



# UCSJ QUARTERLY REPORT

Union of Councils for Soviet Jews • 1411 K Street, NW, Suite 402 • Washington, D.C. 20005 • (202) 393-4117

JUNE 1985



*Prisoner of Conscience*  
Yosef Berenshtein

## INCIDENCE OF BRUTALITY RISES—

### YOSEF BERENSHTEIN BLINDED

Anti-Semitism is not new to Russia, and in recent months there has been a shocking resurgence of anti-Jewish propaganda and violence in the Soviet Union. The so-called "Anti-Zionist Committee" has issued repugnant and vicious press releases accusing the Jews of collaborating with the Nazis, and a program on Leningrad television, "Hirelings and Accomplices," featured well-known Refuseniks, denouncing them as anti-social and parasitical. Lately, there has been an increasing number of cases of state-sanctioned violence against Refuseniks, within and without the Soviet prison system.

On December 11, Kiev Refusenik Yosef Berenshtein, a 47-year-old engineer, was sentenced to four years for "resisting the police." The next day, he was attacked, either by guards or by criminal inmates provoked by guards, and blinded in his right eye. The nerves were severed and bones around the eye broken. His left eye was injured as well, with subsequent reports confirming that he is almost completely blind.

An unsuspecting Mrs. Berenshtein arrived at the prison four days later. She was not permitted to see her husband, but was shown his letter. The day after, she was able to speak to him for 20 minutes in the presence of guards. The medical and investigative chiefs of the prison asserted to her that Yosef had acted crazily and blinded himself.

After seeing her husband with one eye bleeding and the other covered, Mrs. Berenshtein left the prison in shock, telling friends in Israel by phone, "The day before

(Turn to BERENSHTEIN, page 7)

## RABBIS ARRESTED FOR DEMONSTRATING AT SOVIET EMBASSY

Twenty-five Washington area rabbis were arrested in front of the Soviet Embassy on May 7, as they protested the brutal crackdown on Hebrew teachers and Jewish cultural activists in the USSR and the diminishing numbers of Soviet Jews allowed to emigrate in recent years.

Standing at the embassy gates, the rabbis donned their prayer shawls and carried six Torahs, each representing a Refusenik arrested for teaching Hebrew. The police allowed them to finish their prayers, make a brief statement and sound shofars, but when they refused to disperse, arrested them for conducting an illegal demonstration.

"Our intention is to encourage others to follow our example of taking a strong stand against this silent Holocaust," stated Rabbi David Oler, one of those arrested.

Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan, president of the Washington Board of Rabbis, said the demonstration was necessary "to call attention to the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union." Following Cahan's statement, police searched and handcuffed the rabbis and led them to paddy wagons. The rabbis were charged with demonstrating within 500 feet of an embassy and released on their own recognizance. They will be appearing in court as this issue goes to press.

(Turn to RABBIS, page 3)



Police lead Rabbis to paddy wagons

## UCSJ ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since December 1, Mark Epstein has been serving as the Executive Director of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. He came to UCSJ from a position as staff consultant and scholar in residence at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute. Prior to that he was the Issues Director for the presidential campaign of Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC), and the Senator's special assistant for foreign affairs.

Epstein, who has a PhD in History, has lived and traveled extensively in Europe and the Middle East, has published works related to Jewish history and has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including Humboldt and Fulbright Fellowships. \*



(l to r) U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Samuel Lewis, Knesset Member Geula Cohen, and UCSJ Advisory Board Chairperson Lynn Singer

## LICSJ AND UCSJ HONOR MEMBERS OF KNESSET AT BI-ANNUAL MEETING IN ISRAEL

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews and the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry held a conference for one week in Israel to reassess the present climate for Soviet Jews. In an intensive seminar in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, panels of leading scientists, academicians, lawyers, engineers and political scientists joined with members of the LICSJ and UCSJ to analyze the past fifteen years of emigration, reunification and repatriation of Jews.

The UCSJ and LICSJ chose this meeting to honor Geula Cohen and Uzi Barom, members of the Knesset, who are in the forefront of Israeli officials in the struggle for Soviet Jews. American Ambassador to Israel, Samuel Lewis, joined with the honorees at a reception held in the Chagal Hall of the Knesset. Mr. Lewis reiterated the U.S. commitment to Human Rights for Soviet Jews. They also chose the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Accords to recognize former Prisoner of Conscience Joseph Mendelevich, for his long and difficult fight to reach freedom and live in the land of his choice, the State of Israel. \*

## UCSJ ANNUAL MEETING

October 20-22, 1985  
Washington, D.C.  
Hold the date!

## UCSJ WELCOMES TWO NEW COUNCILS

Two new councils have joined UCSJ: in Vermont, the Burlington Action Committee for Soviet Jews; and in San Antonio, Texas, The Alamo Council. The Burlington Action Committee has already made itself visible locally through press releases, bike-a-thons, Simchat Torah marches and letter writing campaigns. The Alamo Council is starting up and actively recruiting new members. If your local group would like to form a council, contact the national office. \*

## UCSJ ADOPTS MAJOR STRATEGY DOCUMENT

The UCSJ has issued a major statement of policy describing its official position on the current situation of Soviet Jews and recommending policy guidelines. Its purpose is to delineate clearly to the Administration and the public, the views of the UCSJ, addressing U.S.-Soviet negotiations and trade agreements and their implications for POCs, Refuseniks and freedom of religion for Jews in the USSR.

The *Statement of Policy on the Emigration and Treatment of Soviet Jews* encourages the U.S. to continue a policy of evaluating the USSR on specific actions, to ascertain the extent of Soviet commitment to promoting human rights.

Timed to coincide with the meetings of experts assessing the Helsinki process and the plans for high level administration officials meeting with their Soviet counterparts, the document was delivered to Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige. It was also distributed at the May 1985 Ottawa Conference, the first in a series of meetings studying the application of the human rights provisions contained in the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

The UCSJ policy statement reiterates firm and continuing support of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which allows conferring most-favored nation (MFN) trade status only to those countries which demonstrate adequate performance in the area of human rights. They, in turn, are entitled to reduced tariff rates on goods exported to the United States. In response to substantial continuing performance on the part of the Soviet Union, the UCSJ could support a waiver under the terms of the Jackson-Vanik bill. The document defines "substantial continuing performance" by listing systematically specific actions on the

part of the USSR which could demonstrate their compliance with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Final Act of the Helsinki Accords* and the *International Covenants on Human Rights*. Although the USSR has agreed to abide by the documents, the *State Department Report on Human Rights* for 1984 states that, "Soviet performance in the realm of human rights fails to meet accepted international standards."

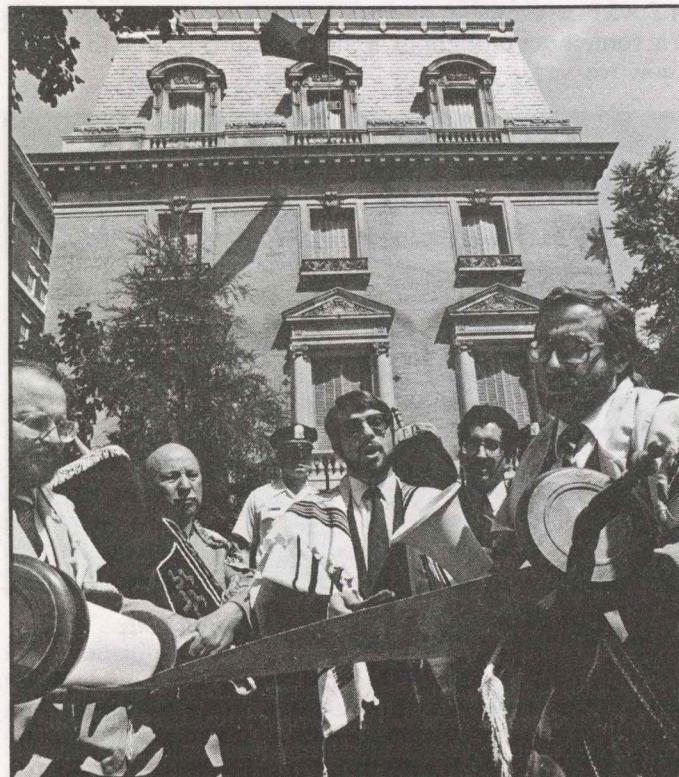
The issues addressed in the UCSJ's policy statement include the release and emigration of POCs, former POCs and long-term Refuseniks. Soviet authorities are also called upon to cease punitive actions against persons seeking to emigrate, and the publication and distribution of anti-Semitic propaganda. In addition, it calls on the USSR to stop intercepting mail, and to allow Soviet Jews to practice their religion and study their cultural heritage.

The UCSJ position paper is available to UCSJ members from the UCSJ National Office. \*

## RABBIS (continued from page 1)

The protest was coordinated with similar demonstrations at the Soviet consulates in New York City and San Francisco, and is part of a continuing effort by Jewish religious leaders to call attention to the worsening plight of Soviet Jews.

Morey Schapira, president of the UCSJ, hailed these coordinated acts of peaceful civil disobedience as a sign of renewed determination in the American Jewish community to keep the issue of Soviet Jewry in the minds of Soviet officials. "We are heartened to see this coordinated, grassroots demonstration of support from rabbis, the traditional leaders of the Jewish community. As teachers, they have set an example for our community by showing us that we cannot stand idly by while the Soviets continue their cruel persecution of our people." \*



Rabbis reading from Torah in front of Soviet Embassy



Protestors demonstrating opposite Soviet Mission to the U.N. in New York

## MASS ARREST OF RABBIS AT UNITED NATIONS

On March 5, nearly 200 protesters, including 120 rabbis, were peacefully arrested as part of a demonstration in front of the Soviet mission to the United Nations in New York City.

The rally was organized on behalf of Soviet Jews to protest the Kremlin's persecution of Jewish prisoners and unofficial Hebrew teachers, the 98% reduction in emigration, and the pervasive and growing anti-Semitic campaign in the Soviet press. Among the sponsors of "Operation Redemption," as the rally was called, were the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) and the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry (LICSJ).

"There is a spiritual genocide in Russia today aimed at Jewish people," charged Rabbi Abraham Weiss, Chairman of the SSSJ. He insisted, "We are telling the Kremlin: no more 'business as usual' while persecution takes place. We are saying to the White House: we want action now." The rally was aimed to coincide with the visit to the U.S. of the Soviet delegation headed by Vladimir Shcherbitzky, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party and most powerful official of the Ukraine.

Carrying placards and dressed in prayer shawls, the rabbis participated in an historical event—a mass arrest unprecedented in the 300 years of American Jewish history. Also arrested were Lynn Singer, Executive Director of LICSJ and, as an act of black-Jewish solidarity, Roy Innis, Director of the Congress of Racial Equality. The protesters were charged with disorderly conduct and released after they were booked by police.

Following the arrests, Rabbi Weiss and SSSJ National Director Jacob Birnbaum sent letters to President Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz, Commerce Secretary Baldrige and leading Congressional figures, urging the Administration to "inform Moscow that the U.S. desires to enter into a substantive negotiation on the emigration and cultural rights of Soviet Jews and expects to elevate the question of human rights and Soviet Jewry to the rank of a serious item on the U.S.-Soviet agenda."

Rabbi Weiss vowed that the Jewish community will not stop from staging mass protests at Soviet offices until positive results are achieved in the struggle "toward redemption of our brethren from their imposed darkness." \*



*Congressional Briefing—January 1985*

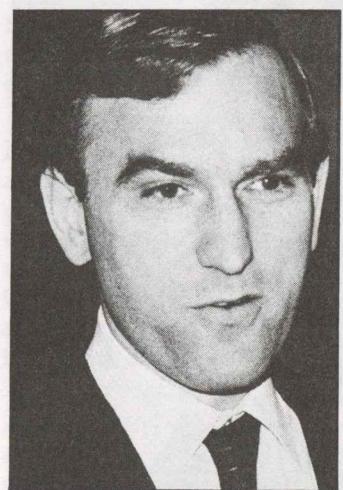
## CONGRESSMEN PLEDGE SUPPORT FOR SOVIET JEWS IN 99TH CONGRESS

More than 250 Members of Congress and their staffs attended the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews' Biennial Congressional Briefing on January 23. The hosts for the evening were Senator Gary Hart (D-CO), Senator John Heinz (R-PA), Congressman Dante Fascell (D-FL) and Congressman Jack Kemp (R-NY). Stuart Eizenstat, the UCSJ legal counsel, moderated the briefing, welcoming members of the 99th Congress and providing them with up-to-date information about Soviet Jewry. Attendees also heard statements from Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams and Avital Scharansky, wife of Prisoner of Conscience Anatoly Scharansky.

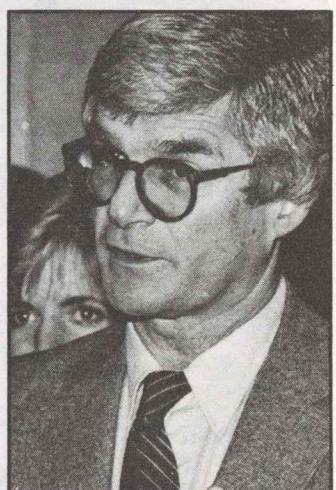
Congressman Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA) received an award for having sponsored the UCSJ Congressional Call to Conscience in 1984. The Call to Conscience, which began officially in 1976, enables Members of Congress to speak out on behalf of human rights in the Soviet Union. Statements about the cases of individual Soviet Jews are placed in the Congressional Record by members who "adopt" a particular individual or family. In 1985 Senator Rudy Boschwitz (R-MN) and Congressman Sander Levin (D-MI) will co-chair the Call to Conscience.

Below are excerpts from statements made by some of the participants at the Congressional Briefing:

Honorable ELLIOTT ABRAMS, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, "We have raised the issue [of Soviet Jewry], as have members of Congress, in every contact we have had with high levels of Soviet government, and not just as a pro forma matter. It is something brought in at the beginning so that they know we care...."



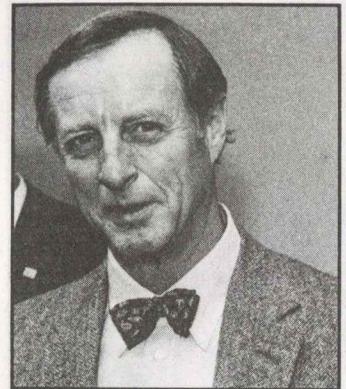
*The Hon. Elliott Abrams,  
Assistant Secretary of State*



*Sen. Rudy Boschwitz  
(R-MN)*

Senator RUDY BOSCHWITZ (R-MN), "In the past there have been weekly statements; hopefully we will increase it to a daily basis...."

Representative LAWRENCE COUGHLIN (R-PA), "I can assure you that the commitment that exists in the Congress remains strong, firm and public...."



*Rep. Lawrence Coughlin  
(R-PA)*



*UCSJ Counsel,  
Stuart Eizenstat*

UCSJ Legal Counsel, STUART EIZENSTAT, "Although no one [can] predict the outcome of the [arms] negotiations, the mere fact that they are occurring gives some justified reason to believe they may lead to greater levels of emigration...."

Representative DANTE FASCELL (D-FL), "We are the conscience of the world. We raise our voices. We provide some kind of forum, some spotlight, some hope to the people who are suffering under the [latest] anti-Semitic drive and anti-Jewish effort in the Soviet Union...."

Representative BENJAMIN A. GILMAN (R-NY), "The message I bring back from the many Refuseniks we met on this past visit to Moscow is please keep up your efforts; please shout long and hard...."

Senator TOM HARKIN (D-IO), "The issue of human rights knows no racial boundaries, no religious boundaries, no ethnic boundaries, no national boundaries. It is a universal problem and it requires universal solutions...."

Senator JOHN HEINZ (R-PA), "[We cannot], because there seems to be some progress in arms control, let the Soviet government off the hook when it comes to the Prisoners of Conscience, the Refuseniks, and the oppressed minorities, in specific, Soviet Jews...."

Representative JACK KEMP (R-NY), "Not only as great patriots in love with what America stands for, but if America is truly to be what it was meant to be in the beginning, then it is vital that we keep a voice in the West of those men and women who long for the day in which they can join us in democratic freedoms...."

Representative JOHN MILLER (R-WA), "I think it is particularly important at this time, during the period of negotiations with the Soviet Union, that we and the Soviets understand that while we want a world without nuclear war, while we want arms reductions, we also want human rights and we also want freedom...."

Representative CHARLES R. RANGEL (D-NY), "Those Jews who are held hostage in the Soviet Union really serve as a symbol of all of the people that are held hostage when human rights have been denied...."

AVITAL SCHARANSKY, "Anatoly said at his trial eight years ago in the face of being sentenced to thirteen years in prison, that no chains, no prisons, can stop our people's wish to be free, to live in Israel. And now, eight years later, we hear the voices of young Refuseniks, a new generation, who break the fears and publicly say that we want to reunify with our large family, with our nation in Israel, with our land, with our Jerusalem...."

Senator PAUL SIMON (D-IL), "The best possible public relations [the Soviet Union] could have is simply to let people emigrate. If the policy of free emigration were to be followed by the Soviet Union, [they] would benefit, the U.S. would benefit, Israel would benefit, everyone would benefit."



*Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI)*

Representative SANDER LEVIN (D-MI), "When the cause is so overwhelming, when the need is so great, our determination is to take every single step, even if it is small, until every Jew within the Soviet Union and everyone else who is persecuted is allowed to leave the Soviet Union...."



## SOVIET JEWRY VIGIL ON CAPITOL HILL

Members of Congress gathered with nearly 200 rabbis from across the nation on the steps of the U.S. Capitol on March 20. The participants, who came together to join in a fast and prayer vigil dramatizing the struggle for the free emigration of Soviet Jews, were led by Representative Robert Mrazek (D-NY).

Mrazek noted that the freedom issue is particularly timely for Soviet Jewry. "At a time when leaders of the Soviet Union and the U.S. are meeting in Geneva and when a new leader has emerged in the Soviet Union," Mrazek declared, "it seems an appropriate juncture to raise the consciousness of the Congress and the nation to the ongoing struggles of Soviet Jews."

Co-sponsors of the fast and prayer vigil were Representatives John Porter (R-IL), Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Jack Kemp (R-NY). A strong and consistent supporter of Soviet Jews, Congressman Kemp expressed a note of optimism, stating, "This can be the year in which we can see a mass exodus if we are resolved to see through the relationship which is beginning to emerge between the U.S. and the Soviet Union." ★



Rabbi Ira Korinow shaking hands with President Reagan. Looking on are Rabbi Alexander Shapiro (l), President, Rabbinical Assembly, and Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut (r), President, Central Conference of American Rabbis.

## RABBIS MEET WITH REAGAN

In a meeting with President Reagan on March 20, a group of rabbis, including Ira Korinow of the UCSJ, urged the President to remember the worsening plight of Soviet Jews. The timely discussion took place at the White House only nine days after Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in the Soviet Union.

"With a change in the Kremlin leadership and the new Geneva arms negotiations, we felt it important to explain our concern to the President now," stressed Rabbi Korinow. "We sought the meeting with President Reagan to express our deep and profound concern about the situation of Soviet Jews." The seven rabbis, ranging from Orthodox to Reform, did not ask that Reagan specifically link Soviet Jewry with arms control talks, but did ask the President to keep the issue in the forefront of any negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Calling for an "increase in the extremely small numbers of Jews who were permitted to emigrate recently," Rabbi Korinow said the group emphasized to the President the issue must be addressed soon. "We hope that the administration will continue to make clear to the Soviets that we await an improvement in the conditions for Soviet Jews in the near future," he added.

The rabbinical group, expressing concern over the brutal treatment of prisoners and especially of Hebrew teachers, found that the President was aware of the most recent series of arrests of unofficial Hebrew teachers in the USSR.

The stated purpose of the rabbis' meeting with the President was to relay the message that "the American Jewish community will not rest until every possible effort is exerted on behalf of freedom for Soviet Jews." \*



Tamara Tretyakova Livshits and Mark Livshits. Tamara was on the 26th day of her hunger strike when this photo was taken.

## ILLINOIS COURT AWARDS SIMON LEVIN CUSTODY

On April 22, Lake County, Illinois Associate Circuit Judge Alphonse Witt entered an order granting custody of Mark Livshits to his father, Simon Levin, of Deerfield, Illinois.

With the consent of Levin's wife, Tamara Livshits, a petition had been filed on behalf of Simon Levin seeking permanent custody of his child, who lives in Moscow with his mother. Levin left the Soviet Union in 1978. His wife was unable to leave at that time as she was in the advanced stages of pregnancy.

Citing the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act, the court stated that the decision is in the best interest of the minor child.

The court further stated that Tamara, while she is a fit parent, is unable to provide care comparable to that which Simon could provide, as she has been unemployed for 4½ years and has recently begun a hunger strike. Over the past six years, Tamara has requested permission to emigrate and has been denied twelve times. (The legal limit for applying is twice a year.)

UCSJ arranged to have the order delivered to the Soviet Embassy with the message that the International Red Cross has agreed to make arrangements for Mark to leave the Soviet Union and accompany him on his trip to the U.S.

Write to Tamara Tretyakova and Mark Livshits with your support at:

USSR  
Moscow 121986  
Seslavinskaya Street  
Apt. 28

Write to the Soviet Embassy to inquire when they will comply with the court order:

Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin  
Embassy of the USSR  
1 Andrei Sakharov Plaza  
Washington, D.C. 20036

## BERENSHTEIN (continued from page 1)

Yosef's trial I saw a strong man, and now I see a man half dead. He may not ever be able to see again, but I will try to keep him alive." The KGB had previously threatened to have their daughter Yana raped and disfigured if she would not cease her Jewish activity.

Mrs. Berenshtain called on the prosecutor to have her husband immediately hospitalized and released from prison because of his health, and to collect medical evidence of his condition as the basis of a trial against the perpetrators of the attack.

Berenshtain had surgery on one eye, rendering it immobile. A resultant infection is in danger of spreading to his nasal cavity and brain.

Soviet authorities, despite appeals from Berenshtain's wife and world reaction, refused to relent. Instead of allowing him to be hospitalized in Leningrad, he was relocated to a labor camp in Dniepropetrovsk. The medical committee that examined him determined that he did not need to be hospitalized as he was in "satisfactory health."

The UCSJ, member councils and concerned individuals in the West pressed Soviet authorities to allow Berenshtain to be hospitalized in the Hospital of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Leningrad. Berenshtain was finally admitted to the hospital in May, but as of this date, there is no information available on whether any of his sight has been restored.

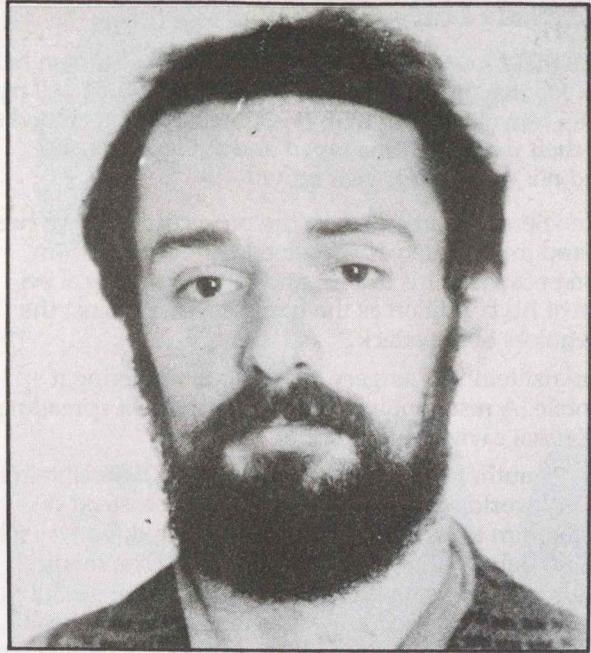
Other recent acts of anti-Jewish violence include:

- The severe beating of unofficial Jewish educator Yakov Mesh of Odessa as he was arrested by ten policemen. Although he is a former boxer, he had not resisted. His internal injuries were so severe the authorities released him from jail, evidently fearing he would die in prison. He journeyed to Moscow to seek medical help, but hospitals there refused to admit him.
- The heavy beating of Dr. Evgeny Lein of Leningrad, a former Prisoner of Conscience, by three KGB thugs. One agent put a knife to his throat and threatened to slit it. Lein, deaf in one ear, was deliberately beaten on his good one, and had to seek medical aid.
- The beating of Prisoner of Conscience Zachar Zunshain the day he arrived in the labor camp. He wrote his wife that he was kicked so hard "in the kidneys, chest and face that almost every breath brings me chest pains and I cannot stand." \*

## SEARCHING FOR TWINS

When she left the USSR with her family in December 1984, Ilana Prutkov's address book was confiscated by Soviet authorities. The book contained all the addresses of the Bat Mitzvah twins that had written to her when she lived in Odessa. Having settled in Detroit, Ilana would like to re-establish contact with her former twins. For her address, contact:

Detroit Soviet Jewry Committee of the JCC  
163 Madison Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48226  
(313) 962-1880



Prisoner of Conscience Alexander Kholmiansky

## KHOLMIANSKY AND NEPOMNIASHCHY SENTENCED

Alexander Kholmiansky, a 34-year-old computer engineer from Moscow, was sentenced on February 1 to eighteen months in a labor camp for the charge of "hooliganism." The court in Viru, Estonia, also fined Kholmiansky 100 rubles, or about \$120 for "mailbox tampering."

In his final statement to the court, Kholmiansky maintained his innocence and charged that the purpose of his July 25 arrest was "to put me in prison for as long as possible, to isolate me from my friends and to deprive me of the possibility to teach the Jewish language and the fundamentals of Jewish culture."

Kholmiansky is a prominent Moscow Hebrew teacher with students in a number of Soviet cities. His arrest was seen as part of the systematic crackdown on Jewish study groups and their teachers which has continued over the past year.

Kholmiansky's case also marks the first time the KGB planted a gun in the apartment of a Jewish activist in Moscow. Following his arrest, the KGB searched his apartment, which he shared with his parents, and allegedly "found" a loaded gun and bullets. However, the pistol was not registered and the operational investigation of the evidence was unable to establish to whom the pistol belonged.

Kholmiansky appealed to the court "to put an end to the criminal prosecution against me and to bring to trial all those who, in violation of the law, tried to create artificial proof of my guilt or who were accomplices of the criminals or who gave false testimony." He continued that he had "no doubt that this whole case is nothing other than a new link in the chain of persecution of the long-suffering Jewish people and its culture."

Upon his arrival on March 25, at the forced labor camp in Sverdlovsk, Kholmiansky requested placement in a section for foreigners, since he has been granted Israeli citizenship. Authorities refused. His parents, in an effort to find more information, journeyed to Sverdlovsk in mid-April. The deputy chief of the prison camp initially pleaded ignorance, but finally conceded that Kholmiansky was hospitalized within the prison, and in an "acceptable" state of health. At the time of his sudden departure on the arduous prisoners' trip to Sverdlovsk, Kholmiansky weighed less than 90 pounds. May 13th marked the eighth month of his hunger strike.

Mark Nepomniashchy, a 53-year-old activist from Odessa, was sentenced on February 5 to three years in a labor camp. The harsh sentence was punishment for his alleged "anti-Soviet slander" when, following the arrest last year of Yakov Levin, Nepomniashchy made a desperate appeal to the West on his behalf. Levin, a 25-year-old Hebrew teacher, was picked up by police just days before his scheduled wedding to Nepomniashchy's daughter, Yehudit. Levin was sentenced in November to three years in a labor camp.

The main piece of evidence used in the trial was an open letter from Nepomniashchy "to the people and government of Israel and to all people of good will," written before he was arrested.

In an effort to register their concern, the London 35s, UCSJ's affiliate in Great Britain, placed a phone call to the prosecutor's office in Odessa. According to the prosecutor, who claimed to have gotten his information from the investigator, Nepomniashchy was found to be guilty as charged. The dialogue took place several days before the trial.

A request for an appeal was reviewed and rejected by a Kiev court. On March 26th a report of the trial, entitled "Bankruptcy" was broadcast on the local television station. \*

## UPDATES ON REFUSENIKS

**LAZAR RULYOV** has been given an internal trial within his prison camp and summarily sentenced to a six-month spell in the notorious "black hole" within the precincts of the labor camp. According to his distraught parents, Lazar is receiving a restricted diet every other day. The reason for this additional punishment is not known. Write to the Camp Commandant, demanding freedom for this innocent man, so that he and his wife Svetlana, in Leningrad, can leave the Soviet Union to join their family, the Kagans, in Israel.

USSR  
G. Zh. D. Gorkovskaya Oblast  
Stantsiya BURYEPOLOM  
P. Ya. YZ-62/4 M  
Camp Commandant

**VLADIMIR LIFSHITZ** went on a 20-day hunger strike to protest the authorities confiscating, opening, reading and holding his mail. To protest this violation of Soviet law and Soviet-signed international postal agreements, send letters and telegrams of support to:

USSR  
Leningrad 197022  
Apt. 139  
Kirovsky Pr. 64/5  
Vladimir Lifshitz

**DAN SHAPIRO**, a 23-year-old unofficial Moscow Jewish educator, was arrested on January 22 by the KGB and charged with "anti-Soviet slander." Shapiro's home had been searched last October when the secret police accused him and other private teachers of using drugs in Jewish rituals. His mother was beaten and the mezuzah ripped from his doorpost. In mid-December, Shapiro was sentenced to ten days' imprisonment after he stood vigil outside the trial of fellow Moscow educator Yuli Edelshtein.

Following his arrest, Shapiro was given a "mental examination" in prison and his family fears authorities were gathering information for a psychological profile. No meetings have been allowed.

Because of his serious heart condition, Shapiro's parents and fiancee, Alla Khazankina, wrote to the Procurator General asking that he be released during the investigation. The request was denied because of the "gravity of the charges."

To protest the false charges under which Dan Shapiro was arrested, write to the authorities at the following address:

USSR  
Moscow 103009  
15a Pushkinskaya Street  
Alexander Rekunkov  
Procurator General of the USSR

**JOSEF BEGUN** was placed on trial at the Perm labor camp on April 3rd on a charge of "undisciplined behavior." On April 7th he was sent to Chistopol prison for a sentence of three years to be served concurrently with the term he is now serving.

His wife Inna and son Boris have stopped their hunger strikes; Boris after 45 days. More than 50 of Begun's friends and sympathizers in Moscow, Leningrad and Riga continue to join in a rotational hunger strike.

Boris and Inna have not yet been able to make contact with Iosef. Write to lend your support:

USSR  
G. Moscow  
Uchr. 5110/1 UE  
Begin, Iosef

USSR  
RSFSR  
Moscow 129243  
Raketny Blvd. 11/1-15  
Inna and Boris Begun

## NEWSBREAK

**Stanislav Zubko** was released from labor camp in May. He had been sentenced to four years in 1981 for illegal possession of arms and drugs.

**Alexander Kholmiansky** went off his hunger strike in May at the urging of his parents. They are trying to arrange a visit with him.



Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-CO)



Ida Nudel

## SCHROEDER HEARS FROM SOVIET JEW IDA NUDEL

Soviet Prisoner of Conscience Ida Nudel longed for her freedom from the Soviet Union in a letter received on January 23, in the Denver office of U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-CO).

The 54-year-old Jewish economist has been trying to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel since 1971. Her efforts included displaying a banner from her apartment window that read "KGB give me my visa." For that, she was arrested in 1978, convicted and exiled to Siberia for four years. She now lives outside of Moscow.

Schroeder and Nudel met in Moscow shortly before her exile and since then, the two have maintained correspondence. Schroeder adopted Nudel as her Prisoner of Conscience in 1979 and has worked for her release through the Soviet Embassy and the U.S. Department of State. \*

**LET THE PRESIDENT KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THESE ISSUES ARE TO YOU.**

**CALL THE WHITE HOUSE COMMENT LINE TO REGISTER YOUR CONCERN FOR SOVIET JEWS.**

**(202) 456-7639**

Between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.  
Eastern Time

**—or—**

Write to:

**President Reagan**  
**The White House**  
**Washington, D.C. 20500**

## 1984—A YEAR OF CONTINUING CRACKDOWNS

In a recent State Department Report entitled, "The Soviet Crackdown on Jewish Cultural Activists" the United States government stated that, "in late July, 1984, the Soviet authorities began a major, sustained crackdown on Hebrew teachers and other Jewish cultural activists." The State Department indicated that "There can be no doubt that the campaign has been consciously directed by Soviet authorities to discredit and destroy the revival of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. The methods used—arrests, beatings, the planting of evidence and the use of the media to slander Refusenik activists—have created a renewed atmosphere of crisis in the Soviet Jewish community and heightened international concern about what may next lie in store for Soviet Jewry. The U.S. Government deplores this accelerating campaign in the strongest possible terms, calls on the Soviet authorities to end it immediately and urges them to live up to the commitments to respect individual human rights that they have solemnly undertaken in a whole series of international accords, from the Universal Declaration on Human Rights through the Helsinki Final Act and the Concluding Document agreed to in 1983 at Madrid."

The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and UCSJ compiled a list of some of the incidents which occurred in the latter part of 1984; the names listed are almost all of unofficial Jewish teachers:

**July 25, 1984**—ALEXANDER KHOLMIANSKY of Moscow was jailed for "hooliganism." On August 29th, while imprisoned, his home was raided by the KGB, and a gun and bullets planted by them were "discovered." Thus, the charge became more serious.

**July 27th**—*Pravda Vostoka* again attacked young RABBI MOSHE ABRAMOV of Samarkand, who was sentenced in January to three years for "malicious hooliganism."

**August 10th**—A week before his scheduled marriage to fellow educator Yehudit Nepomniashchy, YAKOV LEVIN of Odessa was arrested for "anti-Soviet slander," after his house was raided and Jewish books and materials seized. He had refused to testify against another Odessa teacher, YAKOV MESH. A package with religious items for Levin was later brought to the prison. Officials refused to pass it on saying, "this is not a synagogue." Citing connections with Levin, on October 17th the KGB raided the homes of ARON MUNBLIT in Kishinev, MOISEY LIEBERMAN in Bendery and POLINA GRIM in Tiraspol, all cities in Moldavia.

**August 21st**—The home of ALEXANDER KOGAN of Kishinev was searched; police seized a bible. An official of the prosecutor's office told Kogan the book was "anti-Soviet literature."

**August 23rd**—Inna Begun, wife of DR. IOSEF BEGUN, wrote to Chernenko that her husband was put in solitary in the Perm labor camp for six months for discussing the Holocaust with other inmates. His request for a prayer-book denied, Dr. Begun went on a 60-day hunger strike and was force-fed, then hospitalized.

**August 28th**—YAKOV GORODETSKY of Leningrad was sentenced to 60 days of "corrective labor."

**September 4th**—The KGB arrested YULI EDELSHTEIN of Moscow and searched his apartment. They "discovered" what they termed "drugs" in a matchbox planted in his children's room. Three days later, they returned to confiscate more Jewish items. His wife Tatiana was told by officials, "good Jews smell perfume; bad Jews sniff drugs."

**September 5th**—Police seized Jewish books and tape recordings and Israeli postcards from the homes of Odessa activists YAKOV MESH, VALERY PEVZNER and ALEXANDER KUSHNIR, even stripping Kushnir of the Star of David he wore around his neck, which had been sent to him from Israel by his mother.

**September 19th**—Over 10 women from Vilnius, including violinist CARMELA RAIZ, asked that the city's mikva (ritual bath), shut since World War II, be reopened because of the growing number of newly-observant Jews. Their appeal was rejected.

**September 20th**—Secret police raided the homes of DAN SHAPIRO and INNA BROKHINA of Moscow to "search for drugs." When Shapiro's mother asked to see a search warrant she was beaten. KGB men ripped the *mezuzah* from his doorpost, and demanded he pry open his *tefilin* (phylacteries) to look for "drugs." Agents did not even wait for Brokhina to open her door and broke it down. No "drugs" were found, but Bibles and many Jewish books were taken. Jews were told by officials that "foreigners come to the USSR to corrupt Jewish youth with medieval drug rituals."

**September 27th**—Prisoner of Conscience ZACHAR ZUNSHAIN arrived in a labor camp near Irkutsk. "Upon my arrival," he wrote his wife Tatiana in Riga, "I was beaten and kicked with their boots all over my body—in my kidneys, the chest and face." He asked his wife for a Jewish calendar. When his mother learned of his condition, she died of a heart attack.

**October 6th**—When MARK and ZHINYA MIKHLIN of Kiev sat down to break their Yom Kippur fast, several men forced their way into their home, ordering Mark to remove his skullcap and hand over their Hebrew books. They left after being given 10 volumes.

**October 12th**—The official "Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public" held a Moscow press conference, charging that the Israeli secret service Mossad "supports the Red Brigades," the Italian terrorist group, and that Zionists collaborated with the Nazis in exterminating Jews.

**October 12th**—In Moscow to plead for Yakov Levin, his daughter's fiance, MARK NEPOMNIASHCHY was arrested for "anti-Soviet slander." At the same time, his Odessa home was searched by police and Jewish material seized.

**October 16th**—YAKOV (YAN) MESH of Odessa was beaten by 10 policemen, then arrested for "resisting the police" and "refusing to testify against Yakov Levin." Eight co-workers witnessed the attack and signed a letter in his defense; they were subsequently visited by the KGB and retracted their statement.

**October 20th**—As the Sabbath ended, 42 Moscow Jews began a rotating hunger strike for KHOLMIANSKY, EDELSHTEIN and other jailed unofficial Jewish educators. The protest fast spread to 170 Jews in 10 cities, with urgent

requests for sympathy strikes and actions in the free world.

**October**—LEV ELBERT of Kiev was officially warned that his Sabbath service is a ritual and he must obtain a permit. A year before, in prison, Elbert was falsely accused of possessing drugs. Intensive Western protests forced the dropping of the charge.

**October 30th**—MIKHAIL VINAVER of Leningrad was summoned to the KGB, who accused his wife EVGENIA of being part of a Jewish terror ring that had threatened to blow up the famed Hermitage Museum.

**November 1st**—MIKHAIL ELMAN of Leningrad was taken to police station #50 and interrogated and beaten severely by the KGB. Two days later, secret police beat him badly again, saying, "We're fed up with Jews. We'll stop any religious activity. It's a matter of hours of freedom left for YAKOV GORODETSKY. We'll crush ELIMELECH RACHLIN" (the last two are also unofficial teachers). On the Sabbath, November 10th, the KGB tried to break into Elman's home during the *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) of his infant son.

**November 12th**—YOSEF BERENSHTEIN of Kiev was arrested during a trip to Novograd-Volensk which he undertook to clear his aunt of charges that she was speculating in tombstones. The family now believes that this denunciation may well have been a KGB plot to lure him to his aunt's remote town for the arrest.

**November 16th**—During the second day of Levin's trial, Leningrad activists MIKHAIL TZYVIN, BORIS YELCHIN and POLINA GORODETSKY stood outside the court-

house. Tzyvin walked away for a smoke, and was immediately arrested, then sentenced to 15 days.

**November 20th**—YAKOV LEVIN, 26-year-old unofficial Hebrew teacher of Odessa, was sentenced to three years for "anti-Soviet slander."

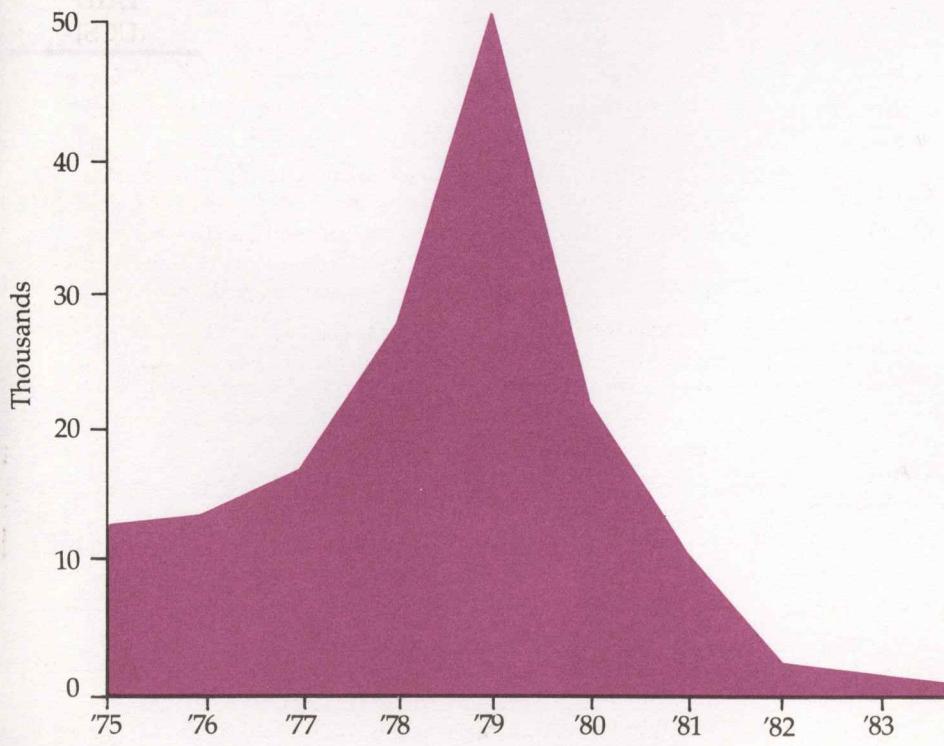
**November 28th**—INNA BEGUN, the wife of the imprisoned IOSEF BEGUN was informed by an official at the Department of Health in charge of Labor colonies that her husband had been examined by a doctor and that there was no cause for concern for his health. However, he also told her that Iosef was punished for breaches of camp regulations and for refusing to work. "Perhaps he refused to work on the Sabbath?" Inna asked. But the official declined to answer. He also refused to tell Inna whether Iosef is still being held in the prison area of the camp.

**December 11th**—Forty-seven-year-old design engineer and Jewish activist YOSEF BERENSHTEIN was sentenced to four years in a labor camp for resisting arrest according to Section 182 of the Ukrainian Code. The trial room was crowded with Ukrainians who yelled in one voice, "Beat the Jew."

**December 12th**—Thirty-eight-year-old NADEZHDA FRADKOVA was sentenced to two years in prison for "parasitism." The charge previously carried a maximum one-year sentence, but was changed as part of the new laws cracking down on Refuseniks.

**December 19th**—YULI EDELSHTEIN, a prominent Moscow Hebrew teacher, was sentenced to three years in prison camp for the charge of "illegal drug trafficking." \*

## A DECADE OF JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE USSR



### EMIGRATION TOTALS

1975	13,221
1976	14,261
1977	16,736
1978	28,864
1979	51,320
1980	21,471
1981	9,447
1982	2,688
1983	1,315
1984	896

### EMIGRATION FIGURES: 1985

January	61
February	88
March	97
April	166

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