with the International Metal Workers Federation. We made representations to the Organization for Economic Development, and made it perfectly clear that we support a reduction in the capacity of the developed countries, making shipbuilding in developing countries whilst the industrialists were providing financial assistance against us and at lower rates of employment.

In our country we have introduced legislation which has proved a benefit to the workers. I refer to the National Employment Service administered through a service known as the