

U.S. SAID TO HAVE DROPPED PLAN TO RESTRICT SOVIET IMMIGRATION

By David Friedman and Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- The Bush administration reportedly has dropped a proposal to temporarily restrict Soviet immigration to those with family ties to the United States.

An estimated 50 to 60 percent of Soviet Jews applying to enter the United States would have been barred by this proposal, which was to be put into effect during the first six months of the 1990 fiscal year, according to David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee.

The 1990 fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

News that the administration had dropped the proposal was confirmed by Mark Talisman, Washington representative of the Council of Jewish Federations.

The Bush administration denied Thursday that it was considering a change in policy that would make some Soviet Jews ineligible for immigration to the United States.

The State Department issued a statement to that effect, in response to reports Sunday in The New York Times and Thursday in The Washington Post that the United States would give refugee status only to those who have immediate relatives in the United States.

But department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler also acknowledged Thursday that the administration has not completed work on a new proposal to handle the explosion of Jews and others leaving the Soviet Union.

Tutwiler read a statement reaffirming the U.S. policy to assist the immigration of Jews and other Soviets, but leaving unclear whether the administration plans to limit the number of Jews and others entering the country as refugees.

Priority For Family Reunification

She would only go as far as to say that the administration intends to give priority as refugees to those with families already in the United States, whether they came from the Soviet Union or other parts of the world.

"We wish to ensure that our limited refugee program numbers and funding are apportioned fairly among all worldwide applicants. Regardless of the higher number, family reunification cases will continue to be a matter of highest priority," she said in the prepared statement.

"The administration is definitely not proposing to bar Soviet Jews from immigrating to the United States," Tutwiler stressed. "We are not proposing rules to make any Soviet Jews ineligible."

"On the contrary, the administration is seeking ways to expand Soviet immigration to the United States. We are seeking ways to fairly and equitably respond to the explosion in demand because of our successful efforts in pressing the Soviets to open emigration," she said.

Tutwiler pointed out that Soviet applications to enter the United States have risen from some 787 in 1986 to an expected 100,000 in the current fiscal year, half of whom are Jews. She said the figure for the 1990 fiscal year could reach 250,000.

Meanwhile, President Bush was urged Thursday by House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) to allow 100,000 Eastern Europeans to enter the United States as refugees in 1990.

In a letter also signed by Rep. William Lipinski (D-Ill.), the lawmakers asked Bush to create a 12-month refugee category "for those who have fled communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe."

The lawmakers were joined at a news conference by Ron Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who said he was there to make U.S. refugee policy part of the Democratic Party's agenda.

Each year, the administration allows a certain number of refugees from around the world to enter the United States on an emergency basis. The U.S. government spends an estimated \$5,000 to \$6,000 per refugee for processing, transportation and initial resettlement costs, including health services provided by state governments.

The U.S. worldwide refugee quota in 1989 was 116,500 people, including 43,500 from the Soviet Union.

The administration is expected to disclose the refugee ceiling for the 1990 fiscal year by the end of September, when, as required under the Refugee Act of 1980, it consults with Congress.

Tutwiler indicated Thursday that the administration will ask for a larger number of refugee slots, but did not indicate any figure.

SHAKEUP REPORTED IN JEWISH GROUP AS IT PREPARES FOR VATICAN TALKS

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- A major shakeup is occurring in the organization that represents the Jewish world to the Vatican, just as relations between Catholics and Jews have reached a crisis point over the convent at Auschwitz and recent anti-Semitic remarks by Polish Cardinal Jozef Glemp.

Leaders of major Jewish organizations, who asked not to be identified, have confirmed to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that an alternative group to the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations is in the planning stages.

The American Jewish Committee, whose representative is presently IJCIC's chairman, is seriously considering pulling out of the umbrella organization before the end of the year and forming an alternative to IJCIC, along with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Congress, neither of which are currently IJCIC members.

Leaders of the three groups met Thursday morning to discuss the plans.

"No comment. That's all I'm authorized to say," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, who holds the dual roles of director of interreligious affairs for AJCommittee and chairman of IJCIC.

Henry Siegmán, executive director of AJ-Congress, did not return telephone calls to his office.

Abraham Foxman, national director for the ADL, would only say that "the subject has been discussed."

He said that the organizations involved have

been contemplating this plan "for a number of years."

ADL withdrew from IJCIC four years ago over what Foxman termed "an issue of sovereignty."

The absence of ADL and AJCongress from IJCIC has been conspicuous. As one Jewish leader put it, IJCIC is "an umbrella organization, but the umbrella has a couple of holes."

The official added that it was the turmoil surrounding the convent which hastened the decision to implement the plan.

"Sometimes it takes a crisis to bring along a serious reassessment," he said.

Not Fully Representative

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, strongly criticized the proposal, saying that the new organization would "not fully represent the Jewish communities worldwide or here."

"There would be no representation for Jews of Latin America, no representatives for the Jews of Europe, no representation to Jews in the far-flung communities of the Pacific and it would not represent the religious groupings of the United States, which are represented in the Synagogue Council of America," Steinberg said.

The timing of the breakaway move is critical, as IJCIC is now coordinating with the Vatican for a meeting this autumn at which the volatile issue of the Catholic convent at Auschwitz would be discussed. The IJCIC delegation is to be led by Rudin.

Foxman said plans by the organizations "would not have an impact" on the projected meeting with the Vatican.

IJCIC has served as the primary channel for Jewish dialogue with the Vatican since its establishment in the 1960s.

In 1974, Pope Paul VI issued an official declaration establishing the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations With the Jews and naming IJCIC as the official organization the Vatican would recognize as representing world Jewry.

IJCIC presently comprises the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International, World Jewish Congress, Synagogue Council of America and Israel Interfaith Committee.

Longstanding tensions between the WJC and other member groups appear to be partially responsible for the discord within IJCIC.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, who previously held Rudin's posts in both the American Jewish Committee and IJCIC, said the situation within the umbrella organization has become "a kind of anarchy that has led to frustration."

Contradicting The Consensus

He blamed "the New York representatives of the World Jewish Congress" for frequently undermining the organization's agreed-upon consensus on a number of issues.

"We would form an agreement, and then one member agency would go to the press contradicting the consensus we had arrived at," Tanenbaum said.

Tanenbaum held up as an example what he called a public threat by the WJC of a "boycott" of the Vatican by world Jewry, which he said reflected badly on IJCIC as a whole.

"People in the Vatican but also the Catholic Church believed what the WJC said about the boycott of pope was the position of world Jewry. In fact, we at IJCIC had voted against it. But

there were headlines such as 'Jews Around the World to Boycott Pope.'"

Tanenbaum said that such actions made it "increasingly difficult to arrive at a consensus with all the member agencies agreeing and adhering to the consensus."

The difficulty of reaching consensus has been a stumbling block in other umbrella groups, such as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

"Problems occur in umbrellas that try to do too much," said Foxman of ADL. "They have to be more realistic in terms of what it is they try to achieve."

Another source within IJCIC said that theological tensions as well as political conflicts exist within the group.

The source speculated AJCongress, AJCommittee and ADL were forming their own organization, "so they can engage in theological dialogue with the Vatican, which the Orthodox groups who are part of the Synagogue Council of America say they will not engage in."

The Synagogue Council of America is the umbrella organization for the rabbinic and congregational arms of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism.

Tanenbaum said that if the new organization is formed, involvement by religious bodies would be crucial in order to deal successfully with the Vatican.

"My personal hope would be that before any public move is made, that the issue of the involvement of major Jewish religious bodies is addressed," Tanenbaum said. "It would be very critical to the effectiveness of a group relating to the Vatican."

ROCKET FROM JORDAN SLAMS INTO ISRAEL; SHAMIR ASKS FOR MORE BORDER ALERTNESS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- Katyusha rockets fired from Jordan into the Jordan Valley on Wednesday night have led settlers in the area to complain of a deterioration in the security situation and to demand the special status granted to front-line villages.

The missiles caused no damage or casualties. The crater caused by the impact of a 105mm Katyusha was found in a search of the region Thursday morning.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir appealed to Jordan to increase its vigilance to prevent hostile actions across the border, adding he was certain the Jordanian government had not changed its policy of keeping the border quiet.

Knesset members of all parties said that Jordan should be warned that cross-border activities could not be confined to one direction only, and that if Israeli farmers near the border were molested or in danger, then Jordanian farmers should be in comparable danger.

The enraged settlers pointed to a number of incidents in recent weeks and months, including an attack by a lone infiltrator on an IDF patrol last Saturday, which resulted in the death of two soldiers and the wounding of a third.

In addition, several infiltration attempts have been made, in both the northern Beit She'an and the southern Arava regions, during the past year.

Since the attack on the IDF patrol near Kfar Ruppin last Saturday, farmers and kibbutz members have been ordered to carry arms.

ANNE POLLARD GRANTED FURLOUGH AND TRANSFER TO HALFWAY HOUSE

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- Anne Henderson Pollard has been granted a furlough from prison over the Jewish High Holy Days and a transfer to a halfway house in late November, pending the approval of her warden at the Danbury Federal Prison Camp in Connecticut.

Pollard, the wife of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, was told of the recommendation for the furlough and halfway house Wednesday.

On the same day, she was denied early release on parole by Daniel Lopez, the Northeast regional parole commissioner.

The parole denial came in spite of more than 200 telegrams and letters sent to Lopez's office by Anne Pollard's supporters.

They urged him to reverse the recommendation of a parole board, which ruled Aug. 22 that she should not be granted early release.

Lopez's decision means that she will most likely not be finally released on parole until March 1990, three years after she began serving her five-year sentence.

Pollard's family plans to submit an appeal of the parole decision to the national appeals board of the U.S. Parole Commission.

Pollard was convicted for possession of classified documents in connection with her husband's espionage activities. He is serving a life sentence for spying for Israel.

Anne Pollard's father, Bernard Henderson, said his daughter plans to celebrate the High Holy Days in New York at the Riverdale synagogue of Rabbi Abraham Weiss.

Weiss has visited both Pollards in prison and is considered by the government as their rabbi.

"She has only been told orally so far," Henderson said of his daughter's impending furlough. "We're trying to pin (the prison authorities) down and get it in writing."

No Final Decision

Prison spokesman Craig Apker said Thursday the final decision on transfer has not yet been made, and that the warden has yet to rule on the decision.

"She's been recommended for halfway house placement and a furlough, but that doesn't mean she's going to get it," Apker said.

Henderson believes his daughter should be released to a halfway house immediately. He said he fears for her life if she remains incarcerated even until November.

Pollard is suffering from a rare gastrointestinal disease known as biliary dyskinesia.

Her family said her weight is down to 82 pounds and that she is not receiving adequate treatment in prison.

A decision to allow Pollard a release on furlough and to a halfway house would be a reversal of the prison authorities' earlier stance that they would not grant Pollard the privileges because of her medical condition.

Ronald Seri, Pollard's case manager, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last week that because Pollard is taking medication which cannot be brought off prison grounds, she would not be permitted either furloughs or release to a halfway house.

Carol Pollard, her sister-in-law, said she was certain public pressure played a role in the prison authorities' decision to reverse their position.

WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPER REPORTS MAJOR SPY SWAP IN THE WORKS

By David Kantor

BONN, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- Israel may agree to release two KGB agents serving prison terms there as part of a multinational East-West spy swap which the West German paper Die Welt says would be the biggest in history.

Other countries involved include the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, South Africa and West and East Germany, according to the newspaper.

Although details are sparse, the Bonn-based daily named Laborite Knesset member Arich (Lova) Eliav as an Israeli go-between in the complex deal.

Eliav is supposed to have met with an East German lawyer, Wolfgang Vogel, who visited Israel last week to discuss the swap with him, Die Welt said. Eliav refused to acknowledge their meeting.

Vogel, 63, is said to be close to Communist Party boss Erich Honecker.

Eliav, who is on the left-wing of the Labor Party, has long been involved in efforts to secure the release of Israeli hostages and prisoners of war held by Arab groups.

Wolfgang Vogel has a long history of organizing spy and other prisoner exchanges. He was instrumental in the U.S.-Soviet swap in February 1986 that included Natan Sharansky.

Vogel's East Berlin office reputedly collects millions of marks each year from West Germany to buy the release of political prisoners.

Vogel visited Israel on a special visa issued by a confidential Israeli mission in Europe, Die Welt said. East Germany has no diplomatic relations with Israel.

Two KGB Agents Held

The mass-circulation daily named two alleged KGB agents Israel would presumably release if the spy exchange is accomplished. It did not say who Israel would receive in return.

One of the Soviets is Shabtai Kalmanovich, a wealthy Cologne businessman arrested by the Israelis in 1988 as a Soviet spy.

Kalmanovich's name has been floated in rumors of a possible spy swap that would free Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence in the United States for spying for Israel, and enable him to go to Israel.

Bernard Henderson, Pollard's father-in-law, seemed surprised when informed of the reputed pending swap and if there were any connections to a possible exchange involving Pollard.

He said, however, that a business partner of Kalmanovich had "tested the water" of a proposed three-way swap involving Pollard.

The other Soviet is a Professor Glinberg, who worked at a weapons-related biochemical facility in Ness Ziona until his arrest for spying in 1983. He is serving an 18-year sentence.

Other alleged spies involved in the swap deal, according to Die Welt, are Swiss couple Dieter and Ruth Gerhard, who were arrested in South Africa in 1981; Arne Trcholt, a Norwegian spy for the Kremlin and possibly Iraq; and East German Reinhard and Sonja Schulze and Reiner Selch, arrested for spying in West Germany.

The newspaper failed to name any Western spies or political prisoners involved in the reported swap.

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: LOW TOLL IN LOST FORESTRY ATTRIBUTED TO JNF PREVENTION By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 7 (JTA) -- This summer has seen fewer and less devastating forest fires in Israel than the disastrous dry season of 1988, but not because the number of arson attempts has declined.

Unfortunately, says Moshe Rivlin, world chairman of the Jewish National Fund, the intifada is still with us, and with it the desire to burn and destroy JNF forests that have changed the face of the land.

The reason for the relatively low toll in ruined trees and gutted groves, he said, "is the action we have taken over this past year to be able to prevent fires spreading."

In particular, Rivlin notes, JNF enlisted the counsel of the United States Forest Service, resulting in better equipment, better preparedness and much better cooperation between JNF and all the various authorities in Israel that collectively contribute to fire prevention or control.

"We ourselves at JNF now have 13 small and maneuverable fire engines in service around the country, and another three big ones.

"Our radio communications network has been totally overhauled: We now deploy 350 units, and we are in constant contact with the Israel Defense Force.

"We man 41 fire lookout posts 24 hours a day, and we have 30-odd fire-fighting teams on alert around the clock. Some are mobile patrols; others are stationary teams who are ready to respond to an emergency call instantly.

"In the forests themselves, we have been systematically widening the paths between the glades, so that fires cannot sweep through large wooded areas with the speed and ease that we witnessed last year.

Effective Coordination

"And above all, there is effective coordination between us, the IDF -- and that includes the air force -- the fire services in each locality, the Nature Reserves Authority and the Society for the Protection of Nature.

"I cannot exaggerate the importance of this cooperation, both in preventing blazes and in getting them under control."

There is, however, a "bottom line," says the JNF chief, which people don't always understand. "They see readily enough that damaged and destroyed forests need funds to make them live and grow again. But they don't necessarily realize how much prevention costs."

The reclamation work, spearheaded by JNF's "Tree-for-a-Tree" campaign, has already achieved success. Much of the ravaged land has been replanted, "though nature, of course, has to take its own time. Forests don't grow in a year."

A high-level U.S. Forest Service team, which toured Israel extensively during May, was outspoken in its praise for JNF.

In its "Report, Recommendations and Action Plan" submitted by L.A. Amicarella, director of fire and aviation management, the team noted: "On our 1989 trip, we saw many of the suggestions offered as a result of the December 1987 trip already put into sound action by JNF.

"The team was enormously impressed by the outstanding accomplishments of JNF in afforestation, species management and fire prevention

approaches in the Mediterranean and dryer climate land.

"Afforestation techniques and successes are significantly better than any the team has seen, read or heard about in the United States or elsewhere in the world. We hope that the USFS will benefit from Israeli expertise in this area."

The U.S. experts note in their report that Israel will have to grapple with the challenge of forest fires even after the intifada ends.

"All of Israel's forest fires are man caused," the report notes. "Even if arson ignitions are reduced in the future, Israel's growing population and forest-use patterns guarantee that there will be enough sources of ignition for damaging forest fires to occur.

"With this background, the team recommends that JNF begin training personnel in fire management planning."

Intensive Study Tour

One result of JNF's close cooperation with the USFS is that a group of eight JNF foresters will be spending two months in the United States this fall on an intensive study tour, with the focus on fire prevention and control techniques.

While intifada-related forest fires have been uniquely JNF's headache this past year, Rivlin, his staff and JNF's worldwide support system can hardly remain unaffected by the overall economic crisis in Israel, and especially over the development areas of the Galilee and the Negev, where unemployment far exceeds the national average.

Vice Premier and Finance Minister Shimon Peres recently met with Rivlin and JNF's new director general, Ori Orr, to discuss how JNF can deploy its resources and activities in concert with various government economic recovery programs.

Rivlin says the minister found a sensitive, responsive and indeed enthusiastic reaction on JNF side, even though there were differences over certain ideas in the agricultural sector.

He stressed above all the contribution of JNF's tourism and recreation development projects to the economic well-being of the surrounding areas both in immediate terms of employment and in the longer-term effect of drawing domestic and overseas tourism to the areas.

In the Negev, JNF has embarked on major landscaping at Mitzpe Ramon, the sleepy little town perched on the edge of the Ramon Crater.

Jobs Now And Later

A private entrepreneur is planning a major hotel complex for Mitzpe Ramon and JNF's work on a scenic driveway and nature reserve dovetails into the overall planning. Once again, says Rivlin, the prospects are for jobs now, and jobs and tourism later.

In Eilat, JNF has agreed to prepare the infrastructure for residential housing on behalf of the ministry of housing, a novel departure for JNF, but undertaken, says Rivlin, willingly in light of the economic needs.

In the Galilee, JNF has helped one kibbutz extend its fruit orchards and is examining other such projects.

Forestry, moreover, though no longer a mass employer as it was in the barren, treeless days of the early 1950s immigration, can still provide promising work for men with a mind for it.

"Our forests today require more than 600,000 man work-days a year," says Rivlin. That translates into some 2,000 foresters: half tenured staffers and the others are seasonal workers.