



# daily news bulletin

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Tuesday, January 20, 1976

No. 13

## PRESS GROUPS PLEDGE TO FIGHT CABINET CENSORSHIP REGULATION

By David Landau

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Most of the criticism centers on the fact that this move by the government is the first ever into the realm of political censorship. The critics argue that it will tarnish Israel's democratic reputation and will not secure the secrecy of state communications as the government intends. The only way to do that, the critics argue, is to plug leaks at source. Otherwise they will continue to dribble out--if not through the local press, then through foreign media publishing stories with overseas datelines to skirt Israeli censorship.

The Cabinet's draft regulations provide that information on secret communications between Israel and foreign governments and secret meetings between officials of Israel and of countries which have no diplomatic relations with Israel is now to be censorable. Transmission of such information can incur a jail term of up to 15 years and publication of it up to seven years.

The editors' committee said they would ask to appear before the Knesset committee to argue their case. This incipient political censorship, their statement said, would have grave repercussions for Israel at home and abroad. The Journalists Association (the professional union) also condemned the measures in strong terms and pledged to fight against them.

## Charge Government Gagging Press

Eric Silver of "The Guardian," chairman of the Foreign Press Association, also protested "in the strongest possible terms." He warned, "This violation of the freedom of the press is a serious threat to Israel's democratic reputation." The chairman of the Press Council, Prof. Nathan Rotenstreich, also attacked the proposed legislation saying it would do more harm than any conceivable advantage it might achieve.

Editorial writers also blasted the government's action. The largest paper, Maariv, whose recent revelation of a message from President Ford upbraiding Premier Yitzhak Rabin had triggered the new measures, headlined its editorial today, "Gagging." The editorial stated: "Yesterday the government raised its hand--folishly and hastily--against the bastion of Israel's democratic freedom--the press."

Maariv added that the decision exposed the government's abysmal loss of control, and warned that the censorship would now extend to wide areas of foreign policy, areas covering basic issues such as Israel's future borders, its economic progress and foreign aid.

## CABINET MOVES TO CRACK-DOWN ON PROTECTION-EXTORTION RACKETS

By Tuvia Mendelson

JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The Cabinet agreed yesterday to allocate extra funds to the police and justice ministries to pay for additional manpower and other resources needed to apprehend and prosecute alleged criminals engaged in the protection-extortion rackets. It was the third session in which the Cabinet took up the problem of organized crime which is reportedly flourishing in Israel's major cities and in smaller urban centers.

Police Minister Shlomo Hillel said the police were giving priority to investigations of the protection-extortion racket that victimizes businesses large and small. He said the public prosecutors were speeding up the preparation of cases and the courts were placing them high on their calendars. The Knesset's law committee was asked to speed up action on a draft bill whereby testimony given to police by victims of the racket cannot be withdrawn in court.

The Cabinet also adopted a resolution urging the public to report all cases of extortion to the police. The police and prosecutors have claimed that the greatest hindrance to arresting and pressing charges against alleged racketeers was the fear on the part of their victims to report criminal extortion and to testify against the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, a committee headed by Supreme Court Justice Haim Landau has been asked to draft legislation that would empower the police to keep extortion suspects in jail pending trial. At present, only murder suspects are kept behind bars.

## DINITZ, KISSINGER CONFER ON MIDEAST

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19 (JTA)--Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz discussed Middle East matters for an hour today at the State Department as Kissinger made final preparations for his departure tonight to Moscow for three days of talks with Soviet officials that will include the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Informed sources said that Kissinger and Dinitz exchanged views on the Lebanese civil war and the UN Security Council debate. Dinitz has been in almost daily communication with Kissinger or Undersecretary of State Joseph J. Sisco since the debate got underway a week ago. The two governments are known to have principles in common regarding the Security Council debate. (See Page 3 for Ambassador Daniel Moynihan's statement today at the Security Council.)

## SOUTHERN REGION OF LEBANON VIRTUALLY TAKEN OVER BY TERRORISTS

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Jan. 19 (JTA)--Lebanese villagers along the Israeli borders have told Israelis that the southern region of their country has been virtually taken over by terrorists while the civil war between Muslims and Christians rages in the north. The central government in Beirut seems to have lost all control--or interest--in the southern region, they said. Police, gendarmerie and other government officials in the region have not

been paid for months and the local judicial system has broken down.

They said that terrorists have taken over some Lebanese army positions that were abandoned when the troops were transferred to the area of fighting around Beirut and that certain Syrian controlled terrorists were entrenched in southeastern Lebanon known as Fatahland. Some villagers claimed that Syrian soldiers disguised as terrorists have been stationed inside Lebanon.

Israeli circles, meanwhile, have confirmed receiving reports that a number of units of the Palestine Liberation Army under Syrian command have been sent into Lebanon. So far there have been no reports of their intervention in the fighting but they are in a position to aid left-wing and terrorist elements. The Syrian-controlled forces were identified as the Hittin and Kabbasiyah battalions of the PLA.

#### Peres Warns Syria

Although there is no evidence so far that Syrian regulars have entered Lebanon, Defense Minister Shimon Peres warned Syria last night not to intervene in Lebanon's civil-strife. Addressing graduating army officers, Peres said "if any foreign army intervenes in the Lebanese fighting Israel will be forced to take the necessary defensive measures to ensure its security and I want Syria to understand this."

The description of conditions in southern Lebanon came from Lebanese farmers who tend their crops close to the Israeli border near Metullah. They expressed fear that the civil war might spread to the south endangering the small Maronite Christian community there which has taken refuge in Christian-dominated villages.

Other sources, mainly UN observers and clergy who have reached Israel via the Rosh Hanikra border post on the coast, reported that the road from Beirut to the Israeli border was unsafe for travel. They reported explosions and automatic fire along the highway. The UN observers have shifted their headquarters from Lebanon to Israel because of the fighting.

In Beirut itself, widespread pillaging was reported in broad daylight under cover of the fighting. According to one report, an armed gang entered the Beirut port area and made off with 300 Mercedes cars unloaded from a freighter a few days before.

#### NCSJ DENIES IT HAS BARRED JDL'S PARTICIPATION IN BRUSSELS CONFAB

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--Jerry Goodman, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, denied today a charge by the Jewish Defense League that he had barred the group's participation in the World Conference on Soviet Jewry scheduled for Brussels in February.

The JDL charged that Goodman said that neither Rabbi Meir Kahane nor any other representative of the JDL would be admitted to the conference. The group said it "would not stand for such a violation of basic democracy and the right of freedom of speech." A JDL spokesman declared "We promise that further action will be taken to guarantee that Rabbi Kahane will be allowed to speak at Brussels."

Goodman said what he had told two JDL leaders, Dov Fisch and Russel Kelner, was that the setup of the conference does not permit the JDL's participation but that he had said that when he goes to Brussels this week to meet with the in-

ternational steering committee he would raise the question of the attendance of the JDL and other organizations.

#### JDL Gathering Affidavits

Goodman explained that the Brussels meeting is not an elected conference. He said the American participation is being coordinated by the National Conference and includes delegates from the National Conference, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and officials of the fund-raising apparatus of the communities that belong to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. "The JDL is not part of that," he said.

The JDL said it is gathering signed affidavits from officials of various Jewish organizations protesting the barring of the JDL. It said one of the first signatures was that of Alexander Tiemkin, who is in the United States to seek help in getting his daughter, Marina, permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel.

In 1971, Kahane was barred from the first international conference on Soviet Jewry which was also held in Brussels. He was seized by Belgian authorities and deported from the country. Kahane who is now serving a jail sentence for parole violation at the Allenwood (Pa.) Federal Prison, is expected to be released from prison at the end of this month.

#### JEWISH GROUPS DENOUNCE ATTEMPTED BOMBINGS OF UN, FOREIGN MISSIONS

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--A broadly representative council of Jewish organizations yesterday denounced those responsible for the attempted bombings last week of the UN and the offices of foreign nations in New York City. Bombs were found and dismantled by police bomb squads before they exploded in a subway tunnel that extends under the UN library and at the Iraqi Mission to the UN. A pipe bomb also exploded outside the Polish Consulate.

The executive committee of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, at its quarterly meeting, said that, while it deemed the presence of the "murderously terroristic PLO" at the UN Security Council "morally indefensible and injurious to progress toward Middle East peace," this does not justify violence in protest.

The national organizations that are affiliated with the NJCRAC, and all of which joined in the statement, are the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, National Council of Jewish Women, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and the United Synagogue of America.

#### Text Of Statement

The statement declared: "Terrorism in all its manifestations is abhorrent, whoever its perpetrators or its victims and whatever its objectives. The national Jewish organizations and Jewish community relations councils in cities throughout the United States that comprise the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council have consistently denounced and condemned all forms of terrorism.

We now join in condemnation of the attempted bombings of UN buildings and foreign consulates last week during the meeting of the UN Security Council... Such violence is not only reprehensible. Its perpetrators are grossly mistaken in their

calculation of its effects. It can only inflame passions and impede peaceful resolutions. Happily, discovery of the bombs last week before they detonated prevented loss of life or injury or severe damage to property. Their placement nevertheless were criminal acts and we hope that those responsible will be apprehended and punished."

#### U.S. INDICATES USE OF VETO IN COUNCIL IF THERE IS ANY MOVE TO CHANGE RESOLUTIONS 242, 338

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The United States indicated today that it would exercise its veto power in the Security Council if that body ends its current Middle East debate with the adoption of resolutions that would attempt to change Resolutions 242 and 338.

Addressing the Council late this afternoon, U.S. Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan said the U.S. believed it would be a set-back for the chances of a settlement if the Council adopted resolutions "which would have the effect of leaving no commonly accepted basis for further negotiations." He warned that any imposed changes unacceptable to any of the parties "will not work."

Moynihan said that "Our actions both in the Council and afterwards will be guided by our best judgement of what is necessary" to avoid impending chances for peace. The U.S. had stated previously that it would block any measures if saw as endangering progress toward a peace settlement.

Moynihan stressed that the two Security Council resolutions are the framework for any progress toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. "We are aware," he said, "that there can be no durable solution unless we make every effort to promote a solution of the key issues of a just and lasting peace in that area on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 taking into account the legitimate interests of all the people of the area including the Palestinian people and respect for the rights to independent existence of all states in the area."

#### Rebuff To Arabs Seen

Moynihan's use of the words "legitimate interests" as applied to the Palestinians was seen as a rebuff to the Arabs who are seeking Security Council recognition of the "rights" of the Palestinian people. The word "rights" signifies political rights which in turn implies the right to statehood. "Legitimate interests" is a much broader term and does not have the same political connotation, observers here noted. Moynihan, however, upheld "the rights to independent existence of all states in the area" which includes Israel.

The U.S. envoy said that the two Security Council resolutions "have been the foundation for the progress that has been made and they continue to provide hope for the future." He said the U.S. is dedicated to achieve progress in the Middle East this year.

Moynihan declared that "We cannot escape the reality of the situation that when all parties have agreed to a framework, all of them must agree to changes in that framework." He emphasized that all the problems of the Middle East should be dealt with by the negotiating process and that any "changes that may be required in our approach must be worked out in the Geneva process."

He said that matters of procedures and the questions of additional participants to the Mideast

talks should be dealt with at Geneva or at a preparatory conference. This U.S. position is shared by Israel whose Ambassador to the UN, Chaim Herzog, said at a press conference last week that Israel was prepared to enter the Geneva conference without pre-conditions and to discuss there the question of additional participants. The Arabs on the other hand, are pressing for Security Council action that would admit the PLO in advance to participation in the Geneva talks.

Moynihan said that "having succeeded in establishing an agreed framework of procedures and principles for a settlement and in creating conditions for the establishment of the Geneva conference as a forum in which the implementation of these principles can be negotiated, the Council should not now seek to pre-judge the work of that conference."

Concluding, Moynihan said, "We have learned and profited from the deliberations of this Council and the ideas that have been put forth here. We believe our strongest duty, however, is to preserve the process for peace...and to use it so that the problems for us can be met and overcome."

#### U.S. DENIES MEETINGS WITH PLO

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19 (JTA)--A leading London daily's front page report of secret meetings recently between American officials and Palestine Liberation Organization leaders brought a sharp denial from the State Department today.

The Financial Times said that the purpose of the meetings it reported to have taken place appears to be to draw the PLO into direct discussions with the United States. But the newspaper added: "It seems inconceivable that the United States would recognize the PLO without parallel guarantees that the PLO would recognize Israel." The BBC carried the report in its overseas service.

Several hours after the Jewish Telegraphic Agency inquired at the State Department regarding the Financial Times report, a spokesman took the unusual step of reading a prepared statement to the JTA. The statement said:

"This story is incorrect. While individuals come to us from time to time purporting to carry messages from the PLO, I can state categorically and without qualification that the reports in this story about either the existence or the substance of a purported dialogue between the U.S. government and the PLO are totally incorrect. As the story itself says, the U.S. has never authorized anyone to act formally or informally as an emissary on its behalf to the PLO. We have no contacts with the PLO."

JTA was informed that the "us" mentioned in the statement applied collectively to American diplomatic offices including both Washington and Beirut.

#### VARNAVITSKY, ZHIGUN GET EXIT PERMITS

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The National Conference on Soviet Jewry has learned that Soviet Jewish activists Izrail Varnavitsky and Lev Zhigun have received exit permits to emigrate to Israel. Varnavitsky and his wife first applied to emigrate, in May 1972. They will soon rejoin their 19-year-old son Mikhail who was permitted to leave the USSR in June 1975. Zhigun applied to emigrate in mid-1973. He and Varnavitsky are notable for their long-term involvement in the Soviet Jewry movement within the USSR and among the oldest "refuseniks" in Leningrad, according to the NCSJ.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****TV SHOW IS A NATIONAL CATHARSIS**

By Uzi Benziman

JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (JTA)--Every second Thursday night most Israelis stay home glued to their televisions, eagerly awaiting "Nikui Rosh" (Cleaning the Head), the now-notorious satirical "magazine" that pulls no punches in its pointed comments on current events. On Mondays, three days after the show, the Knesset presidium is almost always flooded with urgent agenda motions, submitted mainly by right-wing members, in reaction to this or that irrelevant skit.

The Likud and the religious parties, as well as several right-wing MKs of the Labor Alignment, often feel themselves or their tenets attacked or insulted by the charades enacted on "Nikui Rosh." The gravity with which the Knesset discusses the TV show often supplies new ideas for "Nikui Rosh" script-writers.

For the Likud and the religious parties, the authors and editors of "Nikui Rosh" are enemies of the country. They accuse them of sapping the morale of the nation.

Among the skits these groups have found particularly offensive was one recently which hinted that the government might contemplate inducing a war with Syria in order to divert public attention from some of the pressing domestic problems. Another skit portrayed President Ephraim Katzir as a chatterbox who talks freely and unwisely about Israel's alleged nuclear potential. Other scenes which expressed the script-writers' opposition to the government's official policy on the Palestinian problem have raised vociferous protests, too.

**Tries To Balance Attacks**

Admittedly, "Nikui Rosh" tries to balance its attacks by savaging to the left too, but somehow these efforts are regarded more benignly by their victims.

The producer and senior editor of "Nikui Rosh" is Mordechai Kirschenbaum, a 36-year-old University of California graduate. Kirschenbaum is regarded as one of the few quality TV professionals working in Israel. In recent interviews, Kirschenbaum praised his superiors in the Broadcasting Authority for their tolerance and liberality. He says they have shown remarkable readiness to let the "Nikui Rosh" staff run the show guided purely by professional considerations.

In recent weeks, however, Broadcasting Authority director general Yitzhak Livni twice banned a particular skit, causing Kirschenbaum and his co-workers to cancel the whole show. Both times Livni intervened to prevent the screening of scenes pointing up police incompetence in coping with the extortion and "protection" rackets run by certain strong-arm "families" in neglected rural settlements and urban areas. Livni explained that he had pledged to the State Attorney that no reference would be made on "Nikui Rosh" to a certain family whose case is now sub judice.

**Full Backing Despite Criticism**

Livni's ban raised the ire of "Nikui Rosh's" staff, which claimed that there was no legal justification for his intervention because the skit in question hit at the police rather than at the alleged criminals. But they conceded that this instance was the exception rather than the rule.

All the other 600-odd skits have been broadcast as scripted as a result of close coordination

between the program's editorial staff and their administrative superiors. The director of television, Arnon Zuckerman and Livni, give the "Nikui Rosh" writers and editors full backing in the face of outside criticism.

The theme song that accompanies the show each week says: "In the present difficult situation what one needs is to keep one's head (brain) clean." The 120 people who take part in producing "Nikui Rosh" are proud that Israelis can still laugh at themselves. But there are a good many politicians who would prefer "Nikui Rosh" to poke fun at somebody else.

**PLO HAS 'ENFORCEABLE LEASE' IN PARK AVENUE BUILDING**

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The chairman of the Chase Manhattan Mortgage and Realty Trust, Joshua Muss, has explained that the Palestine Liberation Organization "has a valid enforceable lease" in a Park Avenue building in Manhattan which was recently extended for four years by the Trust's leasing agent. Muss made his comment in response to a letter from the American Jewish Congress to David Rockefeller, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, protesting the lease to the PLO.

A spokesman for the bank said that the Trust has no corporate ties with the bank and that the letter accordingly was forwarded to the Trust. The PLO opened an office at the Park Avenue office in September 1970 and moved into a separate but connected building providing it with more office space. The office is used by the PLO's two official observers to the United Nations and three staff members.

The two buildings were taken over on a foreclosure by the Trust, and the leasing agent renewed the PLO lease soon after the Trust took over the mortgage for the two buildings.

**SABBATH OBSERVERS FIGHT BLUE LAW**

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--A group of 20 merchants in East Meadow, Long Island, who keep their stores closed on Saturdays have obtained a temporary restraining order to stop Nassau County Police from charging them with the violation of Sunday closing laws.

The group, known as Shop-A-Rama II, argued in Brooklyn Federal Court last Friday that they were closed on Saturday to observe the Jewish Sabbath and to force them to close on Sunday violates their constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. They claimed they were constantly harassed by police who issued summonses and seized their merchandise.

Chief Judge Jacob Mishler ordered Nassau Police Chief Louis Frank and other county representatives to appear in court Jan. 23 to show cause why a permanent injunction should not be issued.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Religious Affairs Minister Yitzhak Rafael will introduce a bill in the Knesset forbidding persons who are unordained as rabbis from using the title "rabbi" or performing the functions of a rabbi. He said such a measure was needed in response to numerous complaints received by his ministry that unordained persons were claiming to be rabbis. He said they were undermining the title and status of authentic rabbis.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Some 200 philanthropists from France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland will come here soon on a study tour as guests of the Jewish National Fund.



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#### U.S. INDICATES USE OF VETO IN COUNCIL IF THERE IS ANY MOVE TO CHANGE RESOLUTIONS 242, 338

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The United States indicated today that it would exercise its veto power in the Security Council if that body ends its current Middle East debate with the adoption of resolutions that would attempt to change Resolutions 242 and 338.

Addressing the Council late this afternoon, U.S. Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan said the U.S. believed it would be a set-back for the chances of a settlement if the Council adopted resolutions "which would have the effect of leaving no commonly accepted basis for further negotiations." He warned that any imposed changes unacceptable to any of the parties "will not work."

Moynihan said that "Our actions both in the Council and afterwards will be guided by our best judgement of what is necessary" to avoid impending chances for peace. The U.S. had stated previously that it would block any measures if saw as endangering progress toward a peace settlement.

Moynihan stressed that the two Security Council resolutions are the framework for any progress toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. "We are aware," he said, "that there can be no durable solution unless we make every effort to promote a solution of the key issues of a just and lasting peace in that area on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 taking into account the legitimate interests of all the people of the area including the Palestinian people and respect for the rights to independent existence of all states in the area."

#### Rebuff To Arabs Seen

Moynihan's use of the words "legitimate interests" as applied to the Palestinians was seen as a rebuff to the Arabs who are seeking Security Council recognition of the "rights" of the Palestinian people. The word "rights" signifies political rights which in turn implies the right to statehood. "Legitimate interests" is a much broader term and does not have the same political connotation, observers here noted. Moynihan, however, upheld "the rights to independent existence of all states in the area" which includes Israel.

The U.S. envoy said that the two Security Council resolutions "have been the foundation for the progress that has been made and they continue to provide hope for the future." He said the U.S. is dedicated to achieve progress in the Middle East this year.

Moynihan declared that "We cannot escape the reality of the situation that when all parties have agreed to a framework, all of them must agree to changes in that framework." He emphasized that all the problems of the Middle East should be dealt with by the negotiating process and that any "changes that may be required in our approach must be worked out in the Geneva process."

He said that matters of procedures and the questions of additional participants to the Mideast

talks should be dealt with at Geneva or at a preparatory conference. This U.S. position is shared by Israel whose Ambassador to the UN, Chaim Herzog, said at a press conference last week that Israel was prepared to enter the Geneva conference without pre-conditions and to discuss there the question of additional participants. The Arabs on the other hand, are pressing for Security Council action that would admit the PLO in advance to participation in the Geneva talks.

Moynihan said that "having succeeded in establishing an agreed framework of procedures and principles for a settlement and in creating conditions for the establishment of the Geneva conference as a forum in which the implementation of these principles can be negotiated, the Council should not now seek to pre-judge the work of that conference."

Concluding, Moynihan said, "We have learned and profited from the deliberations of this Council and the ideas that have been put forth here. We believe our strongest duty, however, is to preserve the process for peace...and to use it so that the problems for us can be met and overcome."

#### U.S. DENIES MEETINGS WITH PLO

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19 (JTA)--A leading London daily's front page report of secret meetings recently between American officials and Palestine Liberation Organization leaders brought a sharp denial from the State Department today.

The Financial Times said that the purpose of the meetings it reported to have taken place appears to be to draw the PLO into direct discussions with the United States. But the newspaper added: "It seems inconceivable that the United States would recognize the PLO without parallel guarantees that the PLO would recognize Israel." The BBC carried the report in its overseas service.

Several hours after the Jewish Telegraphic Agency inquired at the State Department regarding the Financial Times report, a spokesman took the unusual step of reading a prepared statement to the JTA. The statement said:

"This story is incorrect. While individuals come to us from time to time purporting to carry messages from the PLO, I can state categorically and without qualification that the reports in this story about either the existence or the substance of a purported dialogue between the U.S. government and the PLO are totally incorrect. As the story itself says, the U.S. has never authorized anyone to act formally or informally as an emissary on its behalf to the PLO. We have no contacts with the PLO."

JTA was informed that the "us" mentioned in the statement applied collectively to American diplomatic offices including both Washington and Beirut.

#### VARNAVITSKY, ZHIGUN GET EXIT PERMITS

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The National Conference on Soviet Jewry has learned that Soviet Jewish activists Izrail Varnavitsky and Lev Zhigun have received exit permits to emigrate to Israel. Varnavitsky and his wife first applied to emigrate, in May 1972. They will soon rejoin their 19-year-old son Mikhail who was permitted to leave the USSR in June 1975. Zhigun applied to emigrate in mid-1973. He and Varnavitsky are notable for their long-term involvement in the Soviet Jewry movement within the USSR and among the oldest "refuseniks" in Leningrad, according to the NCSJ.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****TV SHOW IS A NATIONAL CATHARSIS**

By Uzi Benziman

JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (JTA)--Every second Thursday night most Israelis stay home glued to their televisions, eagerly awaiting "Nikui Rosh" (Cleaning the Head), the now-notorious satirical "magazine" that pulls no punches in its pointed comments on current events. On Mondays, three days after the show, the Knesset presidium is almost always flooded with urgent agenda motions, submitted mainly by right-wing members, in reaction to this or that irrelevant skit.

The Likud and the religious parties, as well as several right-wing MKs of the Labor Alignment, often feel themselves or their tenets attacked or insulted by the charades enacted on "Nikui Rosh." The gravity with which the Knesset discusses the TV show often supplies new ideas for "Nikui Rosh" script-writers.

For the Likud and the religious parties, the authors and editors of "Nikui Rosh" are enemies of the country. They accuse them of sapping the morale of the nation.

Among the skits these groups have found particularly offensive was one recently which hinted that the government might contemplate inducing a war with Syria in order to divert public attention from some of the pressing domestic problems. Another skit portrayed President Ephraim Katzir as a chatterbox who talks freely and unwisely about Israel's alleged nuclear potential. Other scenes which expressed the script-writers' opposition to the government's official policy on the Palestinian problem have raised vociferous protests, too.

**Tries To Balance Attacks**

Admittedly, "Nikui Rosh" tries to balance its attacks by savaging to the left too, but somehow these efforts are regarded more benignly by their victims.

The producer and senior editor of "Nikui Rosh" is Mordechai Kirschenbaum, a 36-year-old University of California graduate. Kirschenbaum is regarded as one of the few quality TV professionals working in Israel. In recent interviews, Kirschenbaum praised his superiors in the Broadcasting Authority for their tolerance and liberality. He says they have shown remarkable readiness to let the "Nikui Rosh" staff run the show guided purely by professional considerations.

In recent weeks, however, Broadcasting Authority director general Yitzhak Livni twice banned a particular skit, causing Kirschenbaum and his co-workers to cancel the whole show. Both times Livni intervened to prevent the screening of scenes pointing up police incompetence in coping with the extortion and "protection" rackets run by certain strong-arm "families" in neglected rural settlements and urban areas. Livni explained that he had pledged to the State Attorney that no reference would be made on "Nikui Rosh" to a certain family whose case is now sub judice.

**Full Backing Despite Criticism**

Livni's ban raised the ire of "Nikui Rosh's" staff, which claimed that there was no legal justification for his intervention because the skit in question hit at the police rather than at the alleged criminals. But they conceded that this instance was the exception rather than the rule.

All the other 600-odd skits have been broadcast as scripted as a result of close coordination

between the program's editorial staff and their administrative superiors. The director of television, Arnon Zuckerman and Livni, give the "Nikui Rosh" writers and editors full backing in the face of outside criticism.

The theme song that accompanies the show each week says: "In the present difficult situation what one needs is to keep one's head (brain) clean." The 120 people who take part in producing "Nikui Rosh" are proud that Israelis can still laugh at themselves. But there are a good many politicians who would prefer "Nikui Rosh" to poke fun at somebody else.

**PLO HAS 'ENFORCEABLE LEASE' IN PARK AVENUE BUILDING**

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--The chairman of the Chase Manhattan Mortgage and Realty Trust, Joshua Muss, has explained that the Palestine Liberation Organization "has a valid enforceable lease" in a Park Avenue building in Manhattan which was recently extended for four years by the Trust's leasing agent. Muss made his comment in response to a letter from the American Jewish Congress to David Rockefeller, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, protesting the lease to the PLO.

A spokesman for the bank said that the Trust has no corporate ties with the bank and that the letter accordingly was forwarded to the Trust. The PLO opened an office at the Park Avenue office in September 1970 and moved into a separate but connected building providing it with more office space. The office is used by the PLO's two official observers to the United Nations and three staff members.

The two buildings were taken over on a foreclosure by the Trust, and the leasing agent renewed the PLO lease soon after the Trust took over the mortgage for the two buildings.

**SABBATH OBSERVERS FIGHT BLUE LAW**

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA)--A group of 20 merchants in East Meadow, Long Island, who keep their stores closed on Saturdays have obtained a temporary restraining order to stop Nassau County Police from charging them with the violation of Sunday closing laws.

The group, known as Shop-A-Rama II, argued in Brooklyn Federal Court last Friday that they were closed on Saturday to observe the Jewish Sabbath and to force them to close on Sunday violates their constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. They claimed they were constantly harassed by police who issued summonses and seized their merchandise.

Chief Judge Jacob Mishler ordered Nassau Police Chief Louis Frank and other county representatives to appear in court Jan. 23 to show cause why a permanent injunction should not be issued.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Religious Affairs Minister Yitzhak Rafael will introduce a bill in the Knesset forbidding persons who are unordained as rabbis from using the title "rabbi" or performing the functions of a rabbi. He said such a measure was needed in response to numerous complaints received by his ministry that unordained persons were claiming to be rabbis. He said they were undermining the title and status of authentic rabbis.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Some 200 philanthropists from France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland will come here soon on a study tour as guests of the Jewish National Fund.