

FIGURES SHOW A SPURT, THEN A DROP, IN DENIALS OF ASYLUM FO

The New York Times

December 24, 1983, Saturday, Late City Final Edition

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Section: Section 1; Page 9, Column 2; National Desk

Length: 633 words

Byline: By WAYNE KING

Body

R POLES

Statistics released by the Immigration and Naturalization Service have shown that denials of political asylum to Polish exiles sharply increased three years ago, but have eased slightly this year.

In 1980 Congress revised the law governing political asylum to eliminate preference to applicants from Communist countries, including Poland. Since that time, the number of Polish exiles seeking asylum here has grown dramatically because of upheavals in Poland, including outlawing the union Solidarity and imposing of martial law. Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics show that denials of political asylum to Polish exiles sharply increased three years ago, but have eased slightly in 1983; reports it rejected 900 applications and approved 261 in fiscal 1983 (M)

In the past fiscal year, for example, the Immigration and Naturalization Service reported that it rejected 900 applications for political asylum from Polish exiles and approved 261.

The figures, which cover the period from Oct. 1, 1982, through Sept. 31 of this year, were reported this week in response to assertions from groups supporting Polish exiles in this country that rejection rates ran as high as 85 percent.

The figures reported by the immigration service show a rejection ratio of 77 percent.

Verne Jervis, a spokesman for the immigration service in Washington, said the rejections for October and November totaled about 62 percent.

Backlog of Applications

Mr. Jervis said earlier that a perception of stepped up rejections in the past two months might have resulted from an effort within the immigration service to clear a backlog of applications for asylum.

In the fiscal year 1982, more than 90 percent of applications for asylum from Polish nationals were rejected, he reported, with 1,095 denied and 102 granted.

In the fiscal year 1981, 571 applications were denied, and 90 approved, a rejection ratio of 86 percent.

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But in the fiscal year 1980 243 applications were approved and 74 were denied, a rejection ratio of 23 percent.

The reversal resulted from a change in the law on asylum in May 1980. Before that, applicants for asylum from Communist countries, such as Poland, and certain areas of the Middle East were given special consideration, and their applications "were viewed as having an almost automatic asylum grant," Mr. Jervis said.

He said that 1,843 applications from Poles are pending. In addition, most of those whose applications were rejected at an initial hearing have appealed, asserting that they would be in danger if they returned to Poland.

However, he said that because some appeals fall under the jurisdiction of the Justice Department, precise figures on the disposition of appeals are not readily available.

Appeals Can Cause Delays

Although foreign nationals whose applications for asylum in this country are rejected are routinely ordered to leave within 15 days, appeals can delay deportation for years.

In addition, Polish exiles now in this country are exempt from deportation proceedings under special status granted by the immigration service because of unpredictable conditions in Poland.

That special status was first granted on a temporary basis, for six months, in 1981 and has been renewed each six months since then. The current six- month extension expires at the end of this month, and no announcement has been made on whether it will again be extended.

Groups supporting asylum for Polish nationals have stepped up pressure for a higher acceptance ratio.

In August, two professional associations made up of Polish-American lawyers and doctors petitioned both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee for hearings on the immigration service's handling of asylum applications from Polish exiles.

The Senate has denied the request, and no action has been taken in the House because of the recent death of the committee chairman, Clement J. Zablocki, Democrat of Wisconsin.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: IMMIGRATION (93%); POLITICAL ASYLUM (91%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (90%); STATISTICS (90%); DEPORTATION (78%); APPROVALS (74%); DELAYS & POSTPONEMENTS (72%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (72%); MARTIAL LAW (71%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (60%)

Company: IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%)

Organization: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (US) IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%)

Geographic: POLAND (92%); UNITED STATES (79%)

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