

## Jewish Immigration to the United States

IN THE three fiscal years, from July 1, 1965 to June 30, 1968, a total of 21,900 Jewish immigrants entered the United States,\* a sharp decline

\* For the previous four fiscal years see the article on "Jewish Immigration to the United States" *American Jewish Year Book*, 1966 [Vol. 87], pp. 92-97.

from the preceding period.

TABLE 1. JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES, 1966-68

| <i>Area of Last Permanent Residence</i> | 1966 <sup>a</sup>        | 1967 <sup>a</sup>        | 1968 <sup>a</sup>        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Europe                                  | 1,800                    | 950                      | 650                      |
| Canada                                  | 500                      | 500                      | 500                      |
| Latin America (including Cuba)          | 2,950                    | 2,150                    | 2,250                    |
| North Africa (including Egypt)          | 400                      | 450                      | 700                      |
| Asia (except Israel)                    | 50                       | 50                       | 50                       |
|   | <u>5,700<sup>b</sup></u> | <u>4,100<sup>b</sup></u> | <u>4,150<sup>b</sup></u> |
| Israel                                  | 1,800 <sup>c</sup>       | 2,500 <sup>c</sup>       | 3,650 <sup>c</sup>       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <u>7,500</u>             | <u>6,600</u>             | <u>7,800</u>             |

<sup>a</sup> Fiscal year ending June 30th.

<sup>b</sup> Based upon United Hias Service statistics.

<sup>c</sup> United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report*, 1966, p. 35; 1967, p. 37; preliminary figures to be published in the *Annual Report*, 1968. (Figures have been adjusted to allow for non-Jews.)

The sharp drop in emigration from Europe during these years was mainly caused by the practical cessation of emigration from Rumania and prohibition of all Jewish emigration by some Communist countries in the wake of the six-day war in the Middle East.

The estimate for Canada has remained stationary, as has that for Asia, except Israel.

Figures for North Africa rose between 1967 and 1968 as a result of the greater movement by Egyptian Jews from temporary European havens and, to a smaller extent of more immigration opportunities for Moroccans to the United States.

The number of Cuban Jewish immigrants to the United States declined slightly each year. At the same time, the great change in Latin American Jewish emigration to the United States varied from country to country and year by year. It depended on such factors as the political and economic conditions in the country, the orientation to the United States, and the conditions of antisemitism in each country. The decline between fiscal 1966 and 1967, was due in part to the labor certification requirement of the immigra-

tion act. The only substantial rise in immigration to the United States in the last two years was from Israel.

### *Characteristics of New Immigrants*

There was only little information on the characteristics of the Jewish immigrants, and this mainly on those who were assisted by the agency in the field. However, in most cases, the same also would apply to nonassisted immigrants.

The average size of the Jewish immigrant family entering the United States was between 2.5 and 3.0 persons. Occasionally, there may have been large families of eight or more, usually of North African or Egyptian origin, but these were balanced by the single immigrants.

The initial settlement of immigrant Jews was in the larger cities of the United States. The New York city metropolitan area, including the five boroughs, Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk counties, usually retained between 40 and 50 per cent of the total. Almost all the immigrants settled in some 25 states. It remained the policy of United HIAS Service (UHS) to resettle as many persons as possible outside the New York city area, since it was believed that their adjustment elsewhere would be easier and quicker. However, extremely Orthodox Jews were usually resettled in New York city because of its large Orthodox population and facilities. Cuban Jews have preferred to concentrate in the Miami area (p. 242) and UHS has tried to persuade them to move elsewhere for easier adjustment.

There have been few summaries of the ages and sex of the Jewish immigrants, even of those assisted. It is believed that their average age was higher than that of all immigrants because of the small size of their family units and their refugee background. The division by sex of immigrants from Israel in Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics for fiscal 1967 was about half and half.

Since those assisted by UHS were largely refugees or "needy," their economic level was low. Since many of them came from the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, they were of clerical, sales, operatives, craftsmen, service, and professional groups. Few farmers or household workers were among them.

### *Effects of New Legislation*

The obvious question is to what extent the new major immigration act has affected this immigration. Public Law 89-236, enacted October 3, 1965, became effective on December 1, 1965 (AJYB 1966 [Vol. 67], pp. 164-175). As the 1921 and 1924 immigration laws, it was implemented in stages, in the switch-over from the previous major immigration law. The act became fully effective on July 1, 1968.

Thus for five months of fiscal 1966, or the period from July 1 to November 30, 1965, the McCarran-Walter Act was effective and for seven months,

from December 1, 1965 to June 30, 1966, some features of the new law were in operation.

Beginning with the second phase, the quota provisions of the earlier law were gradually scaled down. However, the new law applied "labor certification" by the Department of Labor to all but certain classes of immigrants, such as close relatives and refugees. Labor certification meant a guarantee that the immigrant would not displace a qualified American worker available for a job, and that his entry would not adversely affect the wages or working conditions of a similarly employed American worker.

Bearing in mind that about half of fiscal 1966 was under the National Origins Quota System and the second half under the new law, the trend has been as follows:

TABLE 2. TOTAL AND JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES, 1964-68

| <i>Fiscal year</i> | <i>Total immigration</i> | <i>Jewish immigration</i> | <i>Per cent Jewish to total</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1964               | 292,248                  | 9,300                     | 3.2                             |
| 1965               | 296,697                  | 7,800                     | 2.6                             |
| 1966               | 323,040                  | 7,500                     | 2.3                             |
| 1967               | 361,972                  | 6,600                     | 1.8                             |
| 1968               | 454,448                  | 7,800                     | 1.7                             |
| <u>Total</u>       | <u>1,728,405</u>         | <u>39,000</u>             | <u>2.3</u>                      |

From the table above it is clear that total Jewish immigration declined from 1964 to 1967, and then rose in 1968. However, when compared with total immigration into the United States, the percentage of Jewish immigrants steadily declined in these five years. The average of Jewish immigration in the last two full years under the National Origins Quota System was 8,550 annually, while the annual average for the first two full years under the new immigration act was 7,200. Thus, at this relatively early point, two and a half years after the new act went into effect, it appeared that the new law has not benefited Jewish immigration, either in absolute figures or proportionately.

Table 3 shows the effect of the new law on assisted Jewish immigration into the United States, e.g. those aided by UHS from areas of political and economic insecurity, such as Eastern Europe and Arab countries.

TABLE 3. TOTAL, ASSISTED, REFUGEE, AND NONREFUGEE JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES, 1964-68

| <i>Fiscal year</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>UHS assisted</i> | <i>UHS per cent of total</i> | <i>UHS refugee<sup>a</sup></i> | <i>Refugee per cent of UHS</i> | <i>UHS non-refugee</i> | <i>Non-refugee per cent of UHS</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1964               | 9,300        | 1,842               | 19.8                         | 1,044                          | 56.7                           | 798                    | 43.3                               |
| 1965               | 7,800        | 2,199               | 28.2                         | 1,599                          | 72.7                           | 600                    | 27.3                               |
| 1966               | 7,500        | 2,244               | 30.0                         | 1,282                          | 57.1                           | 962                    | 42.9                               |
| 1967               | 6,600        | 1,560               | 23.6                         | 1,122                          | 71.9                           | 438                    | 28.1                               |
| 1968               | 7,800        | 1,466               | 18.8                         | 906                            | 61.8                           | 560                    | 38.2                               |
| Total              | 39,000       | 9,311               | 23.9                         | 5,953                          | 63.9                           | 3,358                  | 36.1                               |

<sup>a</sup> Includes those entering under refugee laws or refugee preference and Cuban Jewish refugees who have not come in under the regular immigration laws.

In the last five fiscal years, UHS-assisted immigration totalled 9,311, or 23.9 per cent of all Jewish immigrants, averaging annually 2,020 for the two full years before the new legislation was in operation, and 1,513 for the full two years after that point.

Assisted refugees, as defined by earlier refugee acts and the seventh preference of P.L. 89-236, plus Cuban refugees (who did not come in under the regular immigration laws), constituted 63.9 per cent of the total UHS-assisted Jewish immigrants in the five year period. In the first two full years since the new law went into effect, the annual average of refugees, as defined above, was 1,014, or 67.0 per cent of the total assisted. Under the last two full years of the old law the corresponding average annual number was 1,321, or 65.4 per cent. There was no great change in the proportion of refugees, but there was a decline of about 300 in their number. Refugees were not affected by the application of the new law, which basically repeated the older law on this category.

An analysis of the nonrefugees whom UHS assisted is needed to determine the effects of the new law. The annual average of these immigrants in the fiscal years 1964 and 1965 was 699, and 499 in 1967 and 1968, a loss of exactly 200 per year. Thus, the new immigration legislation seemed to have hindered rather than aided assisted Jewish immigration.

It is ironical that for years UHS led other Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in attacking the McCarran-Walter Act and in supporting the new legislation. It is also ironical that Congressman William F. Ryan, the liberal Congressman for New York city, is the sponsor of a bill to increase the number of immigrant visas for any one country to its annual average level in the ten year period before the new legislation—apparently a reversion to national origins.

### *Purposes of Immigration Act*

How do the principles underlying the new immigration legislation compare with the rationalization of the old National Origins Quota System? The old laws of 1921 and 1924 were basically reenacted in the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. Their aim, at least originally, was to stem the flow into the United States of Jews and other ethnic groups from Eastern and Southern Europe in order to preserve the ethnic character of contemporary America. They therefore limited immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere to the proportions of ethnic groups in 1890 and 1920 censuses and, in this way, favored the earlier British, German, and Irish settlers of the United States.

Also, a 150,000 maximum annual quota was set for immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere. If the quota for any one country was not filled, the unused visas could not be used for other countries which were oversubscribed. In practice, the quota for Great Britain, which was almost half the grand total for the Eastern Hemisphere, was rarely filled: some 30,000 immigrant visas went to waste annually, while the quotas for Eastern and Southern European countries were greatly oversubscribed, and many prospective emigrants had to wait for their visas for years until their turns came.

If any one thing characterizes the new immigration law, it is its emphasis on family reunion. Seventy-four per cent, or almost three quarters, of the new preferential visas for the Eastern Hemisphere were for immigrants wishing to join close relatives in the United States. The principle behind the new law is therefore very similar to that of the National Origins Quota System, namely, to preserve more or less the ethnic character of contemporary America.

Despite the increase in the number of immigrants, P.L. 89-236 was in theory more restrictive than the earlier laws. Under the latter, immigration from the Western Hemisphere was unlimited; the present limitation from this area was 120,000 per year. And whereas the former refugee law, the "Fair Share" Act of 1960 had no limitation but rather adjusted the number to what other countries did about allowing in refugees, the new law had a limitation of six per cent of the total allowed in from the Eastern Hemisphere, or 10,200. This total further restricted the number of refugees coming in, since it included in its total the adjustment of status of aliens already in the country. This limitation would pose great difficulties in case of a large exodus of refugees, as for example, from the Soviet Union.

The labor certification clause of the new act, providing that immigrants must not displace American workmen from their jobs has already caused hardships for immigrants and potential immigrants. With this provision the United States Department of Labor entered or reentered the field of immigration as the protector of American citizen labor. It was the department's responsibility to bar the entry of certain categories of prospective immigrants engaged in occupations that cannot absorb all American workers, and to make certain that overseas applicants for visas had promises of unfilled

jobs from American employers. Thus, 17,406 domestic workers and only 3,721 sales workers were admitted in fiscal 1967. The selection of immigrants was not based on their potential value to the economy, but rather on present need. This militated against the immigration of Jews, especially those in lower income categories.

In summary, it can be said that (1) the number of assisted Jewish immigrants to the United States has declined since the October 1965 immigration act went into effect. (2) Immigrants from Israel, who generally had close relatives in the United States, came in relatively large numbers, probably as the result of the new law. (3) There have been difficulties for Jews in regard to labor certification and the red tape involved. (4) The present legislation would make it very difficult for a large number of refugees to enter the United States at any one time. (5) There were many difficulties in getting into the United States "new seed" immigrants who were not closely related to American citizens.

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