

# Evreiskiye Uroki:

Resources, Contacts, and Strategies in  
Jewish Education for Russian-Speaking Jews



October 2003



UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

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**EVREISKIYE UROKI:**  
*RESOURCES, CONTACTS, AND  
STRATEGIES IN JEWISH EDUCATION  
FOR RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JEWS*

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THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH IDENTITY AND RENEWAL  
UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK  
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*Research Project Conducted by the Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal, Summer 2002  
By Nadya Strizhevskaya*

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook offers a current overview of the Jewish educational programming that exists in the New York area for Russian-speaking émigrés.<sup>1</sup> UJA-Federation of New York offers this publication not only as information for those in the field but also as a request for Jewish professionals teaching and working directly with the émigré population to join in a more coordinated effort to continue developing more and better educational programming for the Russian émigré community. By sharing critical knowledge and information with one another, we can bring about more consistent and substantive change in all the various venues that offer Jewish learning and experiential opportunities for Russian-speaking Jews.

The content of the current study is based upon the research and experience of UJA-Federation of New York's Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal, and it is the outgrowth of a symposium held in Park Slope, Brooklyn in October 2002. This two-day symposium entitled, "Identity and Culture: A Symposium on Jewish Educational Practices in the Russian-Speaking Community" was sponsored jointly by the UJA-Federation of New York, The Department of Jewish Zionist Education of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations (COJECO), and brought together Jewish educators from the New York area and other North American cities, as well as educators from Israel, and those who work in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Though it does not claim to be comprehensive, the directory (see p. 17) does list the majority of program providers in the émigré community. This list continues to grow as the field expands.

<sup>2</sup> The Commonwealth of Independent States refers to the region that is often called the Former Soviet Union (FSU). The term FSU is used in this publication, particularly when addressing a more historical context. In addition, the term FSU is also used when organizations use the term in their own titles or in titles of particular initiatives.

While one of its main goals was to bring together educators working with Russian speakers, the symposium also sought to explore a nascent field within Jewish education that might be called, “Jewish education for Russian-speaking Jews.” While there are Russian-speaking Jews—and also the children of émigrés whose first language is English—who are receiving Jewish education outside the Russian community, their numbers are small. “Mainstreaming” has not been very effective, as Jewish identity resonates somewhat differently in this population. As such, there is little doubt that programs designed specifically FOR this group are much more likely to succeed in generating interest among them. Indeed, for at least a decade, educators have understood that the most successful Jewish programs are those that are rooted in educational forms that have a particular resonance for émigrés from the FSU.<sup>3</sup> These include programs that use the cultural arts as a medium for the transmittal of Jewish concepts and observance, as well as family camping, and other family programming with intergenerational components.

The past several years have ushered in a new and exciting era in the field of Jewish education for Russian speaking Jews because, for the first time in at least a half-century, there are a growing number of Russian speakers entering the field of Jewish education. And, without a doubt, the appearance of these professionals on the Jewish educational landscape has greatly increased the potential to engage Russian speakers in Judaism and Jewish life. In addition—and this is a point that must not be overlooked—Russian-speaking Jewish educators also offer tremendous promise for the continuing reinvigoration of all forms of Jewish education in Israel, in New York, and in many

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<sup>3</sup> As an example of this awareness, see the report of UJA-Federation’s Committee on Jewish Education for Soviet Émigrés (March 1993). The committee was co-chaired by Jonathan Katz and Esther Treitel. The lead professionals on the committee were Howard Wasserman, formerly the Director of Jewish Education at UJA-Federation of New York; and Caroline Katz, Director of Immigrant Services, UJA-Federation of New York.

communities around the world. Because they bring new perspectives and methods to Jewish education, Jewish educators from the broader community should listen and watch for innovative programming coming out of this community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A kind of parallel of this notion can be seen in the development of Jewish community, organization, and leadership in the countries of the CIS today. No doubt, world Jewry will be watching expectantly as the Jews of the former Soviet Union create what promise to be “new” kinds of diaspora communities. For more on this, see Sarai Brachman Shoup’s article, “From Leadership to Community: Laying the Foundation for Jewish Community in Russia,” in Zvi Gitelman, Musya Glants, and Marshall Goldman (eds.), *Jewish Life After the USSR* (Indiana University Press, 2003).

## **A BRIEF SURVEY OF JEWISH EDUCATION FOR RUSSIAN SPEAKERS**

While it is well known that the American Jewish community has been tremendously successful in responding to the immediate financial and resettlement needs of émigrés from the former Soviet Union, it is also true that American Jews have been less attuned to the Jewish “needs” of Russian speaking Jews. Indeed, many activists once involved in the movement to free Soviet Jewry—many of whom are now working directly with Russian Jews in the United States—lament their unpreparedness with regard to the very real (Jewish) cultural and ideological differences separating them from their Russian speaking Jewish brethren. Though they were expecting to encounter Soviet émigrés with different social, political, and (secular) cultural sensibilities, American Jews were not prepared to find the vastly different approach of Soviet (now Russian, Ukrainian, etc.) Jews to their Jewish identity, and, indeed, to Judaism itself.<sup>5</sup> Community leaders took it for granted that Soviet Jews, once settled and ready, would seek out ways to become part of the American Jewish community. To put it bluntly, American Jews thought that Russian Jews would begin attending synagogue services, sending their children to Jewish day and supplementary schools, and joining the boards of Jewish agencies. When this did not happen in any significant way, it became apparent that one of the major obstacles to this type of integration was the lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of the majority of American Jewish leaders. Jewish leaders of all spheres had much to learn about the way that Jews coming from the former Soviet Union defined their Jewishness (more on this below).

Nevertheless, there were many efforts to reach Russian-speaking émigrés through Jewish education. And, to be sure, for some émigrés these efforts were successful. Not

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<sup>5</sup> For a very interesting presentation of the complex and varied definitions of Jewish identity around the world see Steven M. Cohen and Gabriel Horenczyk (eds.) *National Variations in Jewish Identity: Implications for Jewish Education* (New York, 1999).



surprisingly, the most successful programs early on were the local initiatives of émigrés. Two of these earliest successes were school programs *by* and *for* Russian-speaking Jews. In 1979 Be'er Hagolah Institute was established in Brooklyn in response to the wave of 250,000 Russian Jews who had immigrated to America. The institute's mission was to provide Russian émigré girls and boys—through two separate day schools—with the education and skills needed to adapt and succeed in America. Currently, Be'er Hagolah offers every grade from kindergarten to high school, and adds Jewish culture and heritage to the curriculum of math, science, English, and history. The Institute is now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year and, with close to one thousand enrolled students, remains the largest school in the United States dedicated solely to educating the children of Russian Jewish émigrés. Today a Bukharian majority has developed at the school.

About a decade after the founding of Be'er Hagolah, Rabbi Katzin (also a Russian émigré) established Sinai Academy, an all-boys yeshiva for the children of Soviet émigrés. Located in Brooklyn, the school has been extremely successful, and in addition to offering formal education for grades nine through twelve, it also offers a Sunday school, a summer camp, and a *Mishmar* (evening study) program.

The broader Jewish community began to pay closer attention to the issues surrounding Russian-speaking Jews and their Jewish identity in the eighties. In 1985 a study published by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York mapped the affiliation patterns of New York's émigré population and offered several basic recommendations of how best to tailor Jewish educational programs for this community.<sup>6</sup> Most of these recommendations are still very applicable today. Among the points most strongly urged in 1985 were: a) to develop formats that meet the high intellectual standards

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<sup>6</sup> *Jewish Identification and Affiliation of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in New York City – A Needs Assessment and Planning Study*, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, June, 1985

of a highly educated population; b) to focus on family-centered rather than age-stratified programming; c) to create neighborhood-based programs.

Agencies like NYANA (New York Association for New Americans), the Board of Jewish Education (BJE), and JBFCS (Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services) began to intensify their efforts in the area of Jewish education for émigrés in the mid-eighties. As the first point of entry to the American system for most Soviet émigrés, it made sense for NYANA to provide an entry point to the Jewish community, as well. NYANA began to guide émigré families toward Jewish organizations and facilities in their neighborhoods. The agency provided information about Jewish schools and camps and, at times, offered financial assistance to families who wanted to take advantage of these services. As a way to introduce Russian families to Jewish religion and tradition, NYANA encouraged the celebration of Jewish holidays by offering holiday workshops and publications on Shabbat, Chanukah, Passover, etc., in both Russian and English. In fact, many local community organizations still use these bilingual holiday pamphlets today when working with Russian-speaking Jews.

BJE led the way in program development, starting several programs for Russian émigrés in New York. The first program BJE started was at the Shorefront YM & YWHA in Brighton-Manhattan Beach, called *Mishpacha*. This project introduced families to Jewish life through activities they could take part in; holidays, Shabbat, text study, and history lessons. The curriculum developed almost spontaneously, since the teachings pertained to the things going on in the participants' lives (i.e. naming a child, having a first Bar Mitzvah, etc.). *Mishpacha* lasted three years and continued to grow as families brought their friends. A large part of its success is attributed to the fact that émigrés were able to use their own personal experiences to learn about Judaism and the potential role Judaism could play in

their lives. Two years ago, the BJE's Project RUACH was adapted for implementation in the Russian community. The project takes place in public libraries and community centers throughout Queens and Brooklyn. Storytellers use stories, song, and games to introduce Jewish tradition to (mostly Bukharian) families. The program has had tremendous success, especially in Queens, since leaders of the programs live in the communities there and interact with its members outside of work. Again, this example shows how much the success of a program for émigrés depends on having members of the Russian community acting as leaders. Aside from creating and supporting these kinds of programs, BJE serves as a resource center for those who have their own initiatives; providing books, supplies, program ideas, and plans.

Other venues that have been successful in providing Jewish education to Russian speaking Jews are community centers. Indeed, these centers are an obvious gateway into Jewish life for Russian speakers: they are neighborhood-based, have no denominational or religious affiliations, and provide various services to *all* members of the family. Centers such as the Edith and Carl Marks JCH of Bensonhurst, the Shorefront YM-YWHA, and the Kings Bay YM-YWHA in the Marine Park area of Brooklyn are leading examples of community centers that have become hubs of Jewish life for many Russian émigrés. They have adapted their programming to suit the desires and needs of this specific community, and have begun to create educational teams with key Russian-speaking staff to offer inter-generational family programming, youth programming, and camping opportunities for émigrés.

## LATEST TRENDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION FOR RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JEWS

According to statistics in the recently published *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*,<sup>7</sup> Russian émigrés currently comprise 20 percent of the entire Jewish population of New York City. Nevertheless, in a city that boasts a higher percentage of Jews connected to Jewish life than the national average (half of all Jewish households in New York report affiliation with Jewish organizational life) the participation of Russian-speaking Jews in the public Jewish arena lags far behind participation levels among American-born Jews. But there is good news. Because more émigrés are choosing to enter the field of Jewish education and assume educational roles at institutions that serve the émigré population, the situation is improving. Even more, with the proliferation of émigré-created and émigré-led educational and community organizations, the community is beginning to create a Jewish vision of its own.

One of the earliest concentrated efforts to create a cadre of Russian-speaking Jewish educators was BJE's *Shibbolim* Institute in 1995. Its purpose was to train émigrés to become Jewish educators. BJE partnered with JBFCs—and for some time NYANA—to teach future educators about social work, education methodology, program ideas, Jewish history, and Jewish culture. The participants trained for two years, and were given an opportunity to design a program or event for their community each year under the supervision of professionals (recruited from various New York Jewish agencies) to lead the program. These leaders-in-training also took part in a two week intensive seminar in Israel. The program was expanded to train people to work especially with teens or to focus on mental health. Although the program ended in 2001, its graduates continue to play a prominent role in this growing community of educators. Approximately 100 people have

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<sup>7</sup> *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002 Highlights*, UJA-Federation of New York, June 2003.

graduated from Shabbolim, and many of them are now working with the Jewish émigré community.

In the last several years, the émigré community has produced more sustainable Jewish grassroots organizations than it had in the quarter century prior to 2000. This is the direct result of the coming of age of émigré leaders in New York. Examples of these organizations abound and are increasing every day. However, for the purposes of this publication, it has been decided to focus on only four of these grassroots programs in order to demonstrate how the émigré community has begun the hard work of drawing Russian Jews into Jewish communal life.

Among the most successful and promising of the political and community organizations that have developed in the past several years is the Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations (COJECO). This umbrella organization, under the professional leadership of Alec Brook-Krasny and the volunteer leadership of Felix Frenkel, represents twenty-six grassroots émigré organizations and advocates for the émigré community both within the broader political arena and within the established New York Jewish community. In addition to its community goals, COJECO also considers the creation of a Jewishly knowledgeable émigré public a core part of its mission. In recent months, COJECO has begun to work towards strengthening the positive Jewish identity of young Russian-speaking adults through Israel-centered programming and activism.

Another promising organization is RAJI (Russian-American Jews for Israel). This organization, established in the early months of 2003, aspires to become a national advocacy group working on behalf of Israel's interests. The group hopes to represent the Russian Jewish community to the U.S. government on issues pertaining to Israel, and to work in collaboration with a wide array of organizations to respond to anti-Israel sentiment

in schools, and to raise money for Israel. In the arena of education, RAJI hopes to provide Zionist and Israel education in a variety of formats.

Shaarei Emunah, a grassroots community center that runs Shabbat and holiday programming for college and post-college adults, is among the young organizations working in the émigré community primarily through informal education. In addition to these calendar-based programs, the center also offers educational seminars targeted to the needs and desires of this particular community. Its executive director is one of the first Russian-born rabbis trained and ordained in the United States, and the center is also developing young émigré leaders. Because it is run on a very tight budget, members are called upon to develop programming and organize holiday celebrations.

The story of YDA Elite High School is another example of young émigré leadership paving the way towards a more Jewishly committed émigré population. Established and run by young Russian-speaking Jews, this school is only four years old and caters to the “children of the Russian-American community.” YDA is an orthodox school, but is open to every Russian-Jewish child. Largely staffed by Russian speakers (though classes are conducted in English), YDA is familiar with the needs of both émigré parents and their acculturated children. High academic standards and ongoing family participation meet the demands of parents, while innovative programming combined with emotionally and morally supportive staff speak to the students’ needs.

These four represent just a few in the burgeoning field of grassroots émigré organizations tackling the question of Jewish identity in their community. There is little doubt that these organizations represent not only an important development among Russian-speaking Jews, but also the Jewish future of the community. Vital insights into the nature of the community and solutions to the factors that may be contributing to an overall

lack of desire to participate actively in Jewish communal life (even when Jewish identity is strong and positive) can only come from the inside. Perhaps the biggest challenge for the Russian Jew is that of learning the meaning and importance of community. One young Russian leader made an interesting observation about the émigré community. “The Russian Diaspora is unique because it is the only group of Jews for whom the idea of community has been ripped out to the point that it is alien to them.” Before we can expect Russians to come together and form organizations, they have to see community life as a positive concept, independent of the Soviet concept of communal living. There is a big difference between the two, but the regime was able to destroy the former by enforcing the latter.

## **FUTURE GOALS IN ENGAGING THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING POPULATION**

One goal of the Symposium on Jewish Educational Practices was to emerge from the two days of discussion with very specific suggestions about how to broaden the engagement of the Russian-speaking population in Jewish communal life. Some of the ideas listed below are the direct result of conversations that began at the symposium. Other suggestions emerged from the expertise and work of professionals who have been working with the Russian-speaking population for many years.

### Developing and Sustaining Relationships Across Communities

The relationships that were developed among educators from different communities around the world were among the most significant outcomes of the Symposium on Jewish Educational Practices. Indeed, the symposium was planned on the assumption that “information-sharing” among educators working with Russian speakers was vital to their continued success and future innovation. This assumption was confirmed by the excitement engendered when educators from communities in the United States, Israel, and the CIS began to share program ideas, curricula, and textbooks. Though the field of Jewish education for Russian speakers is growing, there is no doubt that those specializing in this area are still a very small group. It is essential that the trend toward connections between educators across borders—and, indeed, even among the boroughs of New York — continues to expand. With a view to this end, UJA-Federation has funded the creation of an Association of Jewish Educators of Russian-Speaking Jews, based at Project Oren of Oranim College in Tivon, Israel. The staff of this newly created association will act as a resource for Jewish educators in communities around the world who are working with Russian speakers. Under the leadership of its executive director, Dr. Ariel (Nikolay)



Borschevsky, the Association is currently developing a website where educational materials, program ideas, and articles on recent trends will be available in Russian, English, and Hebrew. Dr. Borschevsky will also organize conferences for local educators in different communities, including a conference in the fall of 2003 in the New York area. To contact him and be placed in his database please e-mail him at: [natalyab@netvision.net.il](mailto:natalyab@netvision.net.il).

There are several other resources for Russian-language materials that can be used in any community. Several of these can be accessed on the web (for more information, please see the attached Appendix on Educational Resources for Russian-speaking Jews, pp. 33-45). One challenge in the next several months and years will be to determine how we, as an international community, can facilitate the distribution of materials that already exist for Russian speakers (not only in Russian, but in Hebrew, English, and German) to schools and programs that are in need of innovative, culturally appropriate books and curricula.

#### Continue to develop strong local Russian-speaking leadership

Probably the most important factor in ensuring that émigrés become engaged with the Jewish community in larger numbers is through émigré leadership. The entry of young émigré leaders into the established Jewish community is crucial to the needs of both the Russian-speaking community and the Jewish community at large. More émigré leaders will ensure that:

- the needs of émigrés remain a top priority within the Jewish community,
- Jewish programming for émigrés will be culturally appropriate and sensitive,
- the Russian-speaking community at large will become more engaged in Jewish issues and Jewish organizational life.

Currently there are only a couple of leadership development programs working towards the creation of a strong leadership base in the émigré community. It is important to develop more and different types of these programs. Leadership development programs in the Russian-speaking community should:

- interest potential leaders in taking leadership positions in the Jewish community,
- educate potential leaders about the importance and desirability of being a board member or otherwise participating in communal structures,
- provide mentoring to potential leaders in the basics of running an organization or being a board member,
- enhance the general Jewish knowledge of participants,
- engage potential leaders through political activism on behalf of Israel.

#### Creation of more Israel-based programming opportunities

Over the past couple of years it has become increasingly clear that the single most important element that ties Russian-speaking Jews to the broader Jewish community is support for Israel. Jews from the former Soviet Union (and now from the CIS) have long felt viscerally tied to Israel.<sup>8</sup> With émigré families often living split between Israel and other communities in the United States and Europe, Russian Diaspora support for Israel undoubtedly will remain extremely strong. Program providers are aware that Israel offers a tremendous opportunity for connecting Russian-speaking Jews more broadly to the Jewish community. In 2002 JAFI appointed a Russian-speaking *shaliach* to the New York area to develop Jewish educational opportunities with local agencies and educational providers

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<sup>8</sup> The visceral connection to Israel became imprinted in the Russian-Jewish identity in 1967 following the Six Day War.

around the topic of Israel. It is recommended that educational providers increase efforts to include Israel in all types of programming in and for the émigré community.

### Outreach **to** and **from** the Russian-speaking community

The growing success of informal and formal Jewish education for Russian-speaking Jews is directly proportional to the ever-increasing number of Russian-speaking Jews entering the field of Jewish education. This is a trend that should continue to be encouraged by UJA-Federation across the area and by institutions that offer degree programs in Jewish studies and Jewish education. As has been noted several times here, the entry of these professionals into the field of Judaic studies and/or education will serve not only the Russian-speaking community but also the Jewish community at large.

Russian-speaking educators, for example, have been extremely innovative in using various forms of art to teach Jewish concepts and traditions. They have often used the arts as a way to engender interest among their students (both adults and children) in Judaism and Jewish life. The larger Jewish community is still in the early phases of using the arts as a Jewish educational tool, so Russian-speaking educators can serve as an example and an invaluable resource for the larger community as it begins to make the arts an integral part of Jewish education.

Elsewhere, particularly in Israel and the CIS, Russian Jewish educators have been very successful in creating community schools, both in full-day and Sunday school formats. In Israel, for example, the *Shevakh Moffet* school has been re-invented from an average technical school to one of the top science high schools in Israel. Most of the students are Russian-speaking and the school capitalizes on the fact that it is community-based and family centered. In St. Petersburg, the *Adain Lo* school system is renowned for its success

in building educationally strong Sunday schools and after-school programs. In particular, educators there have succeeded in making the Jewish school the center of Jewish community for families, students, and graduates. While the context is certainly different in the United States, educators should avail themselves of the experiences of the visionaries behind these schools.

#### Responding to population shifts to “newer” areas of settlement in the tri-state area

Russian Jews are moving out of Brooklyn and Queens to Staten Island and suburban areas (particularly New Jersey) in increasing numbers. The 11,000 Russian-speaking Jews in Staten Island now comprise 26 percent of the overall Jewish population in that borough.<sup>9</sup> This represents a dramatic increase since 1990, when Russian émigrés were a mere 4 percent of the overall Staten Island Jewish population. Unofficial numbers of émigrés in New Jersey stand around 7,500 and, though relatively small, the community is large enough to sustain at least one synagogue that serves **primarily** the Russian-speaking community. Though the time of professionals is limited, it is vital for all planners and educators working in the field to create stronger and more consistent ties across the entire New York region. Such interaction will ensure that those involved in providing Jewish education and programming for Russian-speaking Jews will not be operating in a vacuum and will gain greater insight into Russian-Jewish life across the region.

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<sup>9</sup> *The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002 Highlights*, UJA-Federation of New York, June, 2003, p. 30.

## DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR RUSSIAN JEWS IN THE NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY AREA

THIS DIRECTORY, THOUGH BY NO MEANS COMPLETE, ATTEMPTS TO RECOGNIZE THE ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES WORKING WITH RUSSIAN ÉMIGRÉS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH SOCIAL, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. WE HAVE INCLUDED THE MOST RECENT CONTACT INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

| SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES                | ADDRESS                                                   | PHONE NUMBER   | DESCRIPTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Board of Jewish Education                      | 520 Eighth Ave.,<br>Suite 1510<br>New York, NY<br>10018   | (212) 245-8200 | BJE has worked for many years to engage the Russian-speaking population in Jewish education. Currently, their most targeted program in this area is RUACH: Outreach and Family Education to FSU Émigré Families through Culture and Arts. Events are held in neighborhoods with dense émigré populations, usually at libraries and community centers. Programs focus on Jewish history and tradition through interactive, bilingual workshops for children and their families.               |
| B'nai Zion Foundation                          | 136 East 39 <sup>th</sup> Street                          | (212) 725-1211 | B'nai Zion was created in 1908 as a fraternal organization, and has a long history of helping immigrants adjust to their new country. Services for Russian émigrés include health insurance, cemetery coverage, language, and job training. As a Zionist organization, it believes in instilling a sense of Israel as the Jewish homeland.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services | 120 West 57 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>New York, NY<br>10019 | (212) 582-9100 | The Board provides community-based programs, residential facilities, and day treatment centers throughout the New York area. Following the influx of émigrés from the CIS, they have been helping Russians with Community Refugee Services, including the Russian Adolescent Project. RAP serves at-risk Russian teens and their families by providing outreach in high schools and yeshivas. RAP also works to educate Russian teens about Jewish values, customs, traditions, and history. |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jewish Community Relations Council of New York                | 70 West 36 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>New York, NY<br>10018  | (212) 983-4800          | JCRC is the umbrella agency for more than 60 major civic, communal, educational, and religious organizations. The Young Jewish Russian Leadership program was founded in 1999 with the purpose of teaching Russian émigré youth how to become leaders in their communities by engaging them in community service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| New York Association for New Americans (NYANA)                | 17 Battery Place,<br>New York, NY<br>10004                | (212) 425-2900          | NYANA has been a leading organization in acculturation and education for Russian émigrés for over 50 years. Programs include ESL classes; leadership training; Jewish education; job counseling, training, and placement; and classes on Jewish and American tradition and culture. NYANA consults with community organizations all over the US.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| The Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations (COJECO) | 100 Church Street,<br>Suite 1608<br>New York, NY<br>10007 | (212) 566-2142          | COJECO was established to give a voice to the Russian Jewish émigré community in New York and to help coordinate the work of Jewish émigré organizations and individual community leaders caring for those in need and fostering Jewish identity and renewal. It helps its members coordinate and develop needed programs and resources so that they become vital Jewish institutions offering quality religious and cultural experiences to their community. In 2003 COJECO made its first set of grants in various program areas. |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS<br/>EDUCATIONAL<br/>PROVIDERS</b>            | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                            | <b>PHONE<br/>NUMBER</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Betar Educational Youth Organization, Inc.                    | 4 East 34 <sup>th</sup> Street,<br>New York, NY<br>10016  | (646) 742-9364          | <i>Betar</i> is a Zionist Youth movement founded in 1923. It encourages Aliya, activism, and leadership development. In the United States, <i>Betar</i> runs various activities on college campuses and in other community venues around issues of Jewish identity and Israel. Recently, in New York, <i>Betar</i> has begun to work closely with the <i>Sokhnut</i> to engage the Russian-speaking émigré population.                                                                                                              |
| Bukharian Jewish Council of America                           | 1212 Avenue of the Americas, Suite<br>2301                | (212) 251-5917          | BJCA's goal is to promote Jewish identity and build a community for Bukharian Jews from the CIS through learning opportunities for all age groups. Programs for émigrés include <i>Shabbatonim</i> for families, holiday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                                                   | New York, NY<br>10036                                   |                | parties, daily <i>Gemarah Shiurim</i> , weekly Torah lectures, preparation classes for <i>B'nai Mitzvah</i> , and workshops geared towards specific age and interest groups.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Chamah                                            | 78 Pearl Street,<br>New York, NY<br>10004               | (212) 943-9690 | The mission of <i>Chamah</i> , first established in the Soviet Union in 1955, is to provide Jewish education and humanitarian aid to Russian Jews. Their “Mobile Jewish Center” has become a source of Jewish information and outreach in Brooklyn and Queens. <i>Chamah</i> hosts a summer camp and an after-school program for Russian children and publishes “ALEF,” a monthly magazine in Russian.                                               |
| Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush       | 1550 Coney Island Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11230              | (718) 377-2900 | These programs target Jewish émigrés of all age groups and all traditions. In an effort to reach the Russian community, the council offers seminars on Jewish topics led by émigré rabbis and leaders, celebrations of Jewish holidays, and visits to museums, concerts, and other Jewish agencies.                                                                                                                                                  |
| Educational Center for Russian Jewry              | 98-12 66 <sup>th</sup> Avenue<br>Rego Park, NY<br>11374 | (718) 275-3318 | The Center – whose main constituency are Bukharian Jews – was founded by a group of young immigrants to provide social, cultural, educational, and recreational services to the expanding émigré population. More than 5,000 émigrés have taken advantage of the youth programs, classes, concerts, and counseling available there. The center currently offers a creative program for Bukharian teenagers to learn Jewish history through the arts. |
| Federation of Georgian Jews                       | 6648 Saunders Street<br>Rego Park, NY<br>11374          | (718) 997-1116 | As the only international Georgian Jewish organization, the Federation aims to unify Georgian Jews all over the world, and to preserve their unique culture, customs, and language. Since 1990, the Federation has been executing diverse community services, events and activities for Georgian Jews. Other programs offered include: <i>B'nai Mitzvah</i> program, youth leadership, and trips.                                                    |
| Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion | 1 West Fourth Street<br>New York, NY                    | (212) 824-2213 | The Educators Outreach Initiative seeks to find teachers, college graduates, and Russian émigrés with Hebrew/Judaic Studies backgrounds and encourage them to enroll in a graduate program in                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                                     | 10012                                                                    |                | Jewish education, and then to become Jewish educators in a number of different realms. The initiative includes professional staff development sessions, presentations at workshops and conferences, and the formation of an outreach task force.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Jewish Channel Institute Inc. (JCI) | 119 Fulton Street, 5 <sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10038             | (212) 964-1524 | Through partnerships and coordination with fellow organizations, JCI is dedicated to providing formal and informal Jewish education for the Russian-speaking community by coordinating programs for accredited distance learning and training. JCI was founded in 2000.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Jewish Child Care Association       | 120 Wall Street<br>New York, NY<br>10005                                 | (212) 558-9930 | JCCA is one of the oldest and largest childcare agencies in the nation, providing services to approximately eight thousand children and their families each year. The JCCA's Bukharian Teen Lounge (located at the Central Queens YM-YWHA) holds bi-weekly meetings that build the teens' Jewish knowledge and leadership skills and give them a chance to experience Jewish culture through conferences and community projects.                                                                           |
| Keren Tifereth Yisroel Foundation   | 45 White Street-<br>Suite 301, New<br>York, NY 10013                     | (212) 219-3944 | KTY, founded in 1998, works with a volunteer staff of teachers, tutors, mentors, and local families to provide Jewish services to Russian Jewish families in the Brooklyn communities of Brighton Beach, Flatbush, and Bensonhurst. Services include tutoring in Jewish subjects, Torah study, Jewish history classes, Shabbat meals, camping excursions, and trips to Israel for teens. Led by Rabbi Yehudah Braun, KTY has become a lifeline for Russian families trying to establish a Jewish identity. |
| L'man Achai                         | 4429 18 <sup>th</sup> Ave.<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11204                      | (718) 436-8255 | <i>L'man Achai</i> was established in 1989 with the goal of spreading Judaism to those not aware of the tenets of Jewish faith. Focusing heavily on outreach to the Russian community, <i>L'man Achai</i> now runs a day school, summer camp, Jewish-Russian library, and adult classes, as well as special events.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Nashi Traditsii                     | Mailing Address:<br>610 West 110 <sup>th</sup><br>Street<br>New York, NY | (212) 666-5828 | This program, started six years ago, is in the process of becoming a non-profit organization that focuses on preserving the music and culture of the former Soviet Union. <i>Nashi Traditsii</i> works with performers of music and dance from the CIS to put on performances that showcase the                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



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|                                                                       | 10024 Apt. 15E                                                          |                | various cultures of formerly Soviet communities. They also offer workshops and group classes on Jewish music and culture, and are leading an oral history project that will archive the lives and accomplishments of Jewish artists from the CIS. Most of the performances are in Brooklyn and geared at the Russian community, but all programs are open to the public and usually draw a significant American minority. |
| National Jewish Outreach Program (NJOP)                               | 989 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave., 10 <sup>th</sup> Fl.<br>New York, NY<br>10018 | (646) 871-4444 | NJOP has always been involved with teaching Hebrew to the Russian-speaking community. They have printed a Russian edition of the <i>Reishith Binah</i> Hebrew primer, and, by working with local synagogues and JCC's, have been able to offer classes in Hebrew on a semi-regular basis to the Russian community.                                                                                                        |
| ORT Operations USA (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) | 68-60 Austin Street, Suite 202,<br>Forest Hills, NY<br>11375            | (718) 459-4953 | ORT strives to bring economic self-sufficiency and pride to Jews through educational programs. Education for Russian émigrés has been conducted at their two-year community colleges in both Queens and Brooklyn. The center provides courses in Hebrew, Russian, and the Jewish calendar, as well as other non-Judaic subjects. Trips to Jewish museums, synagogues, and historical places are also part of the program. |
| Project NESHAMA                                                       | 2997 Ocean Parkway,<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11235                            | (718) 946-9833 | Project NESHAMA's mission is to engage the Russian community of West Brighton, Brighton Beach, and Manhattan Beach in Judaism. It was organized by a grassroots group of Russian émigrés, local businesspeople, and Rabbinic figures. Though affiliated with the Chabad Lubavitch movement, it is a local initiative, providing for community programming by and for the greater Brighton Beach neighborhood.             |
| Shorefront Jewish Community Council                                   | 3049 Brighton 6 <sup>th</sup> St.<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11235              | (718) 743-0575 | The SJCC's mission is to provide the residents of Brighton Beach with comprehensive social services and to facilitate and strengthen Jewish cultural, educational, and communal activities. It assists émigré families with its food pantry, and collaborates with other organizations to engage Russians of all ages in cultural and educational programs.                                                               |
| The Shtetl Foundation                                                 | 300 East 54 <sup>th</sup>                                               | (212) 319-2927 | The Foundation was formed in 1999 with the purpose of building the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                                                | Street, Suite 23 K-L<br>New York, NY<br>10022               |                     | Shtetl Museum in Israel. It conducts educational programs in Israel, Canada, and the US on Jewish life, culture, and history in Eastern Europe, as well as the impact of Jewish émigrés on their countries of immigration. Programs for Russian-speakers include “Family Roots,” which teaches émigrés about Judaism and Jewish history by researching their own family’s history.                                                   |
| WTRR/ The Voice of Russian Jewry               | 1230 41 <sup>st</sup> Street<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11218       | (718) 438-2626      | This is a popular round-the-clock radio station among Russian Jews, offering programs for college students, young adults, and senior citizens. The shows deal with Jewish culture, music, and holidays, as well as Yiddish. The Jewish family radio hour fosters interaction between children and adults around meaningful Jewish themes and promotes Jewish identity by using engaging methods such as quizzes and contests.        |
| <b>SYNAGOGUES</b>                              | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                              | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Beth Gavriel Bukharian Congregation            | 66-35 108 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Forest Hills, NY<br>11375 | (718) 268-3444      | This recently opened synagogue has attracted Bukharians from the Forest Hills region, and is now one of the centers of Bukharian life in Queens. A Sunday school provides instruction for children in Hebrew and other Jewish subjects, to prepare them for attendance at a Yeshiva. The synagogue involves adults through special events and innovative educational techniques. Assistance such as food packages is also available. |
| Bris Avrohom                                   | 30-02 Fair Lawn Avenue, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410                 | (201) 791-7200      | <i>Bris Avrohom</i> opened in 1993 as a Russian Orthodox synagogue under the leadership of Rabbi Saltzman, himself a Russian émigré. In addition to Sunday school, the synagogue runs morning and evening classes in a number of Jewish subjects, all in Russian. This synagogue boasts of almost 300 regular members, and, together with its filial in Hillside, NJ, publishes a multitude of books on Jewish subjects in Russian.  |
| Bris Avrohom Center Congregation Shomrei Torah | 910 Salem Avenue, Hillside, NJ 07205                        | (908) 289-0770      | <i>Bris Avrohom</i> of Hillside, also with a large community of Russian Jewish émigrés, offers all the same services as its filial synagogue in Fair Lawn (see above).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| Congregation Kneses Israel of Sea Gate     | 3801 Nautilus Avenue<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11224                           | (718) 946-3061 | <i>Kneses Israel</i> attempts to accommodate the growing émigré population in the Coney Island/Sea Gate community. The Rabbi is fluent in Russian, and outreach to the Russian community includes periodic mailings, bilingual classes, open-house social gatherings, concerts, and lectures regarding holidays. The synagogue also houses a small but growing Sunday school for the children of Russian-speaking émigrés.          |
| Congregation Sons of Israel                | 2521 Cruger Avenue<br>Bronx, NY 10467                                   | (718) 231-6213 | The Congregation hosts holiday parties, provides families with Shabbat meals for the weekend, offers trips to Jewish shows, helps with clothing and gift drives for the holidays, and offers English classes. There is a Russian-Jewish library available to the public, as well as daily services. The Russian community in this area is active in its participation and all the events are designed to meet their specific needs. |
| Congregation Tifereth Torah of Bensonhurst | 23 <sup>rd</sup> Ave. and 83 <sup>rd</sup> St.<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11214 | (718) 236-6646 | The congregation seeks to reawaken core Jewish values in the Russian Jewish community and foster vibrant Jewish life and culture. It collaborates with two day schools and a nursing home. Programs target children ages 6-12 in an attempt to make them active participants in Jewish life by teaching them Hebrew, to recite prayers, and to understand Jewish history and traditions.                                            |
| Havurat Yisrael                            | 108-19 70 <sup>th</sup> Road<br>Forest Hills, NY<br>11375               | (718) 261-5500 | This is a synagogue that reaches out to Jews of all backgrounds. Services include a beginners' <i>minyan</i> , classes on <i>kashrut</i> , singles programs, retreats, and educational programs for parents and children.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Shaaray Shamayim                           | 17 East 67 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>New York, NY<br>10021                | (212) 249-0799 | Congregation Shaaray Shamayim is a Russian-speaking Reform/Liberal synagogue that provides a bridge to Jewish identity for Russian immigrants in the five boroughs. Programs include Shabbat and holiday services, Jewish living workshops for all ages, Torah study, adult education, music programs, and spiritual retreats.                                                                                                      |
| Kehilas Moreshes Yaakov                    | 1632 East 21 <sup>st</sup> Street<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11210              | (718) 998-1237 | This congregation was organized in 1995 by Rabbi Avraham Binsky for a small group of people interested in learning about Judaism and observing Jewish law. When it started, there were only three families involved. Now, this unique Russian Orthodox Jewish community has                                                                                                                                                         |

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|                                   |                                                           |                     | more than 500 members. The congregation attends monthly seminars and lectures by the Rabbi and other members of the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Kehilat Sephardim of Avahat Achim | 150-62 78 <sup>th</sup> Road,<br>Kew Gardens, NY<br>11367 | (718) 969-1855      | <i>Kehilat Sephardim</i> primarily serves Bukharian Jews by engaging them in social events that bring them closer to their Jewish culture. New initiatives include family counseling and education for youth and adults on domestic violence, proper parenting, successful marriage life, and related subjects.                                                        |
| Kew Gardens Synagogue             | 82-17 Lefferts Blvd.<br>Kew Gardens, NY<br>11415          | (718) 805-8414      | This synagogue reaches out to new Americans through its Hebrew school and the <i>Hatikvah</i> Russian Jewish Community Center. Its efforts have allowed Russian Jews to increase their Jewish pride and identity through holiday events, Hebrew reading, Jewish buddy and <i>B'nai Mitzvah</i> programs, adult education classes, and a beginners' <i>minyán</i> .     |
| Kingsbridge Center of Israel      | 3115 Corlear Avenue, Bronx NY<br>10463                    | (718) 548-1678      | This congregation has a Russian-speaking Rabbi who leads classes for émigrés in Hebrew and Torah study. There are also weekly readings and special holiday programs especially for Russians. The Rabbi also provides private tutoring for children in preparation for B'nai Mitzvot, etc., and is the Outreach Coordinator for the congregation.                       |
| Shaarei Emunah                    | 630 Avenue S<br>Brooklyn NY<br>11223                      | (718) 375-3322      | <i>Shaarei Emunah</i> caters to the needs of Russian-speaking Jewish students and young professionals by providing the social and educational framework necessary for building Jewish communal life. The center encourages students to explore their Jewish identity through educational programs and seminars. It is run by college students and young professionals. |
| <b>SCHOOLS</b>                    | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                            | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| BAIS Yaakov Academy for Girls     | 84-20 125 Street,<br>Kew Gardens NY<br>11415              | (718) 847-7881      | The school has approximately 30 students, all of whom are Russian-speaking, and come from all parts of the CIS. There is no active outreach nor special émigré services, and all the classes are conducted in English. The school shows an interest in developing cultural programs and helping students become Americanized.                                          |

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| Be'er Hagolah Institutes      | 671 Louisiana Ave.,<br>Brooklyn NY<br>11239             | (718) 642-6800                                              | Established in 1979, <i>Be'er Hagolah</i> provides both Jewish and secular education. It offers educational programs that help in the assimilation and acculturation process of new Americans into Jewish life. Programs for émigrés include: ESL classes, citizenship test preparation, recreational trips, youth workshops, Shabbat programs, and family education workshops.                                                                                          |
| Beth Jacob Beth Miriam School | 2126 Barnes Avenue, Bronx NY<br>10462                   | (718) 892-8830                                              | Two years ago, Beth Jacob Beth Miriam began bringing in Bukharian students from Flushing, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, and Rego Park. Currently, about 40 percent of the students are Queens residents (approximately 35 boys and girls). Although the Russian émigré population in the Bronx is decreasing, the school is eager to bring in émigrés from other areas and provide them with the education of a respected Yeshiva.                                          |
| Hebrew Academy of West Queens | 88-01 102 Street,<br>Richmond Hill NY<br>11418          | (718) 847-1462                                              | About three-quarters of this student body are from the CIS. The school caters to the special needs of immigrants by providing ESL and remedial reading and math, as well as Hebrew classes for all levels, regardless of the student's age. Special services and counseling are available, and the school conducts outreach through Russian flyers and a Russian representative who tries to recruit students from local schools. There are about 20 students per grade. |
| Nefesh Academy                | 1750 East 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn NY<br>11229 | Main office:<br>(718) 339-9880<br>School:<br>(718) 627-4463 | <i>Nefesh Academy</i> is a K-12 all-girls school with a student body of over 200 students, 95 per cent of whom are Russian-speaking. They offer ESL and HSL (Hebrew as a Second Language) classes, and special tutoring in Math, Hebrew, and English for émigrés. The school advertises weekly in the widely read Russian-Jewish newspaper, <i>Evreiskiy Mir</i> .                                                                                                       |
| Queens Gymnasia               | 60-05 Woodhaven Blvd., Elmhurst NY<br>11373             | (718) 426-9369                                              | Now serving grades K-6, this day school strives to provide top quality secular and Jewish education. Launched only two years ago, the school is associated with Be'er Hagolah and reaches out specifically to the Bukharian community. While the student body is Bukharian, the curriculum does not place particular emphasis on Bukharian themes.                                                                                                                       |

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| Sha-Arei Zion OHEL Bracha           | 66-35 108 <sup>th</sup> Street, Forest Hills NY 11375 | (718) 268-3444 | Sharing their facilities with the Beth Gavriel Bukharian Congregation, both the student body and the faculty of <i>Sha-Arei Zion</i> are primarily Bukharian. Currently the boys' school serves grades pre-K through six. The girls' school has pre-K classes and a first grade. Aside from religious and secular education, there is an after school program, and outreach to parents in the community to come in for special events to learn more about Judaism with their children. |
| Shalsholet BAIS Yaakov Corporation  | 1681 42 Street, Brooklyn NY 11204                     | (718) 436-1122 | <i>Shalsholet BAIS Yaakov</i> offers its students an education in both Jewish and secular subjects. Because of its proximity to the Russian-Jewish community, approximately 65 percent of the school's student population is Russian-speaking. The school also offers ESL classes.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Sinai Academy                       | 2025 79 Street, Brooklyn NY 11214                     | (718) 256-7400 | Sinai Academy was started in the early nineties by Rabbi Katzin, an émigré from the CIS who lived in Israel before coming to America. The Yeshiva is designed for the sons of Russian émigrés, and offers grades nine through twelve, as well as Sunday school, summer camp, Shabbatons, and a <i>Mishmar</i> program.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| YDA Elite High School               | 293 Neptune Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11230                 | (718) 648-3560 | Established in 1999-2000, YDA strives to provide an elite secular education to the children of Russian émigrés within the context of a religious Jewish environment. The curriculum offers a variety of courses in Jewish Studies, History, Mathematics, Science, Literature, and Foreign Languages, including Hebrew and Russian.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Yeshiva Binat Chaim                 | 75-24 Grand Central Parkway, Forest Hills NY 11375    | (718) 520-7775 | The school enrolls more than 50 boys from grades nine through twelve. Almost all of the students speak Russian. The school offers a high-quality religious and secular education with teachers who are often trilingual. ESL classes are available.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Yeshiva Institute of Greater Queens | 43-00 171 Street, Flushing NY 11358                   | (718) 762-7070 | Approximately 75 percent of the students at this pre-school through eighth grade school speak Russian. ESL classes are available for émigrés, but the rest of the programs and classes are conducted in English.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| <b>GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS</b>             | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                                          | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b>              | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Association of Holocaust Survivors          | 1673 East 16 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>P.M.B #19<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11229 | (646) 207-6430<br>(718) 951-1303 | This association serves approximately 1,500 people, offering medical help, advocacy, lobbying, and house visits. The group is also dedicated to preserving its Russian Jewish heritage and remembering the stories of struggle of its members.                                                                                                                              |
| Chabad Lubavitch of Kensington              | 605 Ocean Parkway<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11218                              | (718) 854-0006                   | Chabad Lubavitch of Kensington offers extensive educational programs for Russian émigrés. Aside from holiday celebrations and Israel education, Chabad puts special emphasis on Talmud and Torah study from a Kabbalistic and Chassidic perspective. Classes are held in Russian, and members are also offered counseling and family events.                                |
| Chabad of Rego Park Corona                  | 6238 99th Street<br>Rego Park, NY<br>11374                              | (718) 393-3085                   | The mission of Chabad of Rego Park is to serve its Ashkenazi community by having a Russian Jewish Community Center. They hold educational programs to increase members' sense of Jewish pride and awareness. Other services include: Shabbat services, a lending library of Jewish books in English and Russian, classes and lectures, Hebrew school, and holiday programs. |
| Congress of Bukharian Jews of US and Canada | 7524 Grand Central Parkway, Forest Hills, NY 11375                      | N/A                              | The Congress focuses on large forums for different members of its community: rabbis, women, community leaders, etc. It publishes a bimonthly newspaper and encourages Jewish family values, and the preservation of Bukharian music and culture. It also hosts a day camp for boys.                                                                                         |
| Jewish Community Center of Starrett City    | 1305 Delmar Loop #17c<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11239                          | (718) 642-7525                   | The center offers an educational and a support network for senior citizens by providing English classes, courses on Jewish traditions and subjects, and cultural trips.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Jewish Union of Russian Immigrants          | 119 Fulton St., 5 <sup>th</sup> Fl. New York, NY<br>10038               | (212) 964-1524                   | JURI serves new Americans who wish to reclaim their Jewish heritage. The program of clubs for a variety of age and interest groups strives to provide Jewish education and unite immigrants from the CIS to address                                                                                                                                                         |

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|                                                         |                                                          |                     | common problems and promote a better understanding among ethnic groups.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Research Institute for New Americans                    | 100 Church Street, Suite 1608, New York, NY 10007        | (212) 962-4383      | This is the first research institute founded by immigrants to study immigrants. Through analytical surveys, the institute researches the émigré community and finds out about their practices, their relationship to Judaism/Israel, etc. Publishing these surveys, as well as the center's monthly bulletin, keeps the Jewish community aware of the émigré population in the US. |
| ROSHNOI Society                                         | 98-20 62 <sup>nd</sup> Drive #12L<br>Rego Park, NY 11374 | (718) 459-4854      | ROSHNOI Society is dedicated to preserving the Bukharian culture while integrating its members into American life. It offers Jewish education for children of all ages and its classes, conferences and clubs serve close to 500 members. It also conducts and publishes historical and sociological studies.                                                                      |
| The Archive: Institute for Russian Jews in the Diaspora | 309 W 30 <sup>th</sup> Street #1A<br>New York, NY 10001  | (212) 268-2878      | The Institute was founded to create a collection of materials pertaining to the immigration experience and to preserve the identity of Russian Jewish émigrés. The Archive collects oral histories through interviews, and works actively with the American community so that Russians have the ability to share their stories.                                                    |
| <b>COMMUNITY CENTERS</b>                                | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                           | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Bronx House JCC                                         | 990 Pelham Parkway South, Bronx NY 10461                 | (718) 792-1800      | Bronx House assists Russian émigrés with the resettlement process and holds services especially for new Americans. Programs include an English conversation group, ESL classes, citizenship classes, holiday celebrations, cultural events, trips, cooperation with residential camps, counseling, and a Russian library.                                                          |
| Central Queens YM & YWHA                                | 67-09 108 <sup>th</sup> Street Forest Hills, NY 11375    | (718) 268-5011      | This center serves a large Russian community in the Forest Hills area with services such as Camp Edward Isaac's Sleep-Away Camp, cultural arts programs, nursery school, Kids Korner after-school center, Bukharian outreach programs such as the Teen Lounge run by the JCCA, Jewish cultural and educational events, and teen leadership programs.                               |



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| Edith & Carl Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst | 7802 Bay Parkway<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11214                 | (718) 331-6800 | Located in one of the biggest Russian communities in Brooklyn, the JCH provides a sense of enthusiasm for Jewish learning and living for children through camps and teen programs. The center reaches out to parents and allows the staff to deepen their Judaic knowledge. <i>“V’Shinantam L’Vanecha: You Shall Teach Them Diligently to Your Children”</i> is a program that targets the émigré population for the purpose of Jewish education. <i>“Morasha”</i> seeks to address the issue of Jewish continuity in the Russian émigré community through family education, camping programs, and an Israel center. |
| Hebrew Educational Society                               | 9502 Seaview Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11236                   | (718) 241-3000 | The Hebrew Educational Society (HES), Brooklyn’s oldest community center, provides a wide range of cultural, educational, and recreational and social services to the many groups in Southeast Brooklyn, one of which is Russian Jewish émigrés. For younger members, the Society offers sports and recreational programs, as well as a summer camp.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Jewish Community Center of the Greater Five Towns        | 207 Grove Avenue<br>P.O.B. 336<br>Cedarhurst, NY<br>11516 | (516) 569-6733 | Serving primarily the Russian-speaking population of Far Rockaway, the JCC offers programming for senior citizens as well as Judaic programs for teens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Jewish Community Center in Manhattan                     | 334 Amsterdam Ave. New York, NY 10023                     | (646) 505-4444 | The JCC in Manhattan has recently begun to reach out to the Russian-speaking community in New York. By hosting Russian cultural events such as movie screenings, and lectures/discussions with key members of the Russian community, the JCC hopes to become a Jewish cultural “home” to the émigré community. (In the spring of 2003 the JCC hosted a week of programming, “Russia-NY Rekindled.”) The recent creation of a Russian Club is expected to increase the number of such events in the future.                                                                                                           |
| Jewish Community Center of Staten Island                 | 1297 Arthur Kill Rd., Staten Island, NY 10312             | (718) 356-8113 | Staten Island has seen an influx of Russian Jewish émigrés over the past few years. In order to help the community assimilate into American and Jewish life, the JCC offers general educational classes, family programming, a summer day camp, and formal and informal Jewish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                                                      |                                                 |                | education. The center is looking to reach beyond the elderly community that comes there and attract more families and different age groups.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Kew Gardens Anshe Sholom Jewish Center               | 82-52 Abingdon Road, Kew Gardens, NY 11415      | (718) 441-2470 | Conservative outreach to émigrés from the CIS.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Kings Bay YM-YWHA                                    | 3495 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11229        | (718) 648-7703 | Established in 1982, the Kings Bay Y is both a social service and a community relations organization. It provides case management, counseling, and job training for immigrants in the area, and is equipped with a capable, bilingual staff. Programs for youth teach participants about Jewish holidays, history, and customs. “ <i>L’ATID: Leadership Development for Russian Émigré Youth</i> ” is a collaborative program between the Kings Bay Y, Shorefront Y, and JCH of Bensonhurst that uses workshops, retreats, and community service projects to stimulate the awareness of Jewish values and teachings. |
| Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach, Inc. | 3300 Coney Island Ave. Brooklyn, New York 11235 | (718) 646-1444 | Located in the heart of Brighton Beach, the Shorefront Y serves a huge Russian émigré population. The program “ <i>Ogonyok: A Chavurah Experience for Young Adult Émigrés from the Former Soviet Union</i> ” allows Russians to experience Jewish education and interaction with Jewish community institutions. The center organizes <i>chavurot</i> that take part in Jewish learning, build Jewish pride, and gain a greater sense of Jewish communal life. Other activities include trips, group dinners, and outreach.                                                                                           |
| The Jewish Center of Forest Hills                    | 63-25 Dry Harbor Road, Middle Village, NY 11379 | (718) 639-2110 | The center strives to involve the large Russian community in the area through Jewish studies educational programs. The Russian language is incorporated into religious services and holiday celebrations. Programs include classes and discussions in Russian, religious activities, field trips to cultural centers, and leadership development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| YM & YWHA of Washington Heights & Inwood             | 54 Nagle Avenue New York, NY 10040              | 212-569-6200   | The center has long had a large Russian-speaking contingent receiving various types of social services. Last year the center began to offer “ <i>Oneg Shabbat</i> ” programs for elderly Russian speakers. The nursery                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| <b>HILLELS</b>                | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                                           | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Baruch College Hillel         | 426 West 58 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Third Floor<br>New York, NY<br>10019 | (212) 279-6300      | Baruch College has a Jewish population of approximately 1,500 students, 80 to 90 percent of whom are from the CIS. Attendance has been growing rapidly over the past few years, as Jewish students come daily to visit the offices on campus. Students remain in contact via mail and email, and gather for holiday celebrations, as well as monthly meetings.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Brooklyn College Hillel       | 2901 Campus Road<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11210                                | (718) 859-1151      | Like other community college campuses in New York City, Brooklyn College has a large Russian Jewish population. To cater to this community, they run a Center for Russian Jewish life. This Hillel offers engaging programs for the students on campus. Aside from holiday celebrations and trips, Hillel members get together for regular meetings where they discuss Jewish texts, or learn together about Jewish history and culture. Special lectures and workshops are offered, and leadership development skills are stressed. |
| Hunter College Hillel         | 695 Park Avenue,<br>East Building<br>New York, NY<br>10021               | (212) 772-5563      | About 60 percent of the enrolled undergraduate Jewish students at Hunter are Russian, a number that continues to increase. Through collaboration with a number of Jewish organizations, the Hillel hopes to involve Russian Jewish students in Jewish life. Opportunities include Israel trips, <i>Shabbatonim</i> , mentoring programs, internships, retreats, and leadership development.                                                                                                                                          |
| Long Island University Hillel | 1 University Plaza<br>Brooklyn, NY<br>11201                              | (718) 780-4010      | The school has a large population of Russian Jewish émigré students. This Hillel strives to connect Russian and American Jews to their ethnic and religious heritage. Through its teachings, students go on to educate the entire campus about Judaism, and teach about anti-Semitism and racism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                       |                                                              |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Queens College Hillel | 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Student Union 206<br>Flushing, NY 11367 | (718) 793-2222 | This Hillel seeks to engage new Americans in Jewish activities by giving them the opportunity to participate in informal educational seminars on Jewish topics and develop leaders from the various ethnic groups at the college, who will then educate their peers and become active members of the Jewish community. This Hillel also involves the large, mostly uninvolved Bukharian student body. Specific programs include discussions on Jewish holidays, lectures on Jewish issues, celebrations of Jewish events, as well as an arts program. |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### SHORT LISTINGS

| <b>ORGANIZATION NAME</b>                    | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                            | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> | <b>ORGANIZATION NAME</b>                                | <b>ADDRESS</b>                                   | <b>PHONE NUMBER</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bensonhurst Council of Jewish Organizations | 8635 21 <sup>st</sup> Avenue #1B,<br>Brooklyn NY<br>11214 | (718) 333-1834      | Jewish Community Council of Kings Bay                   | 3495 Nostrand Avenue,<br>Brooklyn NY<br>11229    | (718) 743-9083      |
| Co-op City Jewish Community Council         | 177 Dreiser Loop, Room 18,<br>Bronx NY<br>10475           | (718) 320-1234      | Jewish Community Council of Pelham Parkway              | 2157 Holland Avenue, Bronx,<br>NY 10462          | (718) 792-1800      |
| Corona Jewish Center-Tifereth Israel Anshei | 109-18 54 <sup>th</sup> Avenue<br>Corona, NY<br>11368     | (718) 592-6254      | Jewish Community Council of Washington Heights & Inwood | 121 Bennett Avenue, Room 11a, Bronx, NY<br>10033 | (212) 568-5450      |

|                                                            |                                                         |                |                                     |                                       |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Flushing Jewish Community Council                          | 65-15 164 <sup>th</sup> Street Flushing, NY 11365       | (718) 463-0434 | Mosholu Montefiore Community Center | 3450 Dekalb Avenue Bronx, NY 10467    | (718) 882-4000          |
| Jewish Community Council of Kew Gardens and Richmond Hills | 82-46 Lefferts Blvd. #1A, Kew Gardens, NY 11415         | (718) 847-5277 | Riverdale Jewish Community Council  | 5625 Arlington Avenue, Bronx NY 10471 | (718) 548-8200 ext. 217 |
| Shorefront Jewish Community Council                        | 3079 Brighton 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn NY 11235 | (718) 743-0575 |                                     |                                       |                         |

## APPENDIX

### WHAT'S OUT THERE? EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR RUSSIAN JEWS IN NEW YORK CITY

Today there are several hundred thousand Russian immigrants living in the New York area, most of whom are Jewish. As a result of their arrival, dozens of organizations in the Jewish community stepped forward to help them to “rediscover” their religious and cultural roots. Through workshops, holiday celebrations, and day care centers, Jewish educators have taught these newly arrived families about Jewish history and traditions; a process that has not been without some difficulty. One of the main obstacles in teaching immigrants is, of course, the language barrier. Over the course of a six-week period in the summer of 2002, COJIR researched the kinds of resources that are being used in the Russian community in the New York City region, and whether other resources exist that have not yet been discovered by our educators. Through on-site visits and telephone interviews, COJIR learned that there is a great dichotomy between what people suppose is available and the resources that are actually in existence.

#### Special Circumstances

There are some things that have to be taken into consideration when it comes to educating a Russian-Jewish family. One curriculum will not always serve all its members. Children are perhaps the easiest group to work with because they are bilingual and require no special Russian resources. Nevertheless, programs for this group need to be culturally sensitive to the Russian community's approach toward Jewish family life and need to appeal to parents. Currently there are relatively few such programs. Most Russian immigrants do not want to send their children to yeshivas for instruction. In fact, many

Russian Jews who do send their children often withdraw from these institutions due to significant religious and cultural differences between their home life and the expectations that are cultivated in the school. They need schools that will teach their children about Judaism as a culture and a way of life, yet almost nothing fits the description. (There are a few schools that are beginning to make this type of effort, such as the YDA Elite High School in Brooklyn.)

For the most part, Russian Jewish youth—teenagers and college aged—prefer instruction in English. Having been here for a while, they have begun to identify themselves as Americans and, with a few exceptions, find it easier to communicate in English. According to a recent survey entitled, “The Next Generation: Russian Jewish Young Adults in Contemporary New York,” only one third of them can read and write in Russian. They speak to each other in English and only sometimes revert to their native tongue. Russian resources become a necessity when it comes to middle-aged and elderly immigrants and in family programming. Of course there are exceptions. Certain community centers still mix Russian and English even with the younger groups, and there are Hillels whose members prefer to conduct their meetings and discussions in Russian.

Families from Russia and the CIS arrived with little Jewish knowledge, and some with even less Jewish pride. They come from a culture that belittled, denigrated, and distrusted religion while celebrating and placing very high value on intellectual, cultural, and artistic endeavors. As such, it is more culturally appropriate that Russian émigrés must be approached not through Jewish religion but through Jewish culture and history.

### Resources Currently In Use

Despite the growing number of immigrants in their neighborhoods, a surprising number of synagogues and Jewish community centers overlook the Russian community.

Too many organizations have no resources to offer Russian speakers, and some show little interest in improving that situation, sometimes citing limited financial and professional resources and, at other times, maintaining that it is simply not a priority. Larger centers tend to be more dedicated to shaping programs that fit the needs of Russian Jews. These community centers, synagogues, or local agencies are trying to build a Jewish identity among Russian Jews while avoiding bombarding them with traditional teachings right away. They look to holiday celebrations to bring Russians together and get them accustomed to Jewish customs and teachings.

Nevertheless, resources on Jewish holidays in Russian are scarce. Every community center, Y or Hillel has NYANA booklets. These short pamphlets are excellent introductory guides. Alongside English text, one finds a translation into Russian. Subjects include holidays such Chanukah or Shabbat, but they are written for a beginner, with little depth into the history and traditions of the specific day. The immigrant population, although starting with little knowledge, needs to reach the next level eventually, and be offered materials that are more insightful and profound. Other pamphlets, for example those published by Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe—F. R. E. E., lack substance as well, and cannot be counted on to provide a sound Jewish education. If there were additional materials available for Russian Jews once they completed the beginner's level, this would not be as much of a concern. Yet it is surprising to find how few books are being used; some centers have none at all. What, then, is used to teach Judaism on a mature level, and what will insure that Russian Jews do not obtain a superficial understanding of their tradition and culture?

Almost all of the available texts were written in English and translated into Russian either by the publisher or the educators themselves. Some good examples are: *Jewish*



*Literacy* by Rabbi Telushkin, *Evreiskiy Mir (The Jewish World)* by Rabbi Telushkin, *Mir Evreistva (The World of Judaism)* by David Harris, and *Vosem Voprosov o Iudaizme (Eight Questions on Judaism)* by Dennis Preiger and Jonathan Teluskin. All these books offer more depth and detail for more mature thinkers. Nevertheless, most places providing Jewish education to émigrés rely primarily upon their teachers who, they say, are their main resources. While it is important to have creative and knowledgeable educators developing programs, they cannot be the only source of information. Especially when only a handful of centers have Russian-speaking Jewish educators who can dedicate all their time to creating programs for Russian speakers.

However good the aforementioned texts are, it must be said that giving Russians translated materials is like giving hand-me-down clothes to children. The quality is not as good, and they do not fit as well. Russian Jews would relate to Russian Jewish authors much better in terms of culture and context than they can to a book or essay intended for an American Jewish audience and translated into Russian. The availability of prayer books and Torah texts is slightly better, but these cannot be relied upon to do all the teaching. Packets of prayers and readings are usually copies that one has to return at the end of a service or celebration. These are not things one can take home and study at leisure.

Those who work with the Russian community are eager to identify the gaps in Jewish education and volunteer ideas on how to fix them. These proposals include having more Russian-written short stories on Jewish history or Jewish holidays that could be used for weekly discussion groups; creating small libraries available to the public to foster an atmosphere that would encourage Russians to explore Jewish study; going beyond games and songs when teaching children so that they grow up with a real understanding of their Jewish identity; primary texts followed by “how to” and “why” explanations. Most

educators voice their desire for a closer Jewish network where resources can be shared because they do not know where to turn when educational materials are needed. But who will take the time to find these resources? In actuality, much of what is needed already exists.

### What's Really Out There

One of the most impressive and most comprehensive resources available is the Virtual Learning Community VLC, [www.ort.spd.ru/nesh/links.htm](http://www.ort.spd.ru/nesh/links.htm). Based in St. Petersburg, the VLC Project is a joint operation of the Pedagogical Club/New Jewish School and the Jewish Community Development Fund. Members of the community can sign on to a monthly Russian language newsletter that provides timely discussions on holidays and other events in the Jewish world. They also have access to an excellent website that provides articles, discussions, and links to other Russian sites. There are plenty of lesson plans and ideas, as well as actual texts and readings on a variety of topics – from Jewish holidays, to Jewish history, to modern-day issues, especially those concerning Israel. It even has essays that explore what it means to be Russian and Jewish—exactly what may help create a sense of identity in the immigrant community **outside** of the CIS. The VLC site also has an extensive list of books and essays for use by teachers with all the texts accessible on the Internet. Its *Guide Over the Internet* provides excellent categories to search such as the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, Orthodox sites, and Family Education. When you click on each link, it takes you to an informative essay on the topic, with plenty of websites relating to it. And what's really great about this resource is that it was created in Russian with the Russian-Jewish population in mind.

Of course there are many other high-quality resources available on the Internet, although they are not necessarily geared towards Jewish educators. The site [www.keri.terra.ee/main.html](http://www.keri.terra.ee/main.html) takes you to a catalogue of Russian language Jewish resources. Essays and books (all of which can be downloaded) in Russian on Jewish history, religion, Israel, and other, more philosophical topics are available at [www.istok.ru](http://www.istok.ru). There is even a site called *In Search of the Russian Jew*, created by Alexander Lvov ([www.cl.spb.ru/alvov](http://www.cl.spb.ru/alvov)) where he offers text studies, stories, and essays on key topics in Judaism. Also worth checking is [www.evrey.com](http://www.evrey.com). It provides similar information, plus a “Q+A” section for rabbis, and plenty of food for thought on Judaism. On [www.judaicaru.org](http://www.judaicaru.org), the website of the Steinsaltz Institute, one finds an extensive library with essays on history, the Jewish life cycle, readings from the Torah, and a great number of useful links. Machanaim’s website, [www.machanaim.org](http://www.machanaim.org), while presenting a somewhat right-wing bent, also provides excellent materials in Russian.

Recently, the Jewish Channel Institute established a relationship with the Open University of Israel to make the university’s distance learning courses available to Russian-speaking New Yorkers. Open University’s Project Russia has been providing courses in Jewish Studies for several years, with over 8,000 students participating in the CIS. With its recently implemented on-line lectures on various topics in Judaism, it may be especially helpful to teachers in the US.

Books in Russian are available as well, mostly from publishers based in Israel. One would have to judge for oneself whether or not the readings are too religious for this community, but it is comforting to know that they are available. Here is just an introductory list to some publishers, most of whom can be found online, offering extensive catalogues.

| Publisher                               | Contact Info                  |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Institute for Jewish Studies in the CIS | Jerusalem Tel: 972-2-624-4486 |

|                                                                                                |                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="http://www.judaica.ru">www.judaica.ru</a>                                             | Moscow Tel: 915-04-09                                                                                                |
| Biblioteka Aliya                                                                               | <a href="http://www.jum.ru/aboutus.htm">www.jum.ru/aboutus.htm</a>                                                   |
| Copyright <i>Machanaim</i><br>Distributed by <i>Shamir</i>                                     | Shamir: Jerusalem<br>Tel: 02-385702<br><i>Machanaim</i> : Kiriyat-Gat, Tel: 08-232439, 051-88249                     |
| Geulim                                                                                         | Jerusalem                                                                                                            |
| Avida                                                                                          | For additional books and other Russian resources:<br>Tel: (718) 871-4506                                             |
| <i>Fond Obrazovaniya Natana Yakybova</i>                                                       | Tel: (718) 997-7226                                                                                                  |
| Shvut Ami                                                                                      | Jerusalem; 02-385414                                                                                                 |
| Hachai Publishing<br><a href="http://www.hachai.com">www.hachai.com</a>                        | 156 Chester Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11218<br>Tel: (718) 633-0100                                                           |
| Shvut Ami<br>In US: American Friends of Shvut Ami                                              | Jerusalem; 02-385414<br>122 W. 76 <sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY 10023<br>Tel: (212) 787-7058                     |
| Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch Inc.                                                                  | 770 Eastern Parkway Brooklyn NY 11213                                                                                |
| Masoret Publications<br><a href="http://www.chassidus.ru/library">www.chassidus.ru/library</a> | 1349 45 <sup>th</sup> street<br>Tel: (718) 633-5581                                                                  |
| National Jewish Outreach Program                                                               | 485 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue<br>New York, NY 10017<br>Tel: 1800-44-HEBRE(W)                                            |
| Gishrey Tarbut Association                                                                     | P.O. Box 28424, Jerusalem 94301<br>Tel: +972-2-6242527<br><a href="mailto:house@gesharim.org">house@gesharim.org</a> |

For educators interested in teaching Hebrew to Russian speakers, the National Jewish Outreach Program recently published the *Intensive Reading Course in Hebrew*, in Russian, as well as *Level II of the Hebrew Reading Crash Course: Now that you know your Aleph-bet, why not try "Adon Olam"?* A number of organizations provide resource guides and directories in Russian, including: National Jewish Outreach Programs, Jewish Community Relations Council, Federation of Georgian Jews, Project LEAD, Queens Jewish Community Council, and Congregation Ohel Simcha.

Although it is difficult to start and maintain a collection of Jewish resources that is open to the public, at least two Jewish libraries geared towards Russian speakers exist in New York City. The Jewish Russian Library run by L'man Achai and located in Brooklyn, has books geared towards beginning and advanced students of Judaism, with stories, biographies, concepts of Judaism, Jewish history, holidays, and philosophy.

(Although the library is open year-round, there is no reference librarian on premises during the summer.) The other is in the Educational Center for Russian Jewry in Rego Park, Queens. Open to the public on Sundays, the center has a variety of books on Jewish history and philosophy, modern-day issues, plenty of prayer books with Russian translations, and a great collection of storybooks for children.

A few unexplored options also remain. They are unexplored because they have not yet been brought to America. Michael Gitik, a Russian-speaking scholar, has started a new open university-typed program. Through his own research, he has created 300 tapes, as well as questionnaires and booklets, on various subjects in Judaism at the beginner's level. He lives in Jerusalem, but works in Russia, where his tapes are widespread. His system works in the following way: Colleagues of his find interested people who buy the tapes. They listen to the tapes and are contacted by people in Jerusalem who go over the material with them. The students take tests and answer questions. Once they have listened to the tapes, Gitik arranges to come to their community to give lectures on Judaism. The tapes he created are very comprehensive, and have recently been put on a CD Rom with MP3's, thus consolidating all the tapes onto one or two CD's. Gitik has also published *Znakomtis s Yevreistvom (Acquaint Yourself with Judaism)*, and is currently working on his second book. So far, his program has not been tried in America, even though he has been in this country and continues to visit.

Another vision for the future is a magazine called *Poisk*, (The Search), started in Israel this year. This publication is in Russian, intended for readers who are beginning to discover their Jewish roots. Although it is not sold in America yet, one can see a preview

of the first two issues on [www.rav.ru](http://www.rav.ru). This type of resource can be very good for the immigrant community because it is very accessible.

### Overall Trends

Educating the Russian community in Judaism is not an easy task, and perhaps because it is a relatively new endeavor, a number of difficulties have arisen. The first thing to notice is that there is a dichotomy between what kinds of Russian resources the Jewish educators think are available and the ones that really exist. Although VLC is just one resource, it is an excellent one, and could be very helpful. It is possible to find excellent books, essays, and activities on-line in Russian if time is invested. This community needs to be linked up to one network and have these resources introduced to them, which is not difficult to do. While teaching as they do (from personal knowledge) is good on one level, it is clear that tangible sources/guidelines are a necessary element for consistently good Jewish education. The next step could be to develop a closer network between Jewish educators in the Russian community around the world. With respect to curricular materials, the Y's and other centers often operate in a vacuum and, as a result, are missing out on some important things. Many educators have exciting ideas about new programs but lack the time or resources to make them reality.

This research has shown that although work needs to be done, there are more available resources than expected. Unfortunately, Jewish educators and others working with the Russian Jewish community have much to do and little time. As a result it can be very difficult to dedicate so much time to researching and finding new materials. Once some guidance is given, the accumulation of resources (or at least of new ideas) will not be as time-consuming. We also cannot forget that this task is difficult because the whole

notion of providing Jewish educational materials in Russian is completely new to this generation of Jews.

Despite the lack of tangible resources, Jewish educators continue to do great work. They are enthusiastic and manage to get many people involved in celebrations and events. The next step is to develop the materials and knowledge to take Russian immigrants to the next level and enable them to deepen their Jewish identity.

Often, just getting Russian Jews involved can seem like an impossible task; they want to learn English, receive job training, find work, and support their family. They don't have the time or the energy to learn about Judaism. And most Jewish centers and organizations in New York City do not want to shove dogmatic traditions down people's throats. Attendance at programs and events is always optional. As such, many organizations end up with a smaller turnout than is possible, and cannot focus as much on Russian resources. Yet those who do not find it difficult to recruit, and whose active mission is to find new followers—the more Orthodox Jewish groups like Chabad—manage to find participants and keep them involved. As a result, the Orthodox Russian community, including the Bukharians, has the most active level of participation, and the most impressive collections of resources. It is one of their main goals, after all, to teach the unknowing about Judaism, and they dedicate plenty of their time and resources to finding educational materials and creating programs for their members.

### Nowhere Near Finished

The information contained in this paper has been gathered over a relatively short, six-week period, and therefore does not leave us with a final, comprehensive report.

Much work needs to be done in the Russian community to better understand the Russian-Jewish mentality, and the right approach to working with this group of people. Yet in this time, a number of issues have come up that are important, and deserve further attention:

- The majority of Russian Jews are not interested in Jewish religion so much as they are interested in Jewish culture and tradition. Educational programs with this community in mind have to introduce Judaism as a way of life, a concept that is easy for an immigrant to relate to.
- There are many available resources that have not yet been discovered by local educators, leading many to believe that there is nothing out there to help them.
- A closer network needs to be developed among organizations working with Russian Jews so that they can share ideas and information.
- Once an in-depth list of websites, books, and other materials is made available, educators can use these resources to create programs especially for Russian Jews, with the knowledge that they are using the right approach.
- We cannot forget that even if one has good resources, the key to the success of any program is the individual educator. It is very important to put special emphasis on the appropriate professional training of educators, as well as creating a viable network among them.

A number of crucial questions still remain, which guide further research and shape possible initiatives.



- a. To what extent is the Russian-Jewish community similar to the larger American-Jewish community in terms of intermarriage, synagogue attendance, Jewish education for children, Jewish rituals at home, etc.?
- b. What do we expect to accomplish as a result of our efforts? To have the Russian Jewish community feel positive about its Jewish roots? To increase their levels of Jewish literacy? To increase their levels of observance? To help them feel comfortable in Israel and/or America?
- c. In regard to American Russian Jews: Do we want them to mimic the larger Jewish community at its best, or to help them build their own unique type of communal life with a strong Jewish content? Or to become active participants in the local communities? Or to support Israel and participate in various charity actions? Or some combination thereof?
- d. What categories of the Russian Jewish population can be reached, and how? Various groups of Russian-speaking Jews need different educational programs. Factors that can influence this are place of origin, geography, education, and social and family status.

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| PERSON CONTACTED                 | ORGANIZATION                                         |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
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**To learn more about the Commission on Jewish Identity  
and Renewal's efforts on behalf of the Russian-speaking community  
in New York and around the world, please call Abby Knopp at  
1-212-836-1236.**

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