

Promised jobs while abroad, social workers feel pinch

By **JUDY SIEGEL**
Jerusalem Post Reporter

Social workers who were specially recruited by Israeli representatives abroad have found themselves jobless after coming on aliya as a result of economic conditions, Dr. Eliezer Jaffe of the Israel Social Workers' Association said yesterday.

The association is preparing a letter-writing campaign to press the government to open frozen job slots in the social services for new olim.

Several dozen social workers who were recruited in the U.S. by a joint effort of the Jewish Agency and the government — and were told that there were "hundreds" of suitable jobs in Israel — are out of work, Jaffe stated.

One of the social workers recruited in New York after being told of "500 available jobs" is Gila Berman, 26, who came on aliya a year ago with two years' working experience and a master's degree in social work.

She studied Hebrew and got a job at the Hadassah University Hospital's oncology department, receiving a monthly IL5,000 stipend from the Absorption Ministry. But now Hadassah is unable to pay her

salary on its own and the ministry has given no word about renewing the stipend.

A ministry official told her: "Why don't you go out and find yourself a job," Berman informed *The Jerusalem Post*.

She applied to all the welfare agencies and hospitals in the Jerusalem area, and several government and private institutions throughout the country and was told that no jobs were available.

"I've conquered the barrier of language, and even though I have no family here, I have begun to carve out a niche for myself and find some friends," she said. "All I'm asking is for the opportunity to work hard."

Aides of Absorption Minister David Levy could not be reached for comment last night.

'Aliya isn't for social workers'

Jerusalem Post Reporter

Recruitment of American Jewish social workers for aliya is being discontinued by Tour Va'aleh and the World Union of Jewish Students because of the difficulty in finding jobs for those already here.

David Bidein, a social worker who spent a year in New York recruiting colleagues, and is now working in Safad, said last night that there are 120 social workers who have already signed up for aliya. "But I don't know what will happen to them now," he said.

WUJS, which runs a Hebrew ulpan for academics, has sent notices to America warning candidates that they cannot guarantee social work jobs here.

The sudden drop in the number of social service jobs resulted from the government's freeze on new employees and the decision not to hire an additional 900 community workers for Project Renewal, as reported yesterday.

Fired social workers to be reinstated with gov't aid

Jerusalem Post Staff

Any immigrant — up to five years in the country — who has been dismissed from a social work job because of budget cuts will be reinstated, with help from the Absorption Ministry, following an agreement that the ministry has reached with the Treasury.

The arrangement, which was reached following reports of firings among olim social workers, will not, however, provide jobs for new olim who have not yet been hired.

The Organization of Social Workers has been asked to inform the employment department of the ministry of all cases of dismissals among olim who served as community workers.

A campaign to recruit social workers abroad for aliya has been

frozen because of the sudden shortage of jobs here that resulted from the government's job freeze and budget cuts.

The Knesset Absorption Committee decided on Tuesday that new immigrants should be partly cushioned against work dismissals on the basis of the "last-in-first-out" principle.

The committee recommended unanimously that each new immigrant taking on employment should be credited with between three and five years of seniority (depending on his age) to make it harder to dismiss him.

The committee decided to invite representatives of the Histadrut, the Labour Ministry and the Civil Service Commission to study the feasibility of the proposal.

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