

HIAS Ends Year with Airlift

In what amounted to an airlift on Sept. 28, some 1350 Soviet Jewish refugees arrived at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York on eight consecutive flights throughout the day. It was the largest number of Jewish refugees to arrive in the United States in one day since World War II.

The Soviets were processed in Europe and brought to this country by HIAS, the migration agency of the American Jewish Community, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. According to HIAS Executive Vice President, Karl D. Zukerman, "Rosh Hashanah is about beginnings. This is the beginning of a new life for our clients who have just arrived in the U.S. I can't think of a better time for them to have arrived."

The airlift arrivals brought the total number of Soviet Jews processed by HIAS in Europe during fiscal year 1989 to 38,000, the most refugees processed by any single agency in one year since World War II. From that group 28,750 U.S. visas were issued to refugees, a number equal to that issued in 1979, the

year of highest emigration from the Soviet Union. The remaining emigrants went to Canada and Australia, or were refused refugee status by the INS.

The airlift came just 48 hours before the end of the federal fiscal year. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service had recently announced that on October 1, 1989, the beginning of the new fiscal year, they would begin processing Soviet Jewish candidates for refugee status at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

The numbers of refugees arriving in the airlift, however, did not anticipate the shift in INS procedure to Moscow, but rather the standard end-of-the-year push by INS and HIAS to bring as many Soviet Jewish refugees into this country as permitted by quota prior to the end of the federal fiscal year at midnight, Sept. 30. Until the President signs the 1990 Refugee Order, which will set the limit on Soviet refugees at 50,000 (some 40,000 of whom will be Jewish), there will be no visas, and therefore no flights carrying refugees.

Though shifting the process-

ing to Moscow will certainly affect HIAS procedure in the long run, for the immediate future, the agency will maintain a heavy work load in Europe. All those Jews holding valid Soviet exit visas dated prior to Oct. 1, 1989 will still be processed by HIAS through Vienna and Rome. It is estimated that 30-40,000 Soviet Jews fall into that category.

Concurrent with INS' procedural changes, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh sent a directive to the INS instructing the agency to unilaterally review all cases previously denied refugee status — approximately 5,000 individuals — with "the most generous standards."

HIAS was subsequently informed by the INS regional European director that motions to reconsider cases would no longer be necessary, since the INS was voluntarily reopening each case. According to Zukerman, "The results were gratifying: During the last 10 days of September, the INS in Rome overturned 198 cases (families), giving 611 persons refugee status."

Historically the President signs the yearly refugee quota by mid-October. At that time, HIAS once again starts moving refugees out of Europe to begin their new lives in the United States.

HIAS is the international immigration agency of the organized Jewish community, founded in 1880. It is a beneficiary of the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and Jewish federations across the country.

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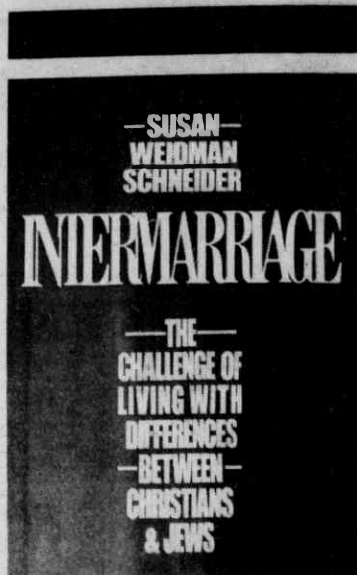
Reading a Book Starting from the End
By Amalia Warshenbrot

INTERMARRIAGE: The Challenge of Living with Differences Between Christians & Jews, Susan Weidman Schneider, The Free Press, July 1989.

Susan Weidman Schneider could have given her new book the single title *Intermarriage*, yet she added a subtitle which makes her unique view clear: "The Challenge of Living With Differences Between Christians & Jews." It is a positive view drawn from the experience of many couples, their parents, children, counselors and friends who wished to make their marriage work in spite of the differences.

So, why did I start reading from the end? The index at the end shows that there is not even one aspect of this difficult issue that the author overlooked. From the index I chose to read some issues that interested me personally, ranging from generational, gender and background differences to adult children of interfaith couples; baby naming and death ceremonies; December dilemma; divorce; Michael J. Fox; and guilt feelings, to name a few.

The author identifies the problems clearly and shows the aspects of them and endeavors to offer solutions. Interfaith



marriage is twice as common today as it was years ago and couples will benefit from other couples' experiences. The book examines each stage in the couples' life together and tries to help couples reach for a deeper understanding of their partnership.

Ms. Schneidman will visit Charlotte on December 10, as the highlight guest speaker of the Jewish Book Fair, which will run December 10-13.

Happy Thanksgiving

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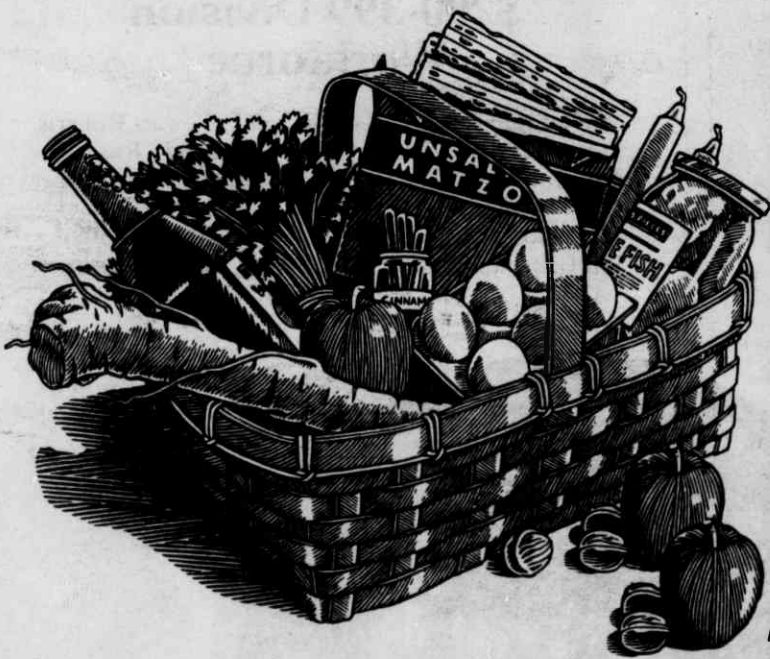
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