

MRS. FRANK COHEN 88 CENTRAL PARK WEST NEW YORK, N.Y. 10023

June 11, 1974

Rabbi Norman Lamm
The Jewish Center
13 West 86th St
New York, N.Y. 10024

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

I find your reasoning that Russian Jews should be welcomed here by Jews and not criticized for not going to Israel somewhat strange. Is it or is it not our duty to build up the population in Israel through aliya? Why should we support the deception of raising funds for UJA so that Russian Jews should go to Israel only to encourage them to come here? The reason we are given to understand for their leaving Russia is because they cannot live as Jews. Where else than in Israel can that be fully realized? Especially as the majority of Russian Jews coming here will not be an asset as Jews to our community. Most of them have really no interest in being Jewish except the minority coming from religious families where Judaism somehow survived.

It was quite a different matter when the Jews who survived from the Nazi holocaust came here. That was a matter of human survival, and the question of Palestine at the time was too complicated politically. Then we had a moral obligation to welcome the survivors. What is our moral obligation to welcome Russian Jews here? Because they happen to have been born Jews? Because they were not given the privileges of other citizens in Russia in terms of schooling and employment?

Do we need numbers in the United States, increasing the rolls with non-identified Jews? In their own words, according to the article in this morning's Times, many of them are more Russian than Jewish.

I do not feel at all guilty because I have not gone to live in Israel. My life has been devoted to Jewish education and to Israel. I believe that as an American Jew there is importance for me to remain here and act on behalf of Israel. I do not feel that Russian Jews have this orientation. They have come here for a variety of personal reasons, primarily to help themselves. They will not be an asset to American Jewry.

It should be made very clear by the UJA and JDC that when we give to these organizations that our funds are being used to bring Russian Jews to the United States. We have all been brain washed about the need to get Jews out of Russia to Israel. Four thousand this year and ten thousand next. Is that how we will build Israel?

Sincerely,
Yours

Whel Cohen

1/74

Resolution for Orthodox Union Convention

Soviet Jewish Immigrants in America

Since 1973, an ever increasing number of Soviet Jews have emigrated to the U.S.A. While the O.U. would prefer that these Jews go on Aliyah to Israel, we feel that we are not in a position to judge them. Moreover, in many cases there are personal elements which motivate some Soviet Jews to opt for America.

Ever since Abraham and his ^{teaching} ~~feeding~~ of hakhnasat orchim, we Jews have been aware of the significance of hospitality. We therefore call upon all communities into which Soviet Jews move to:

1. Set up classes to teach English to all age groups.
2. Assist in finding suitable employment for the immigrants.
3. Assist in re-training some immigrants toward new ways of making a living.
4. Assist in finding them housing and furniture.
5. Establish resource-people to give advice to newcomers.
6. Open their doors and hearts to help the immigrants make new friends.

Moreover, we must use this opportunity to bring to our Soviet correligionists the message of Torah, which has so long been denied to them. To this end, educational facilities must be available for the children. Day Schools must be prepared to admit children gratis. Teen agers must receive seminar-type instruction in Jewish history, tradition, and heritage. Adults must be taught the rudiments of Yiddishkeit - kashrut and Shabbat, prayers, etc.

We call ^{upon} ~~your~~ local communities to reach out to the newcomers, and to make available to them facilities for Brit Milah and Huppah and Kiddushin. Attempts ~~would~~ be made to have available Chumashim and Siddurim with Russian translation, and special adult courses ~~would be granted to~~ them.

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