

**SOVIET EMIGRATION SETS RECORD,
SURPASSING TOTAL FOR ALL OF 1979**

NEW YORK, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- For the third time in a row, more Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union last month than in any other previous month on record.

A total of 9,450 Jews left the Soviet Union in October, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported Wednesday, bringing the figure for the year so far to 51,336. That tops the benchmark total for 1979, which was 51,320.

Of the October total, 1,565 Jews, or 16.5 percent, went to Israel, compared to 12.3 percent the previous month. It is not yet known if the increase in aliyah can be attributed to changes in U.S. refugee policy that went into effect Oct. 1.

Since that date, Jews leaving the Soviet Union on Israeli visas have not been eligible to come to the United States as refugees. Those who want to settle in the United States must now apply for American visas at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

The October figure, which represents a 12 percent increase over the previous month, now replaces the September and August numbers as the largest monthly emigration total recorded since the National Conference's Soviet Jewry Research Bureau began tabulating emigration statistics in 1968.

Prior to August, the highest monthly figure had occurred in October 1979, when 4,746 Jews left the Soviet Union. But 10 years later, the monthly emigration total is nearly twice as large.

Back in 1979, nearly all Jews who left the Soviet Union arrived in Vienna. Today, while the majority still use that route, others are leaving by way of Bucharest, Romania, and Budapest, Hungary. Almost all of those who use those points of transfer go directly to Israel.

Fifth Consecutive Big Increase

Meanwhile, some 285,000 Soviet Jews have taken the first step toward emigrating by requesting sponsors from abroad, the World Jewish Congress reported.

"As a result of changes in American immigration procedures which went into effect on Oct. 1, nearly half of those who have requested sponsors may settle in Israel," the WJC said.

Commenting on the October emigration figure, Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of the National Conference, said, "We welcome the fifth substantial consecutive monthly increase in Jewish emigration."

Nevertheless, Cardin cautioned, "we remain deeply concerned over the continued refusal of permission to those remaining long-term refugees and existence of the category of 'poor relative.'"

The description applies to those who have family members who refuse to sign a necessary waiver of financial obligation.

Cardin expressed hope that "the matter of human rights," as well as "the right to experience and learn about Jewish heritage and religion in the Soviet Union," would once again be discussed when President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev meet for a summit in December.

**BAKER REVISES HIS FIVE-POINT PLAN,
APPARENTLY TO MEET ISRAELI CONCERNS**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- Secretary of State James Baker provided Israel on Wednesday with an amended version of his five-point plan for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

It was unofficially welcomed here as "positive" and "representing 'some progress.'"

Baker, en route to Australia, telephoned the revised language to Foreign Minister Moshe Arens. The written text is expected to follow.

Israel Radio said the amended version of the five points was sent simultaneously to Egypt.

In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher confirmed that Baker spoke by phone Wednesday to Arens and to Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid.

Boucher made no mention of the five points or of any amendments to them.

"These conversations are part of an ongoing effort to agree on a framework, so that we can get to a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians," he said.

But according to Israel Radio, changes were made in Baker's proposals that seem to meet Israel's two key demands: no talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization and negotiations dealing solely with the mechanics of proposed Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel Radio said the new text eliminates references to consultations on the composition of a Palestinian delegation, which were to involve Israel, Egypt and the United States.

Shamir Coming To U.S. In Any Case

It now states that the United States understands Israel will attend the proposed Israeli-Palestinian dialogue only if the composition of the Palestinian delegation is to its satisfaction, Israel Radio reported.

A reference in the original text to the Palestinians' right to speak at the dialogue on issues relating to negotiations has been amended to read "negotiating process."

The change was apparently made because Israel insists that the "process" is spelled out in its May 14 peace initiative. The Israeli plan calls for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to elect representatives with whom Israel would negotiate an interim autonomy arrangement and, later, the "permanent status" of the territories.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will have to decide whether to accept the new version under the pressure of his upcoming trip to the United States. While there is still no official invitation, it is understood that he will meet with President Bush at the White House on Nov. 15.

But there have been broad hints from Washington that Israel's continued rejection of the American points could result in the president withholding an invitation.

A spokesperson for the prime minister said Shamir would go ahead with his visit to the United States, regardless of whether he is invited to the White House.

(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

ISRAEL RECEIVES MILLIONS LESS IN U.S. AID, AT LEAST FOR NOW

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- Israel received \$1.13 billion in economic aid from the United States on Tuesday, \$70 million less than it has received in the past few years.

The reduced figure is largely due to across-the-board budget cuts mandated by President Bush on Oct. 16, when Congress failed to bring total spending for the 1990 fiscal year in line with the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit-reduction law.

Douglas Bloomfield, a Washington lobbyist and former legislative director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said it is "very likely, but not guaranteed," that \$63.6 million of the \$70 million will be restored.

The \$63.6 million cut was mandated under the deficit-reduction law, which required that non-defense programs be cut by 5.3 percent.

But pro-Israel lobbyists said Israel will almost certainly not be able to restore \$6.5 million that Congress shaved off in across-the-board cuts of its own. Of that money, \$5 million was used to expand the government's drug interdiction campaign and \$1.5 million was used to continue the Peace Corps program.

To reverse Bush's across-the-board "sequestration" of federal programs, Congress would have to cut the deficit to about \$100 billion in its 1990 deficit reconciliation bill. Passage of that bill is being delayed for various reasons, including wrangling over a cut in the capital gains tax.

If Congress comes up with the cuts, the few billion dollars in across-the-board cuts that already have been made could be restored, bringing the deficit close to \$110 billion, and in line with Gramm-Rudman-Hollings target.

Some \$10 Billion In Debts

Reacting to the cuts, an Israeli Embassy official said Wednesday, "It's reality."

"We understand that the U.S. government is under severe constraints," he said, adding that Israel is "very grateful" for the funds not cut.

The Israeli official said that the economic aid is used to repay Israel's debts from U.S. loans received during various Israeli-Arab wars and in foreign aid prior to 1984, when Israel's foreign aid was converted from loans to grants.

That debt is now owed mainly to private U.S. banks, under a 1987 debt-refinancing law that converted high-interest government loans into lower-interest private loans.

The Israeli official said his government owes the United States "a lot of money," estimated at \$10 billion, with its annual debt repayments to private U.S. banks being "a little higher" than \$1.2 billion.

Israel, unlike other countries, is required by Congress to receive its economic aid within the first month of the new fiscal year, said Bloomfield. That is because lawmakers realized in the early 1980s that Israel was borrowing at high interest rates from private banks in Israel to repay its U.S. foreign aid and war debts, Bloomfield said.

Having an "early disposal" of Israel's economic aid is a way for Congress to avoid "sending your friends deeper into debt," he added.

Bloomfield said the Bush administration avoided sending Israel "threats and warnings" by sending it the money at this time, even though Congress has yet to approve the 1990 foreign aid

appropriations bill, which includes the \$3 billion in aid to Israel.

By providing the money now, the United States sent Israel a "positive signal," rather than "trying to use foreign aid as leverage over Israel for something else," he added.

Military Aid Cut, Too

As is the case with its economic aid, Israel's \$1.8 billion in U.S. military aid is also being cut, by \$104 million, mainly to meet deficit-reduction targets. Israel uses the money to purchase U.S. weapons systems from the Pentagon.

One pro-Israel lobbyist here speculated that Israel would likely make up most of the gap by using Israeli taxpayer money to fund U.S. weapons systems.

Israel "cannot afford to really stretch (weapons procurement) out" because of "pure economics," the lobbyist said. The costs of procuring weapons increases per unit, depending how fast and how many are being built.

The lobbyist added that Israel might free up \$100 million by reducing its military operation and maintenance budget and spending less on troops.

An Israeli Embassy official would not speculate on how Israel would try to offset cuts in U.S. military aid.

EGYPT CONTINUING TO DETAIN TANKER, BUT DEPENDENTS HAVE BEEN RELEASED

By Hugh Ortel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- Israel seems to be in a quandary over what to do about the continued detention of an Israeli tanker and its crew by Egyptian authorities.

The vessel Nyuta, with 28 crew members and dependents aboard, was arrested in Egyptian waters on Oct. 21 for allegedly spilling oil in the Gulf of Suez. Its master, Capt. Zvi Yosef, was taken into custody and reportedly faces trial.

Five of the crew members' dependents -- two women and three children -- have been allowed to leave the ship, which is anchored in the East Zeid Bay oil port. They were taken Wednesday to the Israeli Embassy in Cairo to be returned home.

But conditions are deteriorating for the 23 crew members aboard the idled vessel, according to Israel Tanker Services, the ship's owner, which is in contact with the tanker. The crew reported that drinking water is running out.

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told the Knesset Wednesday that the government would consider abrogating its oil purchase agreements with Egypt if the ship and its crew are not immediately released to return to Israel.

He amended his statement later to say the oil contract would stay in effect, but that Israel Tanker Services might withdraw from the Egypt-Israel oil run.

The Israel Seamen's Association minced no words. It informed the Israeli Embassy in Cairo that its members would bar all Egyptian vessels from Israeli ports unless the Nyuta is swiftly freed.

The Egyptians insist the crew will be held aboard until Capt. Yosef goes on trial, possibly next week. He will be charged with responsibility for a 60-square-yard oil spill while his ship was passing through the Straits of Tiran on Oct. 16.

Israel Tanker Services says it has evidence from port captains and insurance surveyors that the Nyuta was not the ship responsible.

PLAN TO CREATE SETTLERS MILITIA IN WEST BANK SPARKS FIERCE DEBATE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- A plan by the commanding general in the West Bank to establish a company made up of Jewish settlers has raised a fierce public debate in Israel, with deep ideological overtones.

Right-wingers have jubilantly welcomed the decision by Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, who recently took over as commander of the central sector, which includes the West Bank.

Liberals and those on the left decried it and warned that the plan could lead to the "Lebanonization of the country." They worry that some day political militias will be battling it out with firearms in Israel.

The settlers have long demanded the creation of territorial defense units, made up of Israel Defense Force reservists living in the territories, to increase local security.

The former regional commander, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, repeatedly turned them down. But Mitzna was transferred to the southern command last summer. His successor, Gen. Mordechai, harbors political views closer to those of the settlers.

Paradoxically, Mitzna's policies were supported by the same defense establishment that now backs Mordechai.

The Defense Ministry issued a statement Wednesday evening denying that any new policy had been established. Settlers have always been incorporated in the army for local defense and security purposes, the ministry said.

But Mordechai proposes to set up a special settler company to be deployed in the volatile Hebron area, on an "experimental basis."

Concern About Vigilantism

That is like "putting the cat to guard the milk," commented one of the many irate liberals in and outside the Knesset.

The leftist opposition factions -- Mapam, Citizens Rights Movement and the Center-Shinui Movement -- have introduced motions for a Knesset debate on the matter.

Shinui leader Amnon Rubinstein said Mordechai's decision would only aggravate tension between the Israeli authorities and Palestinians.

"This is turning a blind eye to reality. We have many cases of vigilantism by the settlers. We have many cases in which Palestinians were shot, wounded and, unfortunately, killed by settlers," Rubinstein told Israel Radio on Wednesday.

"To give them this special status only makes things worse," he said. "If we want to see a general conflagration and sectarian warfare in the West Bank, that's the way to do it."

But Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, a Knesset member of the pro-settlement party Tehiya, claimed that settler militias are better qualified than Israel Defense Force reservists to maintain security. Waldman accused some reservists from outside the territories of inciting Arabs to continue the intifada.

"People on the left, people of the Peace Now movement meet with the Arab terrorists and tell them they are absolutely right," he said.

He insisted that the settlers know the territory, know the Palestinians and would do a better job. They are devoted patriots, idealists and citizens who should serve wherever they are needed, said Waldman.

REFORM JUDAISM CLAIMS TO BE LARGEST, BUT LEAST AFFILIATED, OF MOVEMENTS

NEW ORLEANS, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- A report supporting Reform Judaism's claim that it has become the largest Jewish denomination in the United States will greet more than 4,000 delegates attending conventions of the Reform movement that open here Thursday night.

Allan Goldman of Los Angeles, chairman of the board of trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, will report that by the latest count, the movement has a membership of 284,360 dues-paying families and 822 affiliated synagogues -- both record numbers.

The figures represent an increase of nearly 10 percent in the number of Reform synagogues in the last decade and a more than 20 percent increase in membership over that time period, Goldman's report says.

The new numbers appear to make Reform the largest branch of Judaism in North America, according to Goldman.

But officials of the Conservative and Orthodox movement in New York are not so sure.

Lois Goldrich, spokeswoman for the United Synagogue of America, said that the Conservative movement counts its membership at approximately 2 million, and the number of affiliated synagogues fluctuates between 820 and 850.

Rabbi Jerome Epstein, senior vice president of the United Synagogue, cautioned that Reform temples, unlike Conservative or Orthodox synagogues, allow non-Jewish spouses of members to join, and that could affect their count.

William Rapfogel, director of the Institute for Public Affairs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, said that "to compare Reform and Orthodox is like comparing apples and oranges."

Low Affiliation A 'Grave Concern'

He pointed out that while all Reform temples affiliate with the UAHC, there is no single official address for Orthodox Judaism for which their numbers can be compiled.

Here in New Orleans, about 3,500 delegates are gathering at the Marriott Hotel for the 60th biennial general assembly of UAHC, the congregational body of Reform Judaism in the United States and Canada.

Another 1,000 will attend the biennial general assembly of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, representing Reform women. Several joint sessions are scheduled.

The arriving delegates will receive a summary of a study of synagogue affiliation, published by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and the UAHC's Committee on the Jewish Family.

The study, which examined synagogue affiliation in seven middle-size Jewish communities, found that Jews who identify as Reform are the majority in five of those regions.

But the study also found that while more Jews identify with Reform than any other branch of Judaism, the movement itself has the lowest rate of synagogue affiliation.

Orthodox Jews, the smallest group in terms of numbers, have the greatest proportion of synagogue affiliation, followed by those who identify as Conservative.

Goldman said the large number of unaffiliated Jews is "a matter of grave concern" to the Reform movement.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
**JEWISH VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN MAYOR
COULD SOUR RELATIONS WITH BLACKS**

By J.J. Goldberg

The New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK, Nov. 1 (JTA) -- Jewish community officials say that regardless of who wins next Tuesday's mayoral election, the intense focus on the so-called "Jewish vote" could result in a souring of intergroup relations in the city and perhaps around the country.

The race pits David Dinkins, a black politician with a long record of activity on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jewry, against Rudolph Giuliani, a white former federal prosecutor, who is a political newcomer.

Dinkins won the Democratic nomination in September by defeating the incumbent mayor, Edward Koch, and two other prominent Jewish politicians.

Since the primary election, Giuliani's campaign has put heavy efforts into associating Dinkins with black activists that have clashed with the Jewish community, particularly the controversial Rev. Jesse Jackson, whom Dinkins supported in his 1988 presidential race.

Dinkins also was embarrassed by revelations that two local black radicals with anti-Semitic pasts were volunteers in his campaign. Both were dismissed, but the affair left a negative flavor on all sides.

Despite those embarrassments, Dinkins continued to enjoy a commanding lead, both among Jews and in the general opinion polls, until mid-October, when the press turned up inconsistencies in his own personal financial dealings over the past decade. Within a week, his lead virtually evaporated.

Jews, in particular, were reported by the news media to have reversed their loyalty, giving Giuliani a comfortable lead among the usually Democratic Jewish voters.

Since then, coverage of the race has featured front-page reports almost daily on the candidates' efforts to win over undecided Jewish voters by touring Jewish neighborhoods, visiting synagogues and declaring their admiration for Israel.

Could Cause 'Terrible Damage'

"It's terribly unfortunate that Jews have emerged as the turning point of this campaign," said Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress.

"This situation has been aggravated by the very pernicious notion that David Dinkins cannot be trusted because he has been endorsed by Jesse Jackson," he said.

"This sets up the Jewish community for terrible damage," said Siegman. "Those who advance the notion prepare the ground for the ugly accusation that, if Dinkins were to lose, it's the Jews who defeated him because of his association with Jesse Jackson."

The impression has been strengthened by stepped-up activity among some Jewish activists who have appeared at various Dinkins rallies to chant "Hymietown," an anti-Semitic term once used by Jackson in reference to New York.

According to several reports, even Jackson has finally come to recognize the depth of Jewish antipathy toward him, which he reportedly had ascribed to fringe elements until now.

Sources close to Jackson say he has met

with Jewish leaders several times in recent weeks to hear their assessments.

As a result of the apparent anti-Dinkins swell among Jewish voters, community leaders say the longstanding alliance between black and Jewish leaders -- particularly in Congress, where black legislators have consistently supported aid to Israel and other Jewish concerns -- could be shattered.

"If Dinkins wins and gets even 40 percent of the Jewish vote, there will be a sense that the Jewish community is not delivering," said one political activist in the Orthodox community. "And if he loses, there's a sense that the Jewish community will be blamed for his loss."

The irony, insiders add, is that Dinkins' recent losses have resulted from his financial dealings, not from his relationship with Jackson.

But because of the heavy media focus on the anti-Jackson statements by some militant Jewish elements, the impression has been created that any black politician associated with Jackson will be unacceptable to Jewish voters.

Jesse Jackson As 'Litmus Test'

"From a Jewish point of view, it's an absolute 'churban' (catastrophe)," said Dinkins supporter David Luchins, a Democratic party leader who is a vice president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

"What we're saying is that Jesse Jackson is becoming a litmus test. We're saying Jews will vote for a man with no record over a man with a superb 20-year record.

"What we're telling them in effect," continued Luchins, "is that blacks don't have to bother working with us, don't have to bother supporting us. It won't help, because we're not going to work with them."

Rabbi Fabian Schoenfeld, religious leader of Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills in Queens, is among those who believes Jews must take a firm stance against Jackson.

"Jesse Jackson is perceived to be an anti-Semite, and there is nothing on Earth he can do to convince us otherwise," Schoenfeld said in an interview.

But he denies that taking a stand against Jackson necessarily harms black-Jewish relations.

"Dinkins made this into a racial issue, Giuliani didn't. He says if you don't vote for him, you don't vote for any black, and black-Jewish relations fall apart. It's stupid, it's nonsensical and it's insulting," said Schoenfeld.

Despite such sentiments, Dinkins has assembled an awesome array of Jewish community leaders to endorse him and campaign for him, including past presidents and chairpersons of the local United Jewish Appeal, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Rabbinical Council of America, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, as well as leaders of the Lubavitch and Satmar Hasidic movements and many others.

The Jewish leaders made the endorsements in their private capacities, as the organizations they represent do not make political endorsements.

Giuliani's efforts have yielded only a few minor endorsements, mostly by some militant Zionist activists and rabbis.

Nonetheless, the polls suggest Jewish voters in large numbers will break with their leaders and vote for the Republican. The only questions seem to be how wide the gap will be and how leaders on both sides handle the fallout.