



Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia,
Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia

NewsWatch SPECIAL EDITION September 2006

NCSJ Celebrates 25 Years Of Leadership Honoring Mark B. Levin and Shoshana S. Cardin

On Tuesday, June 13th, NCSJ celebrated Executive Director Mark B. Levin's 25th anniversary with NCSJ, and presented former Chairman Shoshana S. Cardin with its *Torch of Liberty* award. Over 250 dignitaries attended the evening reception, held in the Caucus Room of the U.S. Senate Russell Office Building. Major sponsors included the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities of Russia (KEROOR) and the Russian Jewish Congress.

Attendees included U.S. Senators and Representatives, U.S. and foreign ambassadors and Jewish leaders from the United States and abroad. During the evening, NCSJ leaders past and present, Members of Congress, and activists from throughout the history of the Soviet Jewry movement paid tribute to Levin and Cardin. Renowned performer and activist Theodore Bikel, accompanied by Tamara Brooks on piano, performed songs from the Soviet Jewry movement.

Five former Secretaries of State (Madeleine Albright, James Baker III, Alexander Haig, General Colin Powell, and George Shultz) served as Honorary Co-Chairs for the event. The event's Honorary Committees included U.S. and foreign ambassadors, leaders from NCSJ and other Jewish organizations, and over 100 Members of Congress, including Speaker Dennis Hastert, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, and Minority Leaders Sen. Harry Reid and Rep. Nancy Pelosi.



NCSJ Executive Director Mark Levin (center) with (l.-r.) NCSJ President Joel Schindler, Vice-President Lesley Israel, Chairman Robert Meth and Vice-President Rabbi David Hill (all photos: Ron Sachs/CNP)



(l.-r.) Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) presents the *Torch of Liberty* Award to Shoshana Cardin (Ron Sachs/CNP)

The anniversary event was hosted by NCSJ Chairman Robert J. Meth, M.D., President Joel M. Schindler, Ph. D. and Vice President Lesley Israel.

CARDIN RECEIVES TORCH OF LIBERTY; LEVIN HONORED

Past Chairman Shoshana Cardin received the NCSJ *Torch of Liberty* Award in honor of her work

to bring freedom and security to Jews in the Soviet Union and its successor states. Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) presented the award to Cardin, a life-long Baltimore-area resident. The award includes a 1971 commemorative Israeli coin honoring the Soviet Jewry movement, inscribed "Let My People Go" in Hebrew and English.

Mrs. Cardin has, for decades, played a major role in local, national, and international causes, both Jewish and secular. During her chairmanship of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry between 1989 and 1992, her advocacy on Capitol Hill and with the White House and State Department had an enormous impact on the excellent, high-level relations that NCSJ enjoys today.

NCSJ Vice President Lesley Israel announced that in her honor, NCSJ will designate the senior position in government affairs as the Shoshana S. Cardin Director of Government Relations.

NCSJ Vice President Rabbi David Hill presented Mr. Levin with a signed lithograph depicting the Soviet Union, the United States, and Israel, from painter Arthur Szyk's 1948 *History of Nations* series.

Written tributes to Mr. Levin and Mrs. Cardin poured in from the United States, the former Soviet Union and Israel, including letters from President George W. Bush and from Knesset member and former refusenik Natan Sharansky. The letters will be collected for a special-edition tribute book, to be published by NCSJ this fall.

Following are excerpts from the evening's tributes:

SEN. BARBARA A. MIKULSKI (D-MD) *United States Senate*

Shoshana Cardin [has] been my friend, my advisor and my conscience for more than 25 years." *Continued on page 2*

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"How appropriate that someone who's carried the torch of liberty for so many years will actually receive the *Torch of Liberty Award*.

"I also can't say enough about your Executive Director Mark Levin, who has led this effort for so many years in such a dedicated, duty-driven way.

"We remember the dark days of Communism when you worked to save the Jews of the Soviet Union; [they were] living in fear, persecuted, but they knew they were never alone, because the National Conference on Soviet Jewry was there. You marched, you pounded on tables, you led demonstrations, you walked the halls of Congress and you marched on the Mall. You lobbied Congress and every President, meeting with diplomats from here and around the world, and your labors have certainly borne fruit."

Senator Mikulski recalled a briefing by Cardin before a trip to the Soviet Union, and "taking medicine, taking books, because I, as a United States Congresswoman, carried a diplomatic passport and I would not be searched. And I, like you, felt that I would not be moved [from my support of this cause]."

REP. STENY H. HOYER (D-MD)
Democratic Whip

How pleased I am to have been a friend and coworker of Shoshana Cardin for decades. She has made an impact throughout this country, and indeed throughout the world."

"What is of concern to us is the plight of mankind, wherever mankind may live. No one has pursued that idea, no one has lifted that bright light higher or more brilliantly than the lady that we honor today, Shoshana Cardin – a person of extraordinary depth, compassion, energy and ability.

"Mark [Levin] and I spent literally weeks... working together on individual [refusenik] cases, and Shoshana...was always there to teach about how we could be effective. She was there to, frankly, teach [then-Soviet Premier Mikhail] Gorbachev about the value of human rights, and how his society would be better and...she brought Gorbachev out of the dark shadows...of anti-Semitism and discrimination into a greater awareness.

"My life has been blessed, Shoshana, by being one of your friends and one of your students and one of your coworkers. I am so pleased to join the National Conference, in which

support the cause of religious freedom, the NCSJ has acted effectively and constructively to ensure that the American Jewish community's voice is heard and that the rights of Jews throughout Eurasia are protected."

"Following the break-up of the Soviet Union into 15 independent states, the National Conference's work multiplied dramatically. It must now follow the complex web of laws and practices and developments that affect a million-and-a-half Jews living in the successor states to the Soviet Union.

"On the positive side, we welcome the emergence of hundreds of independent schools

and organizations that are allowing a remarkable renaissance of Jewish culture to take place. The National Conference has sought to provide financial, technical and moral support for their advancement, and I very strongly commend you for this important work.

"On the other hand, while official restrictions aimed specifically at Jews have receded, there's a disturbing upsurge in popular anti-Semitism. Racist and xenophobic political parties have drawn on popular anxiety about weak economies and unstable institutions, pouring forth their venom in the press and encouraging physical threats and

attacks against Jews. In Russia, restrictions on the work of non-governmental organizations may have a particular negative impact on religious freedom.

"The breadth and depth of [Mark Levin's] experience has meant that even as much has changed around the world, the role and importance of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry as a voice for freedom and human rights has not diminished."

SEN. GORDON H. SMITH (R-OR)
United States Senate

What a remarkable thing Mark has done for Soviet Jewry and...in making sure that in

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Shoshana Cardin and House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD)



NCSJ Chairman Robert Meth and Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH)



Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-MD)



Performer and activist Theodore Bikel

you have played such a vital and critical role, in honoring you for what you have done for the Conference, what you have done for our country, and what you have done for mankind. God bless you."

SEN. PAUL S. SARBANES (D-MD)
United States Senate

Throughout those difficult years [of Soviet persecution], and continuing until this very day, the NCSJ has helped to keep human rights high on the U.S. national agenda. Whether by providing information on individual cases...or by advocating legislative and policy changes to

Levin/Cardin, cont'd

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all these new states, the issues of human rights, the issues of anti-Semitism, in combating it where[ever] we find it, have been heard in an American voice through this great organization, in places like the U.S. Senate.”

“[Mark Levin] always stood up on issues of human rights and to fight anti-Semitism...He showed up for other faiths as well, because he understood that...tragically, historically, the Jewish people have always been [the] first [victims of hatred].

“I don't know how to say thanks any better than...by recounting his scholarship, his service, his tenacity, and his pivotal historical role...in making sure the Jewish people, through this organization and through the Congress of the United States...was heard.”

Senator Smith paid tribute to Mr. Levin in the Congressional Record on June 12th.

REP. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH (R-NJ)
Co-Chair, U.S. Helsinki Commission

Congratulations to Mrs. Cardin...you are a true leader in the country and in the world and certainly this recognition is long overdue.”

“NCSJ has done a tremendous job all

these years, but Mark Levin was the one who actually knocked on my door and said ‘Will you help us?’, and it has been a delight and a privilege to serve with him all these 25 years.

“He has done a tremendous job...not just with trips and speaking on behalf of individual refuseniks, but with legislation as well. Whether it be the International Religious Freedom Act [of 1997], whether it be the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act [of 2005]...Mark was right there, helping to craft that legislation.

“Finally, working with Mark on the OSCE meetings on anti-Semitism, first [on] the Parliamentary Assembly...Mark was just a great friend and ally, making sure that we had accurate,

and very important information regarding what is happening in each and every one of the countries of the former Soviet Union.

“Mark, you speak truth to power. When you give us information, we know it's accurate, we know it's timely, and we act upon it, and we do get results, and that's a great reflection of your leadership over the last quarter-century.”

RABBI DAVID HILL
Vice-President, NCSJ

About twenty-five years ago, a young man applied to work for the NCSJ. When asked why he chose NCSJ, his answer was, ‘I want to

deeds, is called *hakorat hatov*, which means to recognize when something good is done, and to simply say, ‘Thank you.’ My dear Mark, you have done so much good for our people with your work, that all of us here and those in the former Soviet Union say, ‘Thank you.’”

DOLORES BEILENSON
Wife of former Rep. Anthony C. Beilenson (D-CA)
Co-Founder, Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry

Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry started in the late 1970s and worked through the very difficult 1980s, until the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early '90s. We worked through the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and our advisor was Mark Levin.”

“We were made up of the wives of Senators and House members, Democrats and Republicans, and our goal was to educate and activate the Congressional wives, for Soviet Jewry, because we were in a position to make a significant difference.

“With Mark's guidance, we were able to meet with Congressional staff. We wrote articles for newspapers and Congressional newsletters; we gave speeches, here and back home in our districts; we had extensive letter writing campaigns; we

sponsored briefings for Senators, Congressmen and their staff here in Washington, and we encouraged more visits to the Soviet Union by Congressional delegations, and their visits to refuseniks.

“Our efforts grew as the years progressed. In fact, over the years we developed into the largest, most successful, most effective Congressional wives group to work on any issue, ever, on Capitol Hill.”

ALEXANDER MASHKEVICH
President, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress

I was born and grew up in the Soviet Union — in Kyrgyzstan — in Central Asia. Believe me,
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(clockwise, with Mark Levin): Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ); Dolores Beilenson and Lesley Israel; Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR). (bottom left, l.-r.): honoree Shoshana Cardin, former President Howard Sachs, and Executive Committee Member Herbert Seif

be part of the march for freedom for our people behind the Iron Curtain, and to be my brother's keeper.' That young man was Mark Levin.”

“Mark is a person who possesses wisdom, compassion, patience, commitment, strength and above all, humility, a rare commodity among leaders of today.

“Mark works 24 hours a day, just like a priest, rabbi or doctor. However, [he is] not like a doctor who is awakened in the middle of the night and tells his patient, ‘Take two aspirin and call me in the morning.’ When Mark gets a call for help, he becomes the master in knowing which door to open. Leaders of many countries call upon Mark to open doors in Washington.

“One of the most important *mitzvot*, good

Levin/Cardin, cont'd

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it's quite difficult to imagine how not simple it was to be a Jew in the Soviet Union. We were under pressure every day."

"You also cannot imagine how we admire these people, who every day put their heart, their soul into helping people who are quite far from them, who live in a different country. All our life, we feel their support. A lot of changes happened...because these people, every day, think about us.

"Today, the situation in these countries is not simple. In some countries — it's strange — but in [some] Muslim countries which are now independent in the former Soviet Union, the situation for Jewish communities is much better.

"For instance, in Kazakhstan, the situation is perfect. President [Nursultan] Nazarbayev supports the Jewish community, and [peoples of] all nations are equal. In Azerbaijan, the situation is very good, because President Aliyev supports the Jewish community.

"When people from Washington, D.C. understand what happens, when they think [about it] every day, it helps a lot. And that is why I am here today to say thank you very much for what you did, what you do, and what you will do for us. It's not so many people who are really ready to put their hand to such a beautiful and good effort."

MARINA FURMAN
Former refusenik

How do you symbolize what the National Conference on Soviet Jewry did for people like us, and what all of you did for refuseniks? I would say that you gave us freedom."

"Most of you were born free. Jews in the Soviet Union didn't have freedom: simple freedom to live, freedom to emigrate, freedom not to be afraid.

"Perhaps it would be like if you had a voice — if a person had a most beautiful magnificent voice. But if that person never sang in public, nobody would know about the voice and what it can do, and that's what freedom was for you. This is what you gave us — you made the voice of freedom heard. You let us join in that freedom, in that voice.

"Mark, I know that at National Conference on Soviet Jewry...you started with very few people singing. They weren't sure how beautiful their voice were, but they sang anyway. And little by little, more people joined in the choir...and now a million Soviet Jews have joined the choir as well. And the way I see it, [my husband] Lev and I and [our daughter] Aliyah, the song of freedom is not going to end any time soon."

RABBI PINCHAS GOLDSCHMIDT
Chief Rabbi of Moscow

Coming from Russia today, I was thinking about the foundations of this great country: the words written on the Liberty Bell [that] proclaim freedom to all the inhabitants of this land; the words from Leviticus, talking about a jubilee; the words which signify, more than



(top, l.-r.) Amb. Kanat Saudabayev (Kazakhstan), Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL), and Alexander Mashkevich; (center) Lev and Marina Furman; (bottom, l.-r.) Joel Schindler, Robert Meth, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt and Mark Levin

anything else, that this great country was founded not by a common cultural heritage, not by a common religious or ethnic heritage, but by common values."

"The lighthouse that reminds this great country of its mission to the world is NCSJ, led

by its Executive Director, Mark Levin.

"I've known from personal experience, especially the last year, the importance of NCSJ...of having this great organization continuing to work for all the Jews and Jewish communities in the FSU countries.

"I think that Mark has the special position in Washington today of being the ambassador of the Jewish community of the United States in Washington regarding post-Soviet Jewry, and as well, the ambassador of all the former Soviet Jewry communities."

MARK B. LEVIN
Executive Director, NCSJ
Honoree

Shoshana Cardin played an instrumental role in my development as a professional and as an activist. I probably would not be standing here as Executive Director without Shoshana's support and guidance. Shoshana, I will be forever grateful for your wisdom and friendship."

"I began my career at a less than auspicious time for NCSJ and the movement. The emigration numbers were dropping to unprecedented lows, there was an increasing number of refuseniks and Prisoners of Zion, and tensions were escalating between the United States and the Soviet Union.

"However, what I learned from the earliest days is that no matter how bad the situation became for the Jews in the Soviet Union, there was always a group of committed and courageous men and women willing to sacrifice everything — and for many of them, they did make a sacrifice of everything — and they were doing this simply to be able to make aliyah to Israel or to be able to identify themselves as Jews.

"We've come a long way since those dark days, and as I look across this room tonight and see so many of my friends and colleagues from that time, it makes me even more proud of the leadership role played by NCSJ to secure the freedom of more than one million [former Soviet] Jews now living in Israel and elsewhere today.

"I am also proud of the transition NCSJ has made from being an organization that focused on securing the right of emigration to... supporting the development of Jewish communities throughout the former Soviet Union.

"I, like many of my generation, wanted to make a difference, to make the world a better place. I also wanted to do something that would benefit the Jewish people. I never wanted my children to ask me the same question about the plight of millions of Jews in another part of the world the way I asked my parents about...the Holocaust.

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Board Meeting, cont'd

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modernizations are key to Ukraine's development, but cited education reform – specifically ethnic tolerance education – as the most important modernization by far.



(l.-r.) NCSJ President Joel Schindler; Chairman Robert Meth; Ambassador Dr. Oleh Shamshur (Ukraine); and Executive Director Mark Levin

Ukraine, he said, is one of the few countries in the region that has tried to keep inter-ethnic problems to a minimum. President Yushchenko takes each case of anti-semitism and xenophobia very seriously, and personally – his father was an Auschwitz survivor. Shamshur highlighted his government's action against MAUP, a major university in Ukraine that foments anti-semitism and bigotry. The government has already shut down five of its six affiliates, and the director of the sixth is under criminal investigation.

Shamshur said 2005 marked a fresh start to U.S.-Ukraine political dialogue. "It was [NCSJ's] hand that opened up a new door in...relations with the U.S."

He hopes to see government and non-governmental organizations establish exchange programs, targeting young people, to further enhance bilateral relations.



NCSJ Vice President Rabbi David Hill asks a question of the panelists

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FSU ANTI-SEMITISM

NCSJ Executive Director Mark Levin introduced and led a panel discussion on anti-Semitism in the post-Soviet region. The

panelists were Dr. Gregg Rickman (U.S. State Department), Leonid Levin (Belarus) and Joseph Zissels (Ukraine).

Dr. Gregg Rickman

Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, U.S. State Department

Dr. Gregg Rickman discussed methods to fight the spread of anti-Semitism, and what his position at the Department of State entails. Rickman was sworn in on May 22, 2006 as the first U.S. Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism under the Global Anti-Semitism Reduction Act, legislation sponsored by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Sen. George V. Voinovich (R-OH) in late 2004. Rickman had previously directed the Senate Banking Committee's investigation of Swiss banks' role in managing the accounts of Nazi Germany and of Holocaust victims.

Rickman said his position exemplifies the Bush administration's commitment to combating anti-Semitism. The most important tool in fighting the battle against intolerance is

education and knowledge of the diversity of societies. "Our work," Rickman said, "is to find solutions to this age-old problem...before it strikes Jews anywhere else in the world."

His job, he said, under Amb. Edward O'Donnell's Office of Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, is to speak about and to monitor anti-Semitism. He and his staff analyze the facts of an event, and create and carry out programs based on those analyses.

In response to audience questions, Rickman assessed the change in anti-Semitism in the FSU since the overthrow of Communism. He welcomed the sizable commitments from governments in the Russian and Baltic regions to combat anti-Semitism, but noted a dire need for tolerance education in early childhood. "Hatred," he said, "is not an inborn trait but a learned one."

Leonid Levin

President, Association of Belarus Jewish Organizations and Communities

From the first days of the Belarus Jewish community's revival and reemergence, Levin said, NCSJ, and especially Mark Levin, has given it special care. Although Belarus doesn't particularly suffer from anti-Semitism, the community deserves this special consideration, Levin said, in view of its history as a center of European Jewry, and the devastating losses it suffered during the Holocaust, when 800,000 Jews perished, 90 percent of all Jews in Belarus.

Levin voiced concern, however, that international criticism of Belarusian President



Mark Levin and Special Envoy Gregg Rickman

Alexander Lukashenka isolates Belarus Jews from the worldwide Jewish community. He encouraged Jewish organizations to visit Belarus, promising quality Jewish activity and discussions comparable to other FSU countries. The community, he said, sees its future together with international Jewish organizations, with NCSJ

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Board Meeting, cont'd

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the first among equals.

At the close of his talk, Levin presented the book *Cities of Belarus* to Mark Levin.

Joseph Zissels

Ukrainian Jewish Community

Joseph Zissels, General Council Chairman for the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, congratulated and thanked Mark Levin, who he said demonstrates in his work and his life that



(l.-r.) Joseph Zissels and Leonid Levin

Jews are one family, responsible for each other. He recalled being in the Soviet camps in the 1980s and knowing that he was not alone, that the Soviet Jewry movement and Mark Levin in America were with him.

Over the past 15 years, he said, the incidence of anti-Semitism in Ukraine has decreased annually. In elections, anti-Semitic parties receive fewer votes; Jews serve in the government, and fewer anti-Semitic newspapers are published.

Anti-Semitism still flourishes in Ukraine because the government doesn't have the capacity to fight it. Right now, he explained, government is weak in all respects, not just on anti-Semitism. During the last year-and-a-half under Yushchenko, however, he thinks that more has been done to fight anti-Semitism than in the previous 10 years combined.

CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND COMMITMENTS

Lesley Weiss, NCSJ Director of Community Services and Cultural Affairs, introduced and led a panel discussion on "Communities in Action". The panelists were Allen Kronstadt (Washington, D.C.), Sheryl Adler (Boston), and Dr. Stephen Kutner (Atlanta/Jewish Healthcare International).

NCSJ, Weiss said, develops community-to-community partnerships, such as synagogue adoption and youth exchanges.

NCSJ also connects American Federations, Jewish community relations councils, national agencies and synagogues with FSU communities. NCSJ provides access to U.S. and FSU government officials, up-to-the-minute political briefings, and visa assistance.

Washington-Moscow Connection

Allen Kronstadt, NCSJ Executive Committee member and the incoming chair of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington's Washington-Moscow Connection Committee, outlined the Federation's goals for this new project. The Federation established the committee in 2005 to connect

Washington-area Jews, 10,000 of whom are Russian-speaking, to Moscow's Jewish community, by developing relationships between the communities' Jewish leaders.

Washington and Moscow look to share their experiences and learn from what works best in their respective communities. Projects include a student exchange program and a young professionals exchange program.

Boston-Dnepropetrovsk Kehillah Project

Sheryl Adler, Director of International Partnerships at the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Boston discussed the Dnepropetrovsk Kehillah Project (DKP), which connects and involves the Boston Jewish community with the historic revitalization of Jewish life in Dnepropetrovsk,



"Communities in Action" panel (l.-r.): Lesley Weiss; Allen Kronstadt; Stephen Kutner; Sheryl Adler

Ukraine. DKP helps one-to-one connections and exchange projects to flourish, and provides humanitarian assistance.

Initially, members of the Boston community found no central Jewish community in Dnepropetrovsk. No kosher facilities existed and only one of 40 synagogues had survived the Soviet era intact. Since then, the Boston JCRC has assisted the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish



(l.-r.) Ed Robin; NCSJ Chairman Robert Meth; Board of Governors member Sandra Goldberg

community with medical programs, care for the elderly and for special needs children, micro-enterprise finance for women, and educational initiatives, including Hillel student exchanges in partnership with NCSJ.

In Boston, the JCRC partners with local Jewish and social service agencies to bring needed expertise as well as volunteer leadership to the DKP programs. In Dnepropetrovsk, Chief Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki provides critical leadership to help these DKP partnerships succeed.

A main focus of DKP is pediatric and women's health care. DKP has helped physicians from both cities to exchange information and expertise, and has developed the Boston-Dnepropetrovsk Center for Women's Health, a clinic that now serves thousands, including non-Jews.

DKP consults closely with NCSJ on an

ongoing basis on a range of issues related to Ukraine politics and fighting anti-Semitism.

Jewish Healthcare Initiatives

Dr. Stephen Kutner, Medical Director of Jewish Healthcare International (JHI)

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"With...the freeing of millions of Jews from the Soviet Union, I think I can say to my children that our community did respond, and we did not forget, and the words 'Never Again' really do mean something. I hope the next 25 years are as productive and meaningful as the first 25 years."

SHOSHANA S. CARDIN
Former Chairman, NCSJ
Honoree

I accept [this tribute] on behalf of those who preceded me: those who were brave enough in the Sixties to raise their voices; those who were brave enough to be [protesting] in front of the Soviet Embassy...those who were vocal enough to express their concern [after] having seen, having visited and having spoken with those who were repressed, refuseniks and non-refuseniks."

"I accept this in the memory of my mentor, Ambassador Morris Abram, *olav hashalom*...He helped me understand that the most important thing was that I be true to my mission, and true to my task, and everything else would fall into place.

"Most of all, I want to thank my family for being here...I thank you so much, for [with] your support and your love...and in fact, with the support of the total Jewish community, I was able to carry out [my] responsibilities. I thank you for this magnificent tribute, which I treasure, but accept in the name of all who labored for Soviet Jewry."



(l.-r.) NCSJ President Joel Schindler; former Chairman Harold Luks; Executive Director Mark Levin; former Chairmen Shoshana Cardin, Rabbi Mark Staitman and Denis Braham; current Chairman Robert Meth (also attending, not pictured, former Chairman Richard Wexler).

NCSJ wishes to thank the major sponsors of the 25th Anniversary Program:
Congress of Jewish Religious Communities of Russia (KEROOR)
Arcady Gaydamak, President
Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC) Alexander Mashkevich, President
Russian Jewish Congress Vyacheslav (Moshe) Kantor, President
The Shoshana S. Cardin Family Foundation
Lesley and Fred Israel
Nuri Katz, CEO Century 21: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan

Board Meeting, cont'd

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and NCSJ Executive Committee member, detailed JHI's background and his involvement.

During his first trip to Israel, Kutner volunteered as a general practitioner and ophthalmologist. Working alongside his Israeli counterparts, he saw how a lack of health care infrastructure hurt the Jewish

community's well-being, especially in the poorer communities of Northern and Southern Israel. Thus, JHI was established in 1989 to provide basic infrastructure, like medical technology and medical education, for Israel's less fortunate.

Shortly after its establishment, in reaction to medical needs of the influx of Russian Jews, Kutner decided JHI should branch out to the FSU, particularly Moldova and Ukraine.

To grow and expand JHI, Kutner said, he

works to "develop connections with the highest levels [of leadership] of each community" in Israel and in the FSU. "NCSJ," he said, "has added a new dimension to our work [absent] in the past. We [both] work to take care of the people, and this is purely *tikun olam*."

Soviet Jewry Archive Project

Former NCSJ Executive Director Jerry Goodman reported on

the progress of the American Jewish Historical Society's project to create an archive of the American Soviet Jewry movement.

AJHS received a \$300,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to archive materials from the FSU.

Oral histories particularly need to be gathered; little has been recorded so far. As important and influential FSU leaders of the movement die, histories, archives and documents are lost. AJHS urgently needs these personal documents and stories.



(back, l.-r.) NCSJ President Joel Schindler; Board Member Dolores Beilenson; Nuri Katz; Chairman Robert Meth; Russian Jewish Congress Executive Vice President Sol Bukingolts; NCSJ Vice President Alexander Smukler. (front, l.-r.) Leonid Levin; Executive Director Mark Levin; Joseph Zissels

NCSJ Staff Updates



L. Bronipolsky

Svetlana (Lana) Bronipolsky joined NCSJ as a Program Assistant in November 2005.

She graduated from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. in 2004, with a B.S. in Economics, a B.A. in International Affairs, and a Minor in Statistics. Prior to joining NCSJ, she interned for the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and for then-Senator Robert Smith (R-NH).

Ms. Bronipolsky and her family emigrated from Ukraine in 1991. She speaks Russian fluently.

NCSJ Spring Board of Governors Meeting

An array of senior government and community officials spoke at the Spring Board of Governors meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2006, providing updates on community outreach in the former Soviet Union (FSU) and the shifting political landscapes of Russia and Ukraine. Speakers at the meeting, at NCSJ's headquarters in Washington, D.C., included Dr. Thomas Graham of the National Security Council, Dr. Oleh Shamshur, Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States, and Dr. Gregg Rickman, U.S. Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF U.S.-RUSSIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

Thomas Graham, National Security Council

Dr. Thomas Graham is the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian Affairs on the National Security Council. He has worked at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow as head of the political/internal unit and as acting Political Counselor, on Russian and Soviet affairs for the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, and as a policy

assistant in the Department of Defense office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy.

During his talk, Dr. Graham discussed the benefits and challenges of the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship. He noted areas of cooperation, including nuclear security, non-proliferation, civil nuclear energy, counter-



(l.-r.) NCSJ President Joel M. Schindler, Ph.D.; Executive Director Mark B. Levin; NSC advisor Tom Graham, Ph.D.; Russian Jewish Congress Executive Vice President Sol Bukingolts; and Chairman Robert J. Meth, M.D. at the meeting in Washington, D.C. (all photos: Ron Sachs/CNP)

terrorism, and the promise of closer energy cooperation. The primary areas of concern, he

said, include Russian policies towards its neighbors and internal developments in Russia that mark backsliding on democracy.

TOLERANCE EDUCATION IS A HIGH PRIORITY

H.E. Dr. Oleh Shamshur, Embassy of Ukraine

Dr. Oleh Shamshur has been Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States since March 2006. His previous Foreign Ministry posts include Deputy Chairman for Nationalities and Migration and Deputy Foreign Minister.

Dr. Shamshur described Ukraine's political evolution as an unexpected result of democratic revolution. "Freedom and democracy sprout from the rockiest ground of totalitarian and semi-totalitarian regimes," said Shamshur. Ukraine, he explained, has only recently acquired free press, speech and elections, and rule of law and rising women's standards. Ukraine is trying to form a coalition democratic government, which is difficult. Currently, Ukraine is trying to boost international trade, and domestic energy and agriculture industries, through administrative, judicial, and tax reforms, and by fighting corruption.

Shamshur said these political and economic

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