

CONFIDENTIAL
Outline of Plan for Illegal Immigration of Falashas

Submitted to General Poran, Prime Minister's Office
By Professor Howard M. Lenhoff

Prepared in Collaboration with Mr. Baruch Tegegne,
an Israeli Falasha.

Jerusalem, March 7, 1978

I. Introduction:

- A. Even though there may be some progress towards another legal immigration, we fear that the numbers again may be small, that the process will be long and drawn out, and that the legal method is fraught with too many difficulties. The distances are great (over 750 km from Gôdar to Addis) and the route is difficult with many conflicting parties jeopardizing the route.
- B. Our plan involves a much shorter route, in some cases less than 50 km for over 1,000 Falashas, and involves only one military party. In addition, if the plan has even moderate success, it may be possible to save at least 5,000 people within two months. *years*
- C. Therefore, we respectfully request that full attention be given to the plan submitted in outline form below. The key person to contact immediately is Mr. Baruch Tegegne (address given at end). Time is running out for the Falashas. We can not afford to wait another month or even a day.

II. Essence of Plan:

- A. Through the cooperation of the E.D. U. (the counter revolutionary party in control of most of the areas in which the Falashas live), and with the help of 5 Israeli Falashas (who know either the Sudan area and people, or the Falasha villages), and through bribery (the way of life in Sudan), etc., it should be possible to bring thousands of Falashas to the Sudanese border by foot in the matter of 1-3 days. Once there, and declared political refugees (Christian or Moslem), they can be transferred by truck and/or rail to Port Sudan where a ship under foreign flag (Greek or Italian) can pick them up and take them to Israel. NOTE: A ship is better than airplane; for one, to go to an airport will be too obvious. In addition, until enough people are ready, they people will have to be housed and will arouse suspicion. With a ship, on the otherhand, it will not be obvious, more people can be saved, and the ship can serve as the hotel.

III. Preparation Needed

[REDACTED]

to Poran

page 2

March 7, 1978

- C. Dispatch two Israeli Falashas (or one Falasha and one "Caucasian" because "Sudanese respect white people more") to the Sudan (via Nigeria) [REDACTED]. There they will determine the best routes to transport the Falashas from the Sudanese border to Port Sudan, will arrange transportation, and will bribe people for the necessary help and/or permissions. (NOTE: They can pose as Nigerian Moslems on the way to Port Sudan to go to Mecca or Medina).
- D. Make certain that sympathetic UN officials will receive Falashas at at the Sudanese border and to issue them papers as political refugees.
- E. At the border, after they cross, they should be provided with Sudanese-style clothing so that on their journey to Port Sudan, they will not arouse suspicion among the native Sudanese.
- F. Bribe the harbor-master of Port Sudan so as to allow the Falashas to enter the ship at night. [REDACTED]
- H. Hire a ship under foreign flag to be waiting in Port Sudan (or even some distance from the harbor) to accept the refugees and to transport them to Israel.

IV. Time Schedule of Operation:

- A. [REDACTED]
- B. Immediately: Contact Mr. Baruch Tegegne and send him and 1-2 trusted companions to Sudan via Nigeria. They can be doing all the preparatory work in Sudan while the rest is being arranged.
- C. Immediately: Start negotiations with E.D.U.
NOTE: This is the crucial point. Once the E.D.U. can be bought, the rest of the operation should be very possible.
- D. Once E.D.U. issue looks resolved, negotiations for UN officials, bribery of harbor master, obtaining a foreign vessel, etc. can proceed.

V. Operation:

- A. The five Israeli Falashas (and possibly a Caucasian) enter Sudan.
- B. Three go to Gelabat, Sudan, cross over the Ethiopian border with the assistance of the E.D.U., go to the Falasha villages, and prepare the Falashas for travel.
- C. They then bring the Falashas with the aid of the E.D.U. to Gelabat where these Falashas (posing as non-Falashas (Moslems or Christians), will get papers declaring them as political refugees by UN official. They will then change into Sudanese clothing and be briefed on "proper lies" should they be stopped on the way to Port Sudan. For example, they could say they want to join families in Sudan.

Poran

page 2

March 7, 1978

- D. Then, with the aid of Baruch Tegegne and companion(s), the Falasha refugees will move mostly by night to Port Sudan. It appears possible to arrange a train voyage from Gedarif, Sudan, to Port Sudan, thereby saving much time.
- E. Again, by night, the refugees will enter the ship, and will be taken to Eilat.

I. Considerations and Precautions:

- A. This entire operation must be conducted with Mr. Baruch Tegegne:
1. He knows the Sudanese border and Sudanese people well.
 2. He knows Sudanese and E.D.U. people in that area. (One of his close friends, [REDACTED], may still be an E.D.U. leader.)
 3. He has experience bribing Sudanese.
 4. He has done some work for Israeli Embassy in this area.
 5. He has worked for KOOR selling their products to Sudanese.
 6. He was involved in the futile resettlement plan of Falashas at Sudanese border.
 7. He owned a large cotton farm at Sudanese border.
 8. He speaks Arabic, Hebrew, English, Amharic, Tigrenian, and understands Greek and Italian.
 9. He can provide many references of KOOR and other Israeli officials who have been in Ethiopia.
 10. He should be consulted regarding the selection of other Falashas.
- B. Not a word of this plan must be breathed to any other Israeli Falasha because they might write their relatives in Ethiopia and thereby disclose the plan.
- C. I have discussed this plan (in briefest details) only with Mr. Rosenberg. I plan to submit copies to Mr. Y. Dominitz and Mr. H. Halechmy [REDACTED].
- D. If Israel does not want, for political reasons, to officially sponsor this operation, it can be done in the name of some Jewish or American organization. I personally can not see any reason why such would be necessary.

II. Concluding Remarks:

- A. Regardless of any other negotiations, [REDACTED] and Mr. Tegegne and companion(s) should be sent to Sudan immediately.
- B. If the E.D.U. agrees, this plan is very feasible and should be given all of the high level attention that the Entebbe operation received. Here we have the chance of saving the lives of thousands of Jews' lives. [REDACTED]
- C. The legal method seems too tedious, too difficult, and has too many chances for failure.

- D. Time is running out for the Falashas. The emotional state of the Israeli Falashas is explosive. Now is the time for drastic action.
- E. Assuming that this operation brings even only a few thousand Falashas to Israel this year (and it must), Israel must be prepared to receive them, otherwise there will be severe social problems. I have already submitted to Deputy Minister Yadin a detailed plan by which Israel could have "The Perfect Klita", an example for what Israel really stands for. He should be helped in implementing this plan immediately. Coordination of aliyah and klita of the Falashas is a must. Their record as Olim in Israel is perfect and must stay that way.
- F. One of the problems confronting the relationship with Israelis and Americans interested in the Falashas, has been their mutual distrust. I can say with great pleasure that I have trust in Prime Minister Begin's desire to rescue the Falashas. I also hope that through this document, my document to Professor Yadin, through our discretion in avoiding dangerous publicity, through our financial support and cooperation of the Israel Committee--that we have earned your trust.
- G. Therefore, I request that you keep me abreast of the situation regarding aliyah from your office. With such a trust and connection established, I can foster more help from the American Jewish Community, and I can quiet those people (including myself) who are very concerned and become frustrated by the lack of information and lack of understanding of the difficulties involved.
- H. I offer my services in any way you deem necessary.

Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

Howard M. Lenhoff
Howard M. Lenhoff
Prof., Univ. of California
Vice President, American
Association for Ethiopian Jew

APPENDIX:

Mr. Baruch Tegegne, Maon Tiran, Room 128, Herzlia Pituach.

Phones: (03) 930-668 and 930-000.

NOTE: He moves out of the Maon this week. He is in between jobs and is ready to help today.

Prof. Howard Lenhoff, 304 Robin Hood Lane, Costa Mesa, Ca. 92627 USA
Phones: home (714) 642-8613; office (714) 833-7299

NOTE: I leave Israel March 5 and will return within 9 months.
Confidential information can be transmitted by the nearby Los Angeles Consulate.