

Hong Kong residents rush to apply for emigration

HONG KONG (AP) — Tens of thousands of Hong Kong residents, worried about their future after China's takeover in 1997, flooded the Immigration Department Wednesday, the last day to apply for a special plan to emigrate to Britain.

More than 18,000 heads of households submitted applications for the nationality package by 12:30 a.m. Thursday when police clanged shut a portable gate 30 minutes after the scheduled deadline.

At least 45,000 people, including children and other dependents, waited in line throughout the day, and no one appeared to have been turned away, immigration officials said.

The British nationality package will grant full British citizenship to 50,000 fami-

lies, or about 225,000 Hong Kong residents.

Hong Kong is scheduled to return to Chinese control in 1997, ending 99 years of British colonial rule. More than 1,000 people a week are emigrating from Hong Kong, mainly to Australia and Canada.

Emigration this year is expected to increase at least 30 percent over last year when more than 42,000 people left.

According to Hong Kong immigration officials, about 3.5 million of Hong Kong's 5.7 million people are eligible for the British plan. But less than 10 percent will win the right of abode.

Britain offered the plan in an attempt to stop Hong Kong's most skilled people from fleeing the territory as the date for the

Chinese takeover draws near.

China opposes the British emigration plan and has threatened not to acknowledge the British passports of Hong Kong residents.

On Wednesday, people were packed 12 deep in some places outside the Immigration Department.

The line snaked for almost a mile over walkways and along avenues from morning until late in the night. About 50 people spent Tuesday night sleeping on an overpass and dozens of people fainted in the humidity and heat.

A woman wearing a sleeveless green T-shirt was the last applicant.

"I just want to apply quietly," she pleaded in broken English as news photographers

surrounded her. "Apply quietly for Britain."

As the clock ticked toward midnight, women ran, clutching their babies, fathers sprinted with strollers and young toughs cut in line with an elbow in the face.

"If I don't get out of Hong Kong by 1997, I'm finished. I know it," said Li Qiang, a 42-year-old laborer who fled Communist China to Hong Kong during China's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. "I hate the Communists, and I'm afraid they want to get me."

Li was waiting with his wife and 11-year-old daughter.

During the day, thousands unfurled umbrellas to counter the withering sun. Businessmen whispered into portable phones,

cutting deals as they awaited their turn.

Most of those eligible don't have to formally apply, like people were doing Wednesday, because they already can prove they are British subjects, either by possessing a British-Hong Kong passport or a Hong Kong birth certificate.

The confusion was a further indication of the growing fear Hong Kong residents have of the impending Chinese control.

Over the past few months, the Hong Kong government appears to have bowed to Chinese pressure to limit political discourse. It has prosecuted political activists, censored a film on China's democracy movement and started random identification checks during pro-democracy rallies.

BATTIPS

Anyone with story suggestions can call BATTIPS, The Battalion's phone line designed to improve communication between the newspaper and its readers.

BATTIPS' number is 845-3315.

Ideas can include news stories, feature ideas and personality profiles of interesting people.

Firefighters from around world attend training school

By ISSELLE MCALLISTER
Of The Battalion Staff

Firefighters are blazing through College Station in full force.

More than 4,700 firefighters from 39 states and eight countries are in town attending the 61st annual Texas Firemen's Training School.

The firefighting training school, which continues until Aug. 3, is at Texas A&M's Brayton Fire Field.

The school, hosted by the Texas Engineering Extension Service, trains more men and women annually than any other firefighter training school in the world.

The firefighting school dates to 1929, when the first training program for volunteer firefighters was at Texas A&M College.

About 196 firefighters attended the first program, and the numbers have increased vastly since then.

Firefighters receive intensive instruction by qualified professionals in the art of extinguishing flames.

Among the instructors are Steve Beavers of Phillips Petroleum and Jerry Craft from Exxon. Both participated in firefighting efforts after chemical explosions threatened their facilities, said Brenda Lee Sims, a TEEEX information specialist.

Charles Page, head of TEEEX's Fire Protection Training Division, said firefighters receive extensive

training.

"We are going to train firefighters to protect themselves and to live through a fire," Page said. "The (representatives) from the Exxon and Phillips Petroleum plants will discuss how proper training and preplanning pay off, should a disaster occur."

Sims said the program is categorized into schools for municipal, hazardous material and industrial firefighting. A special Spanish-speaking school also is included. Each school runs for one week.

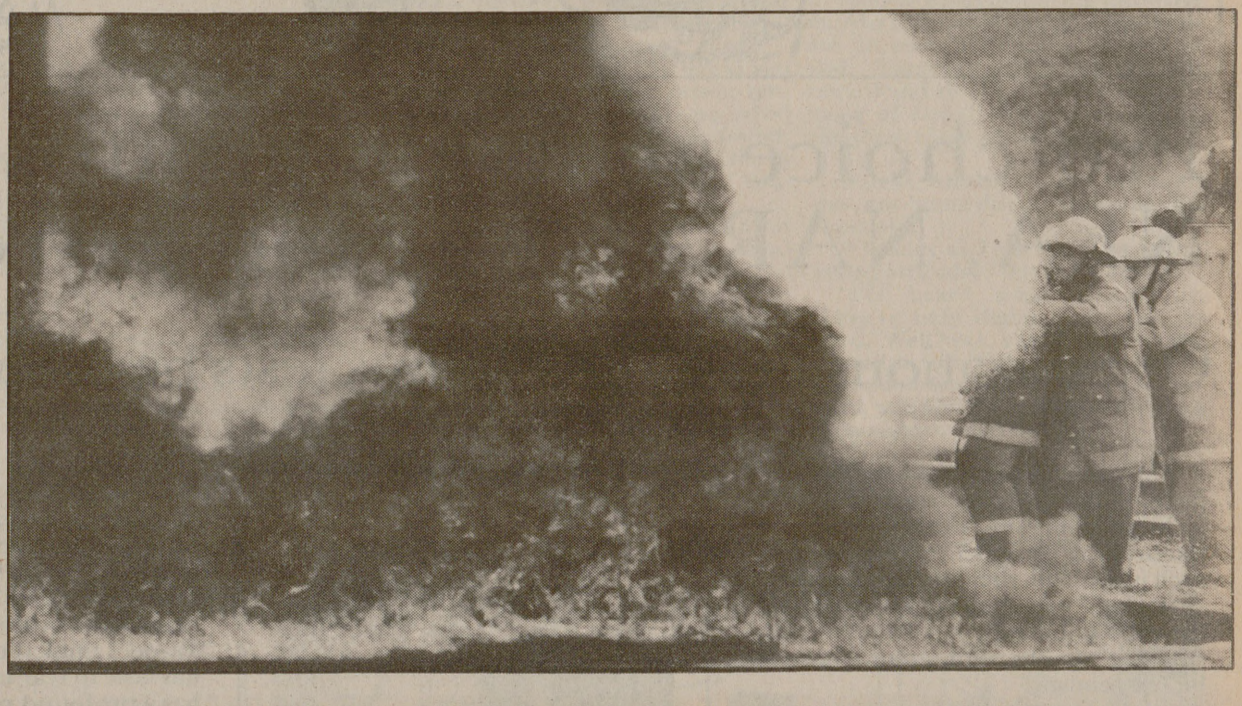
Topics to be discussed range from public education to computer-aided management of emergency operations, she said.

Firefighters learn through a combination of classroom and practical instruction.

Jeffrey McNeel of the Beaumont Fire Department explained that the firefighters learn techniques in chemical and shipboard firefighting, rappelling, industrial rescue and auto firefighting, among others.

Training is not simulated, but instead participants fight real fires in buildings, cars, towers, full-scale industrial structures and chemical plants spread over 60 acres in Brayton Fire Field.

McNeel said state law provides for the extensive fuel and chemicals burned for firefighter training.



Firefighters from Duncanville shield themselves with a wall of water as they get closer to a mock petroleum fire at the Texas Firemen's Training School. Over 2,500 firefighters from around the world are expected here this week to train in the latest fire and rescue techniques.

Group studies need to report racial injustice across campus

By ELIZABETH TISCH
Of The Battalion Staff

The University Awareness for Cultural Togetherness committee met Wednesday evening to discuss the creation of a formal procedure to report incidents of racial harassment that occur on A&M's campus.

Chairman of U-ACT, Betsy Spears, said students are not aware of the many racial harassment cases that occur on college campuses because most victims do not report the incidents due to the lack of a formal procedure.

"Victims of racial harassment feel frustrated because there are so many 'layers' to go through before anything can be done," said Student Activities Advisor Felicia James.

The members of U-ACT discussed last year's incident when a Texas A&M student received a racist letter. She received the letter after she hung a sign over pictures of famous African-American leaders reading, "It's a black thing...you wouldn't understand."

The letter titled, "It's a White Thing You Just Wouldn't Understand" contained derogatory racial statements such as "The KKK will never be destroyed!" "Mandela should burn" and "What color were Adam and Eve."

The student, who wishes to remain anonymous, said she reported the incident to the Department of Student Services. The student, however, could not press harassment charges because the sender of the letter was expressing an opinion.

Moreover, such a reason supports the argument from some that any policy regulating racial remarks violates the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment.

One member of U-ACT said if, however, a student was a victim of sexual innuendos or statements made in inappropriate times or disguised as humor, he or she may file formal harassment charges which are supported under Texas A&M's policy.

Student Body President Ty Clevenger said he is not aware of any policy at A&M that is specifically outlined for racial harassment. Therefore, he plans to use the help from the members of U-ACT to mandate a policy that allows victims from A&M to file formal racial harassment charges.

Along with Texas A&M, students and educators from the University of Texas are trying to enact policies that prohibit ethnic slurs or prejudices. Faculty and students at the University of Texas are attempting to pass this kind of policy after two

Boxed MSC trees suffer shock

By MIKE LUMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Four oak trees removed during MSC expansion are categorized as being "in shock," but are scheduled to be transplanted near Cain Hall by the end of summer.

The trees, temporarily without a place to sink their roots, stand in boxes on the Joe Routh Boulevard side of the MSC.

Eugene Ray, director of the

Grounds Maintenance Department, said trees can experience shock when moved.

He explained shock tends to defoliate trees and is the result of removing them from their fully developed root system and pruning them to reduce their load.

He said one of the four trees had a stronger case of shock than the others.

"It's marginal though," Ray said. "I think it will come out of it."

He also said there is no guarantee all trees in any large-scale move will survive.

Steve Hodge, manager of the University Center, said the original plan was to return the trees to the Rudder Fountain area upon completion of construction.

He said the goal has changed and the intention now is to move them to Cain Field, near Cain Hall, by the end of summer.

"We think they have a better chance of survival if we get them back in the ground as soon as possible," Hodge said.

Before construction began, Dr. Benton Storey, a professor in the horticultural sciences department, said the University Center expansion should be reconsidered.

Storey said this was because he seriously doubted all the trees would survive being transplanted.

"In August, with the extremely high temperatures and the loss of the trees' root systems, it's going to be difficult to get adequate water to the leaves of those trees (in boxes)," Storey said during a public forum about MSC expansion plans.

A representative in Storey's office Wednesday said the professor's position had not changed.

Ray said a total of 12 trees, including the four in boxes, were uprooted from the MSC area before construction began in February.

Eight were transplanted immediately. The four boxed trees remained on the site pending their return to the fountain area, he said.

All the trees are checked and monitored daily, Ray said. The boxed trees are watered, fed and given whatever maintenance is necessary.

"Care has been quite intensive since they were moved," he said.

The University Center expansion, a 2½ year project, was initiated to serve a growing student body at A&M.

Details of the MSC expansion met strong opposition from some students, faculty and staff members over plans to remove several oak trees, including the Rudder Oak.

The \$36 million expansion will add more than 200,000 square feet to the University Center. The project is expected to be completed by November 1991.

Expert says Soviets pose growing military threat

A&M research engineer frets over U.S.S.R.'s intentions

By JULIE MYERS
Of The Battalion Staff

● a space interface.

"We have seen the defanging of only one interface," Thomas said. "Now they speak of creating a common European home, and paint the Soviet Union as a part of Europe. They need technical assistance to do this."

Thomas said the reunification of Germany is part of the process to improve Soviet technology — the Soviets need technical assistance that West Germany can provide and West Germany needs Soviet approval to reunify.

Gorbachev agreed last week to allow a unified Germany to be a member of NATO, while West Germany agreed to send \$3 billion in direct aid to the Soviet Union.

"In effect, West Germany ransomed East Germany for \$3 billion in assistance to the U.S.S.R.," he said. "They're using money as a leverage to get Gorbachev to agree to reunification."

This arrangement between the major European economic power and troubled Soviet Union concerns Thomas.

"In the past, we have seen evidence of German arrogance by knowingly supplying Libyan Leader Moammar Gadhafi with materials used to manufacture chemical weapons," Thomas said.

"The German's view of business seems to be that if there's enough money in it, they'll sell anything to anybody. The only exception is that we're now talking about reunification instead of money."

Thomas said he believes German thinking begins and ends with reunification, and that needs to change.

As part of last week's agreement between West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Gorbachev, West Germany also agreed to help finance Soviet repatriation.

The Soviets don't have the housing or consumer goods to absorb the 370,000 Soviet troops presently in East Germany, so Kohl agreed to help the assimilation financially, Thomas said.

West Germany can afford to give

● a strategic or nuclear interface.

Military threat to the United States is greater today than it was yesterday, last year or when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, a Texas A&M expert on Soviet technology said.

Dr. Richard Thomas, research engineer and director of A&M's Center for Strategic Technology, said that because of this threat, it was important that President Bush agreed to provide technical aid to the Soviet Union.

Bush agreed to technical assistance and not monetary aid for the Soviet Union during the Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations in Houston two weeks ago.

Thomas, who has traveled extensively in the Soviet Union, offered his analysis of the situation.

"It is inappropriate for the West to supply the Soviets with money as long as they provide assistance to countries that oppose U.S. policies, like Cuba, and continue to deploy nuclear weapons that threaten us," Thomas said.

"If the cold war is over, why are they still deploying intercontinental ballistic missiles?" he asked. "If they're our friends, why are they trying to destroy us? We have to be guided by actions, not words."

When the Strategic Defense Initiative was introduced by the United States in 1982, Gorbachev's predecessor, Yuri Andropov, told members of the Communist Party they were losing the technology war and the communist system was crumbling and needed to be fixed.

"They felt challenged to the technical war by SDI, but couldn't fully participate because their research process was, and still is, fundamentally flawed," Thomas said.

He said there are four potential combat interfaces, or areas, with the Soviet Union:

- the NATO/WARSAW pact conventional arms interface.
- the developing nations interface.
- a strategic or nuclear interface.



Boxed tree by the MSC suffers through the heat.