

Congressional hypocrisy has rarely been more blatant. Not only is the American Congress today championing "direct flights" after decades of previously insisting on the right of Soviet Jews to choose where they want to go.

No limits to Congressional hypocrisy—Part II

THE current hypocritical effort by the US Congress to pressure the Kremlin into allowing direct flights full of Soviet Jews to Tel Aviv—and at the same time to do another end-run around Presidential "pressure" towards Israel—is but the latest example of Congressional whorring on behalf of Israel and at the behest of the Israeli/Jewish lobby.

That was the subject of the first part of this column last week.

But there is much more to this situation than just the typical cowering of key members of Congress to the monetary bribes and political rewards incessantly offered by the Israeli/Jewish lobby.

There is also a historical backdrop to what is going on today on Capitol Hill regarding Soviet Jewry, a backdrop that has important ideological as well as monetary and political aspects.

What is involved is a struggle for ideological supremacy within the Jewish world coupled with the more immediate goals of American money for Soviet Jewish resettlement in Israel and the undermining (or at least "controlling") of the executive branches meager efforts to bring about some form of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Over the past few years, even as Israel's overall position in world affairs has become far more controversial, the Zionist establishment has essentially fought and won a major battle in the ongoing ideological struggle that has raged for nearly 40 years. In a very real sense, the Israelis have forced American Jews to knuckle under.

Since the 1950s, a kind of

underground ideological war has raged between the Zionist zealots of Israel and the self-proclaimed liberals who head some of the major American Jewish institutions such as the American Jewish Committee and the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS).

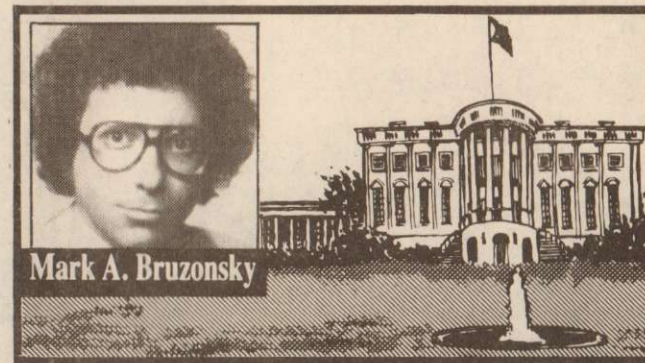
The zealots, right from the beginning, insisted that "good Jews" simply had to come to Israel, whether they wanted to or not. They saw coming to Israel more as a neo-religious duty, especially important in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

Associated with this way of looking at Jewish identity was the usually unspoken put down that Jews who remained elsewhere - most especially in the US - were not fully equal, were not fully "Jews" if you will.

The liberals, especially those with the most to lose from their connection to American society, countered that they could not force their fellow Jews to go somewhere they didn't want to go; nor in fact should they. And indeed the liberal organisations within American Jewry were in the forefront for many years of providing various mechanisms to help Soviet Jews come to the West. Unspoken in their position was their desire to contend that one was as good a Jew living in America as those Jews living in Israel.

All along, of course, everyone realised that under the table various incentives were being extended, and constantly increased, to get those Russian Jews leaving the Soviet Union to become Israelis. But all along as well it was quite crucial to the liberals who dominated American Jewish life to maintain that

From



Washington

they were fully supportive of the position that oppressed Jews should be helped to go and live wherever they wished; for if they were to take any other position, so they then thought, they would have undermined their own feelings about their American identity.

And so, in a very real sense, this debate about Jewish immigration between Zionist zealots and Western secular liberals has paralleled the basic debate over the legitimacy of the Diaspora itself.

Soon after Israel's creation David Ben-Gurion attempted to enforce the basic existential concept that Israel was the state of the Jews just as England was the state of Englishmen, France the state of Frenchmen. There was a pragmatic aspect to all this; for Israel attempted a major push to get large numbers of American Jewish emigrants to come to build and expand the new Jewish state. But Ben-Gurion also believed in the notion that that now a Jewish state existed "good

Jews" should come there to make their lives.

Yet Ben-Gurion's efforts to be a new Moses to American Jews had little appeal in the US. Israel was too weak; American Jews too strong. Israel was too economically difficult; America in the heyday of post-war opulence.

Furthermore, though Zionist ideology mandated Ben-Gurion's proclivities; conditions within Israel and among Jewish communities really necessitated a far slower assertion of Israel control over world Jewry.

First of all Israel needed its Jewish supporters abroad, especially in the US (though this was less evident in the 50s than it became in the 60s and 70s) and secondly the new state's leaders soon realised they had to be a bit more gentle with the sensibilities of the largest community of Jews in America, Jews who were far more committed to American democratic secularism than many Israelis had initially understood.

Moreover, the contradictions and dangers inherent within Ben-Gurion's narrow nationalist way of defining Jewishness were quickly causing concern in the US.

It was not just intellectual opponents like Alfred Lilienthal (who in 1953 wrote the fascinating book *My Flag Is Not Your Flag*) and Elmer Berger who

Soviet Jews were really eager to go to Israel it wouldn't be that big a deal for them to first travel to wherever they could and then make the trip to Israel. But the situation is actually much different. The Israelis have learned over the years that a very small percentage of emigrating Soviet Jews will actually go to Israel if they have any other choice.

Hence, the continuing push for "direct flights".

Meanwhile, cowardly American Jews have pretty much acquiesced in this new situation, essentially closing their eyes to the decades of struggle behind them in which their predecessors refused to knuckle under to this kind of Zionist heavy-handedness.

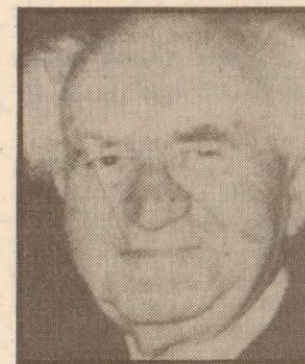
And now the American Congress is being further enlisted in this struggle as well.

The very Congress that previously championed "freedom for Soviet Jewry" is now being pushed, bribed and cajoled to support "direct flights"—two diametrically opposed notions.

"Freedom for Soviet Jewry" always meant the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate to a country of their choice. Of course there always was a basic unresolved issue here—why this special treatment for Soviet Jews? The answer to this question never was very clear, however. And inherent in this confusion were the seeds of what we are experiencing today.

For once it became conventional wisdom that somehow Soviet Jews should be treated specially, that even relations between the US and the USSR should be made to pivot on the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration (i.e., the "Jackson Amendment"), the embryo of today's "direct flights" situation had been implanted.

Yet "direct flights"—whatever subterfuge reasons are given—is specifically designed to take



David Ben-Gurion

away the freedom of Soviet Jews to decide where they can resettle, exactly what both Congress and American Jews had previously insisted upon!

Congressional hypocrisy has rarely been more blatant. Not only is the American Congress today championing "direct flights" after decades of previously insisting on the right of Soviet Jews to choose where they want to go. It has as well passed legislation specifically closing the immigration gates to this country while at the same time pushing the departing Soviet Jews upon the Palestinian Arabs who are themselves being expelled and suppressed with other funds allocated by the same Congress.

No wonder this issue has become so volatile and so emotional in recent months!

Next week, in Part III about this subject, more on how the American Congress is being manipulated to pressure the Soviets on the issue of "direct flights" and how the Israelis intend to get American money to resettle Soviet Jews.

Tamil guerrilla women 'deadlier than the men'

By Patrick Cruz

WITH cyanide capsules around their necks and assault rifles ready to fire, the women guerrillas of the Tamil Tigers have moved out of the jungles and into the towns.

Following the withdrawal of Indian peacekeeping troops, the emergence of the Tiger women, who long have been talked about but less often seen, is jolting Tamil society in the Jaffna peninsula.

Violence has been rampant since the ethnic minority's separatist revolt began in 1983, but warfare generally was considered men's work.

"Our social fabric and lifestyle have been completely destroyed. It will never be the same after seeing these young girls carrying guns," said Velupillai Kanapathipillai, a Tamil school teacher, echoing traditional beliefs that Tamil women should be shy and retiring.

Lt. Imelda, a 26-year-old commander of the female Tigers of Tamil Eelam, feels otherwise. She said she and her women cadres can handle not only their T-81 Chinese assault rifles and machine pistols, but also rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns.

Her two-storey headquarters was guarded during a recent visit by about 25 camouflage-clad Tiger women. They are allied with, but segregated from, the male Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which fielded the biggest guerrilla force against the Sri Lankan Army and later the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

No men were in sight, and the rare male visitor is eyed with suspicion.

Imelda, who like many of the male Tigers used a code name, said 26 female Tigers died in face-to-face combat with Indian male soldiers in the last two years.

She denied rumours that the female Tigers were created to fight the Indian paramilitary policewomen who served in Sri Lanka along with the all-male

Indian Army.

"No Indian woman soldier can fight me," Imelda said, her eyes blazing. "They are powder puffs. I challenge them."

Neither the male nor female Tigers will give the total strength of the guerrilla forces fighting for a Tamil homeland in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

More than 11,000 people have died since the separatist campaign started in 1983 by Tamil militants who said they needed an independent nation — to be called Tamil Eelam — to counter domination by the island's Sinhalese majority.

Sinhalese, who control the government and army, comprise 75 percent of Sri Lanka's 16 million people. Tamils account for 18 percent.

Last year the Tamil Tigers started negotiations with the Sri Lankan government to enter the political mainstream. As the Indian troops withdrew, there was no serious opposition by the Sri Lankan armed forces when the Tigers took over positions and whole towns once patrolled by the Indians.

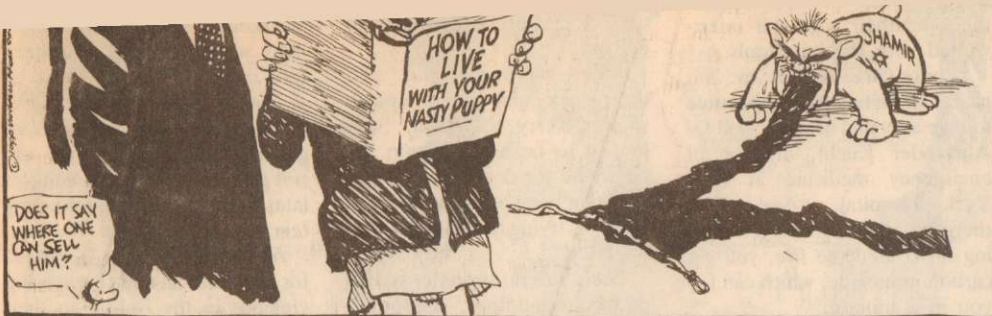
While Jaffna town is patrolled mainly by male Tigers, many residents speak with awe of the female Tigers who periodically are seen in the town as well as in outlying village.

One of Imelda's fighters, 20-year-old Valarmathy, said: "Women have been in the forefront of the liberation struggle all over the world. We are no exception." Like Imelda, Valarmathy refused to say when she joined the Tigers or what she was doing before becoming a guerrilla.

Stanley Dominic, district leader of the male Tigers, spoke with visible pride about the female Tigers.

"They do everything we do," he said in an interview in Jaffna town. "They man checkpoints 24 hours. They drive heavy trucks captured from the Indian Army. They take part in active combat, and they are willing to bite their cyanide capsules to avoid being captured."





'IT SAYS HERE THAT NO MATTER HOW BADLY HE BEHAVES, ONE MUST NEVER DAMAGE HIS DELICATE EGO WITH EVEN GENTLE REBUKE. ONE SHOULD MERELY SAY, "TSK! TSK!"'

My children of Palestine

'We have lost everything, there is nothing to lose'

By Joan Jackson

I JUST returned in October 1989 from four weeks in Palestine — a combination of heaven (the Palestinians) and hell (the Israelis) — a country that is one giant prison! In the beginning you think that it is impossible, but after a few days you learn to live with the sounds of war — the gunfire, the explosions, the jet fighters, the helicopters, the military vehicles roaring around, the shouting soldiers and police, the walkie-talkies, the sirens, the beating of wooden clubs and metal crow bars on doors or sandwich stand tables by the Israelis; the rocks hitting the metal frames of buses and cars, the beating with rocks and sticks on the metal doors of the closed shops of the Palestinians by the Palestinians. I travelled the occupied West Bank from north to south and from east to west and the Gaza Strip from one end to the other and talked with Palestinians all along with way.

You watch the Israeli army and police travel in packs like wolves. In each encounter with them you receive either a frown or a growl. They command everything except respect. The vast majority are cowards and beasts.

The Palestinian lives his life day by day or maybe I should say minute by minute. He never knows what will happen next to himself, his family, his friends.

He watches his family and friends shot, tear gassed, beaten and killed before his eyes. The pain of this is within his heart always. He knows also that he may be next.

Usually the Palestinian tries not to think about what is happening around him. Sometimes he wants to talk about it but most of the time he tries to forget for a little while. When people have been face to face with so much sorrow they feel a bit numb, but always alert. A Palestinian must be alert to stay alive.

The Palestinians do not live with a morbid fear of death but with an acceptance. They live under the tension of a country involved in a full scale war, only this war is one sided — Israeli army and police against unarmed Palestinian civilians!

Only God and the computer know for sure exactly how many Israeli troops and police and

armed settlers are in the occupied lands but it must surely be a number that far outnumbers every Palestinian man, woman and child.

The mental, physical and emotional suffering of the Palestinian is something that one must be there to feel. All of the reading materials, pictures, both still and moving, and talking with those who have been there are not the same as actually being there. You think you know the pain but until you experience it you don't. Multiply one hundred-fold what you who have not been there know and even then you don't understand. You read, you see the pictures, you hear and your heart goes out to the Palestinian, but when you are there....

I did my research well before I went and I knew all of the dangers to expect and I, like the Palestinians, faced them. I went in and came out alive, but with a very wounded heart that may never heal. The longer you are in Palestine the longer you want to stay and help. I wanted to stay forever, but my work is on the outside trying in some small way to help make the world understand the situation in Palestine. I met many good, caring Palestinian friends who will always be in my heart and my prayers who helped me walk the thin line I had to walk while I was there. I faced many problems and challenges and never once did a Palestinian fail to help me through them. God and the Palestinians were with me all of the way helping me to find everything for which I searched.

The entire country is filled with barbed wire but the pride of the Palestinian is unbounded — pride in themselves and their country. The people are kind, generous, hospitable and always treated me with the greatest respect.

Humiliation is a word heard over and over again from different Palestinians. It is what they are subjected to by the Zionists 24 hours a day every day. They watch while their crops are destroyed, their land and possessions confiscated and can do nothing to stop it. And this is the democratic state of Israel!!!!

The Intifada will continue until there is peace because as the Palestinians say: "We have lost everything, there is nothing more to lose." Their one desire is for peace in their own homeland — Palestine.

vociferously challenged the new Israeli definition of Judaism. Serious concern for Ben-Gurion's attempt to dominate American Jewry and define Jewish existence in the Diaspora as well as in Israel were coming from many segments of even the most pro-Israeli elements of the American Jewish establishment.

This resistance by the Jews living in the Western World, especially those of the US, led to a stalemate, a kind of ideological truce. The American Jews understood that their own nationalistic legitimacy as "good Americans" was ultimately at stake. They further understood that the Zionist zealots were attempting to assert control not only over the state of Israel but also over world Jewry, even though their numbers were quite small.

Furthermore, many of the leaders of American Jewry at that time understood that the secular world they had been working to achieve—a world where Jews were fully accepted as Americans in a culture that prided itself on integration and unity rather than segregation and ethno-chauvenism—could ultimately unravel.

And so an uneasy alliance was born. Ben-Gurion agreed to drop the ideological crusade and stop undermining the legitimacy of Jews as citizens of diverse countries—at least in public and out loud. American Jews agreed to support Israel whole-heartedly with money and political clout.

But today the Israelis, led today by even a more virulent form of Zionist zealots, have manipulated the current situation to their advantage once again.

Most importantly they have outmanoeuvred American Jewish institutions that always insisted they would help Soviet Jews emigrate wherever they wished to go.

What the Israelis have created instead are new conditions where the only place still willing to accept large numbers of these emigrants is Israel, whether or not they wish to go there.

And yet, most Soviet Jews still want to go elsewhere. And that's why all the pressure today on "direct flights."

For "direct flights" is but another step in forcing Soviet Jews to Israel, taking away their options, making it much more difficult for them to choose for themselves where they want to live.

After all, if the departing

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