

Should we refuse to trade or talk with the USSR until they improve their human rights and family reunification record? Many of you will be familiar with the Jackson-Vanik amendment in the United States which links U.S. trade with the Soviet Union to the release of Soviet Jews wishing to emigrate. The Jackson-Vanik amendment has been in effect since 1974 and there has been little discernible impact on Soviet performance to date. Even so, it has been suggested by some people that a similar condition be placed on Canada-USSR trade.

In our view market forces will be much more effective in bringing about change in the USSR than any legislated link might be. The Soviet Union knows that its human rights record remains an obstacle to improved commercial relations between us. The current trade imbalance is heavily in our favour, and the Soviet Union is anxious to increase exports to Canada. They are becoming more aware that their human rights record stops Canadian consumers from buying Soviet products, and that the best way to change that image is to allow more families to be reunited in the West and to cease the repression suffered by those who remain in the USSR.

Negotiations will get underway early next year on facilitating human contacts between Canada and the Soviet Union. These will include measures for the management and review of family reunification questions. Reaching agreement will not be easy. And even if an agreement can be achieved, the litmus test will be whether there is any real progress by the Soviet Union on the issues involved. The Soviet Government issued a decree a few days ago about its emigration policies. We will be watching very closely to see whether this leads to progress in resolving cases of interest to Canada. One disappointing feature is the absence of any specific reference to the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

In our view, the policy that will have the greatest chance of success is to maintain firm and committed pressure on the Soviet Union to improve its human rights performance. You can help us by continuing your pressure on Soviet authorities to allow more Jews to leave the Soviet Union, by calling on the USSR to ease repression on those who stay behind, and by publicizing abuses of human rights in the USSR. In so doing, you will be helping to ensure that this