

Zev forges his New Alliance

By JOEL ROTEMAN, Executive Editor

For Zev Siegel, former British blockade runner bringing Jewish refugees to Palestine, a couple of his major dreams are coming true. First of all, his dream "of bringing refugees into the US mainstream," the way "Israel does," is nearly a reality.

Siegel is president of New Alliance College and Alliance Institute, a degree and non-degree college that has set its sights on educating Eastern European refugees into useful American citizens.



Z. Siegel

Come this fall, New Alliance College will welcome some 2,000 students into classrooms in a 83,000 sq. ft. office building that formerly served the USX Bridge Division in Ambridge.

Over hot corned beef sandwiches, the burly Siegel, a former Mossad agent, told The Chronicle, "I have worked all of my life with refugees in Israel, from before Statehood days. When it comes to absorption -- klita -- Israel does it better. Here in the US, the first generation of refugees is lost.

"So, I decided to do what Israel does. They bring refu-

gees into the mainstream in their own lifetime. Israel pumps out integrated citizens." Siegel has already signed Russian and Polish governments into trade missions with the school.

He had graduated from Alliance College, a Polish-American funded school of higher education that was located in Cambridge Springs, PA. "We wanted to buy the campus when the college went under -- 188 acres of beautiful cam-

pus and 14 buildings, but that fell through."

Among the original members of Israel's Navy, Siegel had been in Palestine-Israel since he was 17, when his Zionism led him from his Washington, D.C., home with his parents, to found Israel's most successful moshav, Beit Herut, midway between Haifa and Tel Aviv on the Sharon coastal plain.

He calls his New Alliance College, first and foremost, "a super Ulpan," where English as a Second Language (ESL) "will be a thorough year's immersion, not a six-week deal." His mission is to "Americanize" and educate Russians and

other Eastern Europeans to earn a living.

The college, private and non-profit, will be affiliated with Penn State through its nearby Beaver campus. PSU faculty will do the teaching.

From where will his students come?

"All over the US. There are thousands of Polish, Russian, Yugoslav and others who have found us. Of course, I have a special place in my heart for the Soviet Jews," says Siegel, whose family roots are in Lithuania.

Where did the concept of a refugee college come from?

"From a living legend named Jan Wydro, who has raised about \$750 million for Americas, a charity that sends medical supplies to Eastern Europe. I was speaking at a Kosciusko Foundation meeting when he approached me."

The college for refugees will concentrate on non-degree programs as well as three degree programs. In the non-degree area, New Alliance will teach ESL, Americanization skills "Klita" and how democracy works.

In the degree program,

New Alliance will teach business -- "small business start up," environmental engineering, and, for existing registered nurses from Eastern Europe, a two-year program for the Commission for Graduation of Foreign Nursing Schools.

"It's a national board for registered nurses. We will make American nurses out of them. The business school students must do a small business project with a real plan."

Dorm space will be in Penn State Beaver dorms and in private homes and tuition will be the same as PSU's. "Our fundraising group called The Founders will provide scholarship funds. No one will be denied entrance for lack of money. Refugees," Siegel added, "are eligible for just two things: Medicare and student financial aid."

New Alliance will have start-up ESL classes beginning in the summer. For openers, the venture to open such a college has required about \$2 million -- some of it Siegel's own money. Paul Kulik is the school's executive vice president.

Among his other job descriptions -- Mossad agent,

moshavnik, naval officer -- Siegel found time to establish an industrial plant in Israel, producing the state's first contemporary ceramic giftware and lamps, some of which are on permanent display at the Haifa Art Museum.

So far, Siegel's dreams are coming true. "We have hundreds of applicants for New Alliance so far and we haven't even gone public. I will encourage our Soviet Jewish students to go to synagogue services," he said.

Olim must be HIV-free

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- New immigrants to Israel and visitors who plan to stay longer than three months must prove they are free of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, to get their visas, according to new restrictions taking effect within a week.

Those persons failing to show proof will not automatically be barred from entering the country, as stipulated in the original proposal, but instead, each individual case will be reviewed by the Interior Ministry.



NEW home for New Alliance College is the former USX Bridge Division offices in Ambridge. Photo courtesy The Sewickley Herald.



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