

The New Russian Revolution: Rush To Freedom

Annual Campaign helps train olim teachers

BEERSHEVA, Israel -- In the 1980s, scholarship students at Beersheva's Practical Engineering College were struggling youngsters from nearby and often downtrodden neighborhoods.

Today, they're middle-aged Soviet immigrants, earnestly building new careers.

Half of the 170 immigrants, trained Soviet educators, are more accustomed to giving grades than receiving them. For others, student life is a novelty. Employed as scientists and engineers in the Soviet Union, they're preparing to teach the sciences in Israel.

All are participants in a teacher-training program, Operation Opportunity, which runs in both the Negev and Galilee. The purpose of the program is twofold: immigrants acquire a skill and underdeveloped regions

of the country get a boost in population. Operation Opportunity is funded by the Jewish Agency, which is supported by contributions to the United Jewish Federation's 1991 annual campaign.

Anna Zinger, an economist from Moldova, has discovered a new aspiration. She explains that the differences between Soviet and Western economics ruled out working as an economist in Israel. She then says, "To be honest, I don't mind giving up working with facts and figures all the time. I like the idea of developing relationships with students." The students are less



LEARNING teaching skills are Soviet Jewish immigrants.

threatening than some of the immigrants had feared. Leonid Margolis, from the Ukraine, chose to become a physics teacher when he realized that Israel had little need for turbine engineers. But he had some reluctance about facing a classroom with his less than perfect Hebrew.

Still surprised by the students' warm reception, he says, "They don't make fun of us. Instead, they're kind and encouraging." Margolis has seized the teacher training program to start fresh. He says, "This is a new challenge in a new country."

Veteran Soviet teachers, who have no qualms about conducting a class, have

been more sensitive to the differences between Soviet and Israeli youth. Israelis, who have a rigorous matriculation curriculum, are credited with being far more mature than their Soviet counterparts.

Chaim Anstey, a physics and math teacher from the Ukraine, has noticed, "Israeli teenagers are far more responsible and ambitious. They have a clearer idea of where they're going in life."

Now, these newest immigrants also know where they're going in life. At the moment, they're studying a range of topics from advanced Hebrew to peda-

gogics. But in the future, and armed with this new knowledge, they'll make their mark on a generation of young Israelis.

The United Jewish Federation's 1991 Annual Campaign offers an opportunity to make a commitment to

help Jewish families trying to immigrate to Israel from distressed lands.

To make a commitment to the 1991 Annual Campaign, write to the United Jewish Federation, 23 McKee Pl., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 or call 681-8000.

Furniture dealer helps ease Soviets' plight

By HOLLY LEHMAN, Chronicle Staff

"If I can give a chair for an older lady or a desk TV in, a lamp for a man to read by or a table for a young girl to do school work then I'm going to do it," states Dan Waldman, owner of Belmont Furniture, a family business currently in the business of helping Pittsburgh's Soviet Jews.

"They come with nothing and their support from UJF ends after four months. It's the least we can do - I wish it was more," he adds.

Waldman and his family have always been involved in Jewish concerns and in this instance, he feels he is truly in the position to make somebody's life a little easier.

"I started by helping a couple families resettle, moving heavy boxes and books. We said, 'If you need the help we'll be happy.' My drivers came back and told me these people had no furniture."

Waldman realized that little money the Soviets did have would be spent on food and not furniture. At this point he put a call in to Madelon Edelstone, Resettlement Volunteer Services coordinator, and volunteer, Jack Gordon at the UJF.

"I told them to look in the warehouse - we're gonna do it," he recalls.

According to Waldman, Belmont Furniture and several other Pittsburgh furniture stores, many owned by Jews, have a surplus of furniture that is either nicked, sent from the manufacturer by accident or just not

selling. "It would normally be marked down for clearance, for someone on a tight budget or during our last sale. They're easy to sell if we wait for the right event. It's nice, usable and sellable but what the hell... I'd rather give it away. It's not a question of money but of helping other people."

Waldman's next step was to fax his available inventory to Edelstone and Gordon.

"They were worried about coming to pick up the furniture but we have six trucks," he says, adding "We're absorbing all expenses, there's no expense to anyone but Belmont Furniture."

"They tell me where and when to deliver and it will be there," he states.

"It's the least I can do," he says, when asked about the cost to his company. "I feel privileged to work in a family business, to live in America and be able to be proud to be a Jew."

Waldman suggests other furniture store owners interested in helping should call Federation and Gordon at Edelstone and Gordon can be reached at UJF, 681-8000.



THROUGH the efforts of rotating groups of Yeshiva University students, the 3,000-member Jewish community of Tallinn, Estonia, has rediscovered its religious identity. The student-organized and run group, the Yeshiva University Students for the Revival of Soviet Jewry (YUSSR), has raised \$75,000 to send two students every five weeks to Estonia to teach children and adults at the Tallinn Jewish School. Below, three of the first four participants to return and the group's founder, including, from left: Jeff Paley of Teaneck, NJ; founder Hillel Novetsky of Staten Island, NY; Kevin Taragin of Brooklyn, NY; and Yitzchok Rosenblum of Woodmere, NY. Above, Rosenblum with some of his students at the Tallinn Jewish School.



Efforts fail to prod Soviet Jews back

BONN (JTA) -- Efforts to convince some 300 Soviet Jews in Berlin to return to Israel have had meager success.

Only about 15 of the former olim who left Israel are said to be willing now to board a flight to Tel Aviv. But others have admitted telling falsehoods about their treatment in Israel.

The 300 Soviet Jews came to Germany in January at the height of the Persian Gulf War, claiming they were escaping Iraqi Scud missiles falling on Israel.

But when their temporary

visas expired last month, they refused to return. Many said they were disappointed with Israel, were mistreated there and were forced to settle in the administered territories.

They carry Israeli travel documents, and the Jerusalem government insists they must not be treated as refugees but be made to return to Israel, asked the nationals they are.

Israel asked the Germans to make clear to the emigres that they had no chance to become legal residents of Berlin.

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A salute to resettlement volunteers

The hundreds of people who volunteer their time to assist in Pittsburgh's Soviet Jewish resettlement effort were honored last week by the Jewish community.

Held at Beth Shalom Congregation, volunteers were given an opportunity, during a recognition program, to sign a historic record of their work that was presented to the Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

"The evening was an opportunity to thank the many volunteers who have given so much time and energy to the New American resettlement project. Their efforts have been extensive and worthwhile," said Harriet Kruman, chairwoman of the event.

Merrille Weisman, chairwoman of the United Jewish Federation New American Resettlement Committee, noted "Volunteers have been involved in every facet of resettlement, supplementing and enhancing the work of resettlement professionals. I speak on behalf of the

Pittsburgh Jewish community in honoring your volunteer efforts and applauding your energy and commitment.

Dr. Misha Galperin, assistant executive vice president of the New York Association of New Americans, was the keynote speaker.

Introduced by Louise Silk, chairwoman of Resettlement Volunteer Services, Dr. Galperin discussed the vital role volunteers play in acculturation of immigrants.

"The volunteer, the informal partner, who drives a New American to a doctor's appointment or helps a New American practice his or her English plays an important role in helping the emigres feel truly at home," he said. "The volunteer effort in Pittsburgh is one in which the community should feel intense pride."

More than 500 people have volunteered time and assisted in resettling more than 180 Soviet Jews in Pittsburgh. Luba Khaykin, a New American, addressed



VOLUNTEERS to Pittsburgh's Soviet Jewish Resettlement effort were honored. Standing, from left, rear: Linda Silverman, co-chairperson, Volunteer Services; Arlene Weisman, president, Women's Division; Karen Shapira, vice-president, Women's Division; Carolyn Levovitz, chairperson, Volunteer Services. Seated, from left: Merrill Weisman, chairwoman, New American Resettlement Committee; Dr. Misha Galperin, assistant for New York Association for New Americans and keynote speaker; Harriet Kruman, chairwoman, Volunteer Recognition; and Louise Silk, chairwoman, Volunteer Services.

the gathering about her personal experiences with

CDS/SS sets Bible contest in Hebrew

Community Day School/A Solomon Schechter School will be holding a Hebrew Bible Contest for grades 2-5, with each class preparing a different book of the Bible, according to Hebraic-Judaic Studies Director Dr. Zepora Gur.

The contest will take place at Tree of Life Congregation May 16 at 7 p.m. and is open to the public.

There will be a written test in Hebrew after which competing contestants will be chosen. The contest will include five class finalist on each team, which will compete against each class.

Judging the contest are Dr. Eunice Baradon, Sara Reichman, Nurit Bar-On, Chantze Butler and Rabbi Alvin Berkun.

"If we had done the contest in English, the kids would show more knowledge of Rashi, and perhaps give better explanations. But the purpose here is really to bring Hebrew as the language of the Bible to life," notes Dr. Gur. "We hope to really strengthen their love and confidence of the Hebrew language." Gur adds that the kids "are already so excited they've been taking their books home to work with their parents.

"Americans seem to be losing the edge," Gur notes. "Many times we don't make our kids work as hard because we want them to have 'fun.' We often seem willing to sacrifice feeling. At CDS/SS we feel it is important to sometimes show there are winners and hard workers; competition can be healthy."

ized legal and dental services, helping Soviets prepare themselves for employment, serving as mentor families (National Council of Jewish Women), and staffing the resettlement referral line (521-INFO) which serves to inform New Americans about services available to them and links volunteers interested in the resettlement effort with appropriate agencies.

"Your dedication to the New Americans has done so much to ease the burden of this difficult transition. We applaud and thank you for your effort," said Kruman.

Although the volunteer historic record was presented at the program to David Fax, vice chairman, Advisory Committee on the Jewish Archives and Faye Leibowitz, archivist, it will be available to volunteers to sign this month at the United Jewish Federation, 234

McKee Pl. All volunteers are encouraged to sign their names to this historic record.

Resettlement volunteer services are coordinated by the UJF Women's Division, whose president is Arlene Weisman.

JCC-kibbutz joint program on May 6

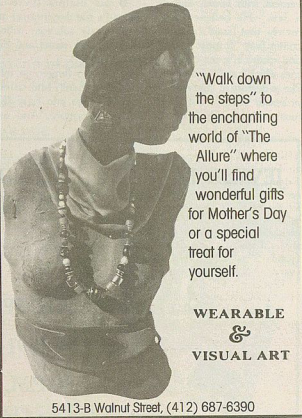
Let's Go Israel, a joint program of the Jewish Community Centers and the Kibbutz movement, will hold an open house on Monday, May 6, 8 p.m. at the JCC.

Ella Zeilinger and Amitai Rotem will provide information about the program, security, scholarships, etc., and will show slides from previous years.

This is the last chance for teens ages 15 - 18 and their parents to hear about the program.

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RECENTLY holding their 6th annual Membership Appreciation Brunch was the B'nai B'rith Pittsburgh Council. Guest speaker was Dr. Saul S. Friedman, professor of history at Youngstown and Kent State Universities. Key participants included, seated, from left: Dr. Steven Smiga, Council president; Sam Friede, chairman; Alan Hausman, Council chairman; Dr. Friedman. Back row, from left: Sherman Strager, 2nd vice president of B'nai B'rith District 3; Irv Elling, past district president and Council 1st vice president; Marc Fargotstein, secretary; David Iszak, immediate past district president; Mitch Silver, regional director.



HANDLING reservations for the Ladies Hospital Aid Society's annual meeting in Ronna, Mark, left. The event, a professionally staged fashion show, will introduce Larry Rabi Heimer of the Chapeilney program. It is set for Thursday, May 9, 11:30 a.m. at Westmoreland Country Club. LHAS Executive Secretary, Ann Keck, will be honored. The cost of the afternoon is \$15. Contact the office, 648-6106, for reservations and transportation information. Finalizing plans with Mark are, center, Janice Daub, chairwoman of the day, and Patti Berman, arrangements.

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