

# soviet jewry report

Cincinnati Council for Soviet Jews

Winter 1987/1988



Dorina Partisky, carrying a photo of her father Alexander, in Washington. Sandy Spinner is standing next to Dorina.



Elie Wiesel and Tanya Zunshine renew their friendship in Cincinnati.

## ZUNSHINES COME TO CININNATI

Where were you one year ago? Were you mailing soap to then Prisoner-of-Conscience Zachar Zunshine? At the time, prison authorities had refused to give Zachar soap. So...we in Cincinnati spearheaded a campaign in the United States and in Leningrad to bombard the prison officials with soap.

What a difference a year makes! Since then, Zachar has left prison and he and Tanya, at last, emigrated from the Soviet Union. Simchat Torah brought a special treat as Tanya and Zachar visited Cincinnati. During the course of a busy week--and they attended services at Rockdale, their adoptive Temple, and shared in the celebration of Simchat Torah and the consecration of youngsters beginning Rockdale's religious school. On Saturday night John Cobey and Jan Frankel hosted a reception for Tanya and Zachar where they were able to meet with Board members of CCSJ. Zachar and Tanya spoke about their experiences, Zachar's imprisonment, and how activity in the United States helps the Refuseniks. Sunday brought a special reunion for Tanya with Elie Wiesel who was also in Cincinnati. Elie Wiesel had spent the previous Simchat Torah in Moscow. There he met Tanya who was worried about Zachar; they spent an afternoon talking together. This time they were able to share the joy of Zachar's release from the Labor Camp and Tanya and Zachar's new life outside the Soviet Union.

Speaking to Board members of Council Tanya and Zachar emphasized the importance of contact with the West. Tanya cited the account of a visit to Zachar while he was in the Labor Camp. Many times she had been denied the opportunity to meet with Zachar. After two years of this, Tanya went to the camp with a plan. Friends in the United States knew that she had gone to visit Zachar. If her meeting with Zachar was denied once again, Tanya would stage a sit in strike in the procurator's office. News about this refusal would trigger phone calls --to Tanya in the procurator's office-- several friends from the United States. Once the visit was denied, the phone calls began. Tanya could see the fear on their faces. As she explained,

They did not know what to do... They were not high enough officials to make such an important decision as to take Zachar out of the punishment cell.... So they were begging me: "We shall make this decision, but not just now --in a week." I told them, "O.K. You are free to make the decision in two weeks, but I am waiting for this decision here."

It happened that in a day they were forced to make such a decision.... The officials are very sensitive about pressure, especially the pressure they will personally receive....

Tanya added that telephone calls are especially important because it enables people to react immediately as happened when she was sitting in the office in the camp and people were calling.

Both Tanya and Zachar added the importance of trying. Zachar noted his surprise when he was called out of the punishment cell in the prison to meet his lawyer --and the defender turned out to be Tanya! They were able to meet in the privacy allowed a prisoner and his lawyer. Wives met with husbands under supervision at the prison. Had Tanya not requested the opportunity to represent Zachar, this would not have been possible.

Zachar, likewise, never stopped trying. His clothing disappeared after he reached the Labor Camp in the Gulag. So he filed a case against the Labour Camp chief for 440 rubles for the missing clothing. Much to his surprise, eight months later he received the money. Zachar sent this money to Tanya. At the time, she was threatened by the KGB for not having a job. Tanya was able to respond to the threat with the statement, "My husband [in the Labor Camp] is supporting me!"

Neither Zachar nor Tanya stopped trying. It is because of their indomitable spirits that, upon completion of his prison term, OYIR granted them permission to emigrate. But their efforts do not end there. Tanya is responsible for the creation of the International Physicians Group. Originally formed to monitor the health of prisoners who were subjected to considerable abuse, now that most of the prisoners have been freed the Chicago-based group sees to the needs of the Refusenik community.

Both Tanya and Zachar are quite firm that it is pressure from the United States which will help. Phone calls --to keep informed and to let Soviet officials know that certain actions will not be tolerated-- are a vital means of applying this pressure. In addition, they add that pressure must be put to bear to have the Emigration Law which took force in January, 1987, repealed. This law is a stumbling block since it makes it considerably more difficult even to **apply** to leave.

Their courage is infectious. We must continue to keep informed and to speak out.



Tanya and Zachar Zunshine

URGENT

CCSJ is a 100% volunteer organization. No one receives a salary. We are committed to remaining that way because it enables **every penny** of CCSJ's income to go to programming.

So what do we want? A volunteer!

Office skills are necessary: typing and word-processing. The volunteer will take responsibility for any one (or more) of the following:

- filing, updating, or copying biographies
- transcribing phone calls and preparing mailings
- answering inquiries/correspondence

Minimum of 2 half days a week appreciated.

Call: Sandra Spinner, (513) 221-7134



SOVIET PHYSICIANS VISIT CINCINNATI  
GREETED BY SANDY SPINNER

On September 30 members of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War visited Cincinnati and spoke at Cincinnati Council, Good Samaritan Hospital and the University of Cincinnati. During the question-and-answer session following the program at U.C. Sandy Spinner, Director of CCSJ, approached the microphone. After a short speech welcoming the Soviets in the spirit of peace and friendship, she introduced herself and went on to say:

Therefore, in the name of Glasnost and in the spirit of the common cause you espouse with us, I request that you carry home the attached information and bring your good offices to bear on behalf of the following medical cases:

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Benjamin Charney and family   | Moscow    |
| Yuri Cherniak and family      | Moscow    |
| Lilia Friedman and family     | Leningrad |
| Galina Lifshitz and family    | Moscow    |
| Alexander Paritsky and family | Kharkov   |
| Fanya Terlitsky and family    | Moscow    |
| Ilya Vaizblit and family      | Moscow    |
| Galina and Roald Zelochonok   | Leningrad |

As physicians, and in the cause of humanitarianism, your intervention would certainly be viewed as adding to the spirit of trust and cooperation which you seek to develop.

Following this there was a round of applause from the audience. Somewhat surprised, the Soviets promised to deliver the list to the appropriate authorities when they returned home. American representatives assured Sandy that they would follow up to see that this was in fact done.

We will also follow up!

AS WE GO TO PRESS, PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE HAS BEEN GRANTED TO THE VAIZBLITS AND FRIEDMANS.

DORINA PARITSKY VISITS CINCINNATI

The timing of the Regan-Gorbachev Summit Talks brought 21-year-old Dorina Paritsky to the United States in early December. Dorina, who was the sole member of her family to emigrate to Israel from Kharkov, USSR, last September, made pleas to American Jews and elected officials to work for the release of her parents and sister. Members of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (our parent organization) introduced Dorina to influential Congresspeople such as Paritsky-supporter Senator Edward Kennedy.

Dorina's four-day visit to Cincinnati shortly after the mass rally in Washington held a great deal of significance for local Council members. For over six years Council has followed the circumstances of her father's arrest, incarceration, and attempts to obtain exit visas to Israel where his brother lives. Alexander has been in close touch with Cincinnati through letters and phone calls, as Council tries to make his case more prominent in this country. Despite Dorina's release, Alexander, his wife, and younger daughter were again notified on December 2nd that they could not leave because he knows state secrets.

Dorina spoke at Golf Manor Synagogue, whose congregants have "adopted" the Paritsky family, and to CCSJ's Board members at the Hillel Jewish Student Center on December 9th. [Television crews from WCPO-TV 9 and WKRC-TV 12 filmed and interviewed Dorina for the news.] She presented a videotaped interview with her parents to draw her audiences closer to her family with personal contact, facts, and additional insights.

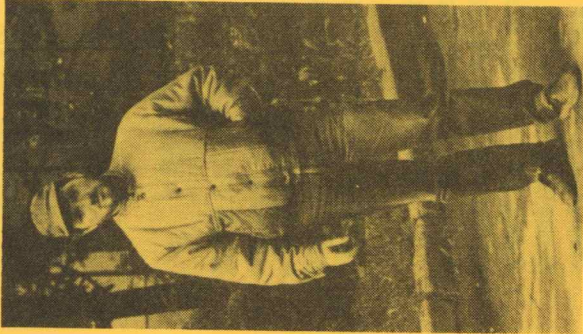
Alexander's arrest in 1981 stemmed from his activities related to his Jewish culture and identity. In his hometown of Kharkov in the Ukraine he tried to have a monument erected to the memory of Jews who perished during the Holocaust. Paritsky also worked to establish a Jewish University for refusenik students which would be a branch of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For these acts he was sentenced to three years labor in a Siberian gulag. Dorina remembers visiting him there and barely recognizing him. Alexander still bears physical and emotional scars from his internment. He cannot practice his profession as an oceanographer, nor can his wife work as an engineer. They have held a variety of menial jobs to support themselves over the years, and now work together as boiler stokers.

Dorina stressed that her parents are ordinary, non-political people who are being severely victimized. Jews in America were urged to write to Gorbachev and demand the release of the Paritskys. Under the present climate, a mass appeal on their behalf can make a difference in gaining their freedom.

CCSJ WISHES TO THANK RABBI DAVID INDICH AND GOLF MANOR SYNAGOGUE  
WHOSE GENEROSITY HELPED BRING DORINA TO CINCINNATI.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Paritsky Family  
Tankopiya 19/2, Apt. 48  
Kharkov  
Ukrainian SSR, USSR



Alexander Chudnovskaya

The Chudnovskaya children



Sofia Chudnovskaya with her two children

## APPEAL

Yesterday I sent photos and telegrams to the USSR-USA TV Bridge\*. In these telegrams I told Soviet Deputies and American Congressmen and I asked to give the text of this telegram to American conference. The text follows:

I am the mother of two babies and I appeal to good Soviet deputies and American congressmen for justice and liberty. It is nonsense to talk about human rights without mentioning the mother of two babies who is refused to leave for Israel together with her husband because of some secrecy which never existed. She is subjected to a psychological experiment since her husband has got permission to leave and she hasn't. Somebody had decided to put a hard choice for us: family or repatriation and to see what the Jews would do now. At this time we again make our choice for repatriation in the hope of reuniting one day in Israel. If the basic human rights violation will not stop, then in December our family will exist only in marriage license. Please, either help us to settle this problem before USSR-USA TV Bridge or include it in your teleconference and invite our family to take part in it.

--Sofia Chudnovskaya

[This appeal was received directly from Sofia Chudnovskaya over the telephone during a phone call to the Soviet Union.]

\*ABC TELEVISION TELEBRIDGE BROADCAST WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME SOVIET HOSTED BY PETER JENNINGS.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We make regular telephone calls to the Soviet Union to speak with refuseniks and to learn about changes in their individual situations. Through these calls we are able to reach out to new refusenik families who have requested our help. Sofia Chudnovskaya was one such case.

## LATE-BREAKING GOOD NEWS

When Sofia's husband Alexander arrived in Israel on December 14, after making the painful decision to leave his family behind and to try to help them from Israel, he learned that his wife and two young sons had been given permission to emigrate.

You can help. Long distance telephone calls enable each of us to keep in touch with family and friends. In this country, long distance is quite reasonable. But calls to the Soviet Union are more expensive. Please, help Council pay for the rapidly increasing phone bills by contributing 10% of the cost of your long distance telephone bills to CCSJ.

\* \* \* \* \*

I WISH TO HELP CCSJ

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ (10% of my past three months long-distance phone bill or other contribution)

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO CCSJ, 2615 CLIFTON AVENUE, CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220

**Thanks for your help.**

## BAR AND BAT MITZVAH TWINNINGS

In 1987 there were a total of 46 twinnings through CCSJ. Twelve of these were from out of state. Other states that we serviced were Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina, and Louisiana.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah twinnings since the last **Soviet Jewry Report**:

|                      |                 |                |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Kerri Ann Abrams     | Andrea Amber    | Benjamin Cohen |
| Allyson Beth Fish    | Rachel Gantz    | Joel Herzig    |
| Daniel Robert Larson | Tiffani Lemberg | Brian Peerless |
| Steven Pereira       | Tara Smith      | Gayle Warm     |

We already have ten twinnings for 1988:

|                   |              |               |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Karri Clark       | Elisa Gallon | Eric Gallon   |
| Vivian Lasse      | Scott Lyons  | Jody Peerless |
| Daniel Perlmutter | Gail Pinales | Alan Roth     |
| Adam Schwartzman  |              |               |

Since the stepup in emigrations, CCSJ has begun notifying past twinnings when their adopted Russian families have been allowed to leave. If your twin's family has been fortunate enough to emigrate, please consider adopting another family. CCSJ will be happy to provide the name of family whose struggle has not ended.

Is there a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in your future? Would you like to share this special occasion with a youngster who cannot celebrate in a formal ceremony? To arrange for a Soviet twin, please contact CCSJ at 2615 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220.



Michael Resnikov, Michael Rabkin, and Sergei Aronov.

## A VISIT WITH A TWIN

I don't think I shall ever forget the week I spent with my son, Michael, in the Soviet Union. Michael and I made the trip together in order for him to meet his Bar Mitzvah twin, Sergei Aronov, of Moscow. It was to be a learning experience; we were going to transform the symbolism of the twinning program into the reality of two Jewish boys meeting and sharing and becoming friends.

What we learned was probably far more than we bargained for. We were detained upon arrival at the Leningrad airport for more than nine hours. We were searched, interrogated, separated from one another, intimidated. What had we done? We had brought in Hebrew texts, Jewish magazines, Jewish art books. Do you know that there is a customs official who knows just enough Hebrew to test tourists on their Hebrew proficiency? Presumably, if one can read Hebrew one can keep his Hebrew books. Although we "passed" the test, the books and many other items were confiscated and never returned. Michael and I, through this ordeal, learned also about the feeling of powerlessness that our refusenik friends must feel in dealing with the Soviet system. We were detained nine hours -- not nine years, as many of our new friends had been. It is a completely arbitrary system, one that has no logic, no sense. It is utterly impossible to communicate with the functionaries in this arbitrary system -- not because we do not speak Russian but because we do not speak the same language of "human rights."

Despite the horrors of the entry procedures, Michael and I enjoyed the "freedom" to travel inside the country. Our first visit was to the Consulate in Leningrad. We gave the Consul a complete report of our ordeal. She helped us to regain our composure and assured us that whatever we did could only help the refuseniks. In fact, making problems at the airport helped to underline the strength of our movement for freedom and human rights.

Michael and I visited with many refusenik families in Leningrad and Moscow. We celebrated Simchat Torah at the Synagogue in Leningrad, where we saw thousands of Jews gathered in the street, in the courtyard and in the Synagogue dancing and singing and praying together.

The reason for our visit -- to meet Michael's twin -- was finally realized on our last day in the USSR. Sergei and his father, Valerie, met us at the Metro station. And as seems to be the case with all such meetings, the greeting was immediately warm and affectionate. The boys began chatting non-stop (in English) as we continued our ride on the Metro. We spent the day together. Michael and Sergei and the children of another refusenik family played outside while the parents and I talked and learned about one another. As the day ended, and we were walking back to the Metro with them, I observed that had we been together at home, Michael would have asked, "Mom -- can Sergei sleep over?" Two boys -- playing, talking, laughing -- what good friends they could be.

We have been home for a month now. But we are not the same people we were a month ago. We have learned first hand what it means to be deprived of freedom. We have seen what people will risk in order to secure their freedom. Bar Mitzvah -- becoming a "man" -- means being recognized by the congregation as ready to assume responsibility. I believe that Michael understands very well what is expected of him as a Jewish young man, ready to become Bar Mitzvah. I believe that he knows the importance of taking a stand, speaking out for a cause, becoming involved. Michael's Bar Mitzvah twin is not a "symbol" -- he is Sergei, a friend, who is not free. They speak on the phone, they write letters, and one day they will play together again. But until that day, and until the day when all Jews are free, Michael and I will continue to speak out, to fulfill the mitzvah of one human being helping another.

BARBARA RABKIN

## HAVE YOU REMEMBERED TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Chanukah celebrates the victory of the weak against the mighty. My contribution to CCSJ can help Jews in the Soviet Union in their present-day struggle to survive. I have enclosed a tax-deductible contribution of:

( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \$100 ( ) \$50 ( ) \$25

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: CINCINNATI COUNCIL FOR SOVIET JEWS, 2615 CLIFTON AVENUE, CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Cincinnati Council for Soviet Jews holds monthly meetings. These meetings are open to our membership and we strongly encourage all to attend. Meetings are held at the Rose Warner House/Hillel Jewish Student Center, 2615 Clifton Avenue in Clifton, at 7:30 p.m. Call for date and time (221-7134).

Cincinnati Council for Soviet Jews  
2615 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

(513) 221-7134

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