

# Immigration Law May Be Improved

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

This is the summer of their discontent -- those 1900 freedom-seeking Haitians confined in camps across the U.S.

But there are two scraps of hope for the escapees from the authoritarian regime of Haiti's Jean-Claude Duvalier, known as the "President-for-Life." One is the refusal of a three-judge panel of a federal appeals court to stay U.S. District Judge Eugene F. Spellman's order for the release of the penned-in refugees to their sponsors in this 14th month of incarceration. The second is the possibility that a new American immigration bill, based in part on recommendations of a blue-ribbon immigration commission, may win asylum for them.

These developments cap a string of harrowing escape-to-freedom efforts by brave refugees. Their odyssey hit low point in October, 1981, when 33 Haitians, making their run for liberty in small, frail boats were found dead on a Florida beach. These were a handful of the 1000 or so Haitians reported arriving monthly in southern Florida.

Washington has held these humans in flight to be economic, not political, refugees. Because they flee the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere (per capita annual income \$300), their need for jobs in the U.S. stamps them ineligible for traditional asylum in the judgment of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Their plight stirred heavy sentiment in their favor when U.S. Coast Guard cutters were dispatched to interdict Haitian ships in the Windward Passage. That action made mockery of U.S. tradition. Added compassion was felt for the Haitians when the Administration sought to deny the courts jurisdiction to hear challenges by the escapees' lawyers. This seemed to many an effort to put the President above the law.

Not all students of our discrimination-scarred history of immigration policies hold that the proposed new legislation is as fair and humane as free men would have it. The proposal calls for a limit of 425,000 people a year (apart from refugees whose entry is fixed by a 1980 act). But at least, the plan raises the morale and hope of Haitians beaten down by a harsh government with a sorry record of torture, cruel punishment for minor criminal infractions, arbitrary arrests, and denial of fair trial.

American Catholics have, understandably, a deep interest in the plight of these poor fugitives. Haiti is 80% Catholic. Blacks also are fighting hard for the Haitians' cause and have raised complaints of American discrimination on the basis of race.

Those who labored for more than 80 years to upgrade U.S. Immigration and Naturalization laws would recognize the importance of this struggle for justice for the Haitians. Their uphill fight started soon after the end of World War II when the infamous 1924 national-origins-quota law was enacted. This retrogressive piece of legislation delighted members of the Immigration Restriction League and misguided anthropologists and sociologists whose successful efforts to saddle the ideology of Nordic supremacy on America facilitated the efforts of biased lawmakers to discriminate against Jews and Catholics coming from "non-Aryan" nations.

American shame was written even deeper into U.S. immigration regulations when Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada and Congressman Francis Walter of Pennsylvania succeeded in fastening discriminatory quotas on the national-origins structure in 1953. Thus the numerus clausus pattern was imported from Europe to America by restrictionists, many of whom openly asserted they wanted to lower the gates of entry on Jews. In advancing his prejudicial handwork, Congressman Walters acknowledged that American immigration authorities had made use of Nazi documents in screening refugees from East Germany.

Those who now labor to win fair play for Haitians fighting against odds to gain asylum here could gain inspiration by reviewing the herculean and successful efforts of the National Citizens Committee for Immigration. Those efforts came to fruition Oct. 3, 1965, when President Johnson signed a new immigration law, not perfect, but humane and free of the ugly term, "quota system."

Season tickets are now available for Nevada Dance Theatre's 11th ballet season, presenting concerts in October, December and February 1983. The traditional Christmas ballet, "Nutcracker" will be featured as the December program. Subscription tickets will save 25% on regular admission and offer priority seating. NDT offers a special rate for groups of 20 or more as well as a dinner/ballet package with Jubilation Restaurant. For information, phone 739-3838.

## WCC STATEMENT UNDER FIRE

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- The Foreign Ministry has publicly rejected a statement by the World Council of Churches (WCC) blaming Israel for the plight of the refugees and homeless in Lebanon and demanding the immediate lifting of the Israeli siege of West Beirut where the PLO is trapped.

The WCC, comprising 400 churches of the Protestant, Greek Orthodox and Catholic faiths, based its charges against Israel on a report by a five-member delegation which the WCC had sent to Lebanon. The report was made to an assembly of the member churches held at the WCC's headquarters in Geneva.

Most of the WCC officials denounced Israel in discussing


the report of the delegation. The unanimity of the anti-Israel stance expressed at the session was shattered by one of the WCC officials, Armenian Archbishop Agamia, and by sharp and skeptical questioning by reporters at a press conference on the delegation report.

Agamia said it was "strange" that one of the WCC representatives found "fit to mention" the 20,000 Christians he said were killed and the 200,000 Lebanese civilians who lost their homes long before Israeli forces pushed into Lebanon last June 6. He chided his fellow clerics for ignoring the hardships suffered by the Lebanese as a consequence of the PLO actions in Lebanon.

### ISRAEL PREMIER MOURNS HENRY FONDA

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following Cable was Sent by Prime Minister Begin to Henry Fonda's Daughter Jane Fonda.)

PLEASE ACCEPT DEAR FRIEND ON BEHALF OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL OUR HEART-FELT CONDOLENCES AT THE PASSING AWAY OF YOUR FATHER. HENRY FONDA WILL BE REMEMBERED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN CREATIONS. I CONSIDER HIS ROLE IN THE TWELVE ANGRY MEN AS A MASTERPIECE NEVER SURPASSED AND NEVER EQUALLED. YOUR FATHER WAS A DEVOTED FRIEND OF ISRAEL AND YOU CAN BE PROUD OF FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS BOTH IN ART AND IN FRIENDSHIP FOR OUR PEOPLE AND COUNTRY. YOURS WHOLEHEARTEDLY, MENACHEM BEGIN.



**Travel Talk**  
From  
**LINDER TRAVEL**

**CHUCK JOECKLE**

### GIFT BUYING ABROAD

Every traveler with any conscience at all is haunted by the knowledge that he must buy gifts for friends or family back home. Before you part with the foreign exchange, here are a few tips:

You're allowed to bring back \$300 worth of goods, duty-free so don't waste the privilege. Air mail back one gift per day to a different person on your list and keep its value under \$10. This way you'll avoid duty as it's declared "gift" and you'll have a lighter suitcase during your trip in addition to giving yourself more leeway on that final \$300 custom evaluation. I say "air mail" because it's positively unbelievable the way packages sent from abroad via surface can disappear along the route.

Remember that you concierge in the hotel can be a very good friend and that his judgement and advice can usually be relied upon. But always check the local export rules before buying if you find something special. You might not be allowed out of the country with it.

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