Soviet Jews in the United States

by STEVEN J. GOLD

SINCE THE MID-1960S, over 280,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union have settled in the United States.[1] They constitute the largest single group of Jewish immigrants to enter the United States since the 1920s. Although they share kinship ties with the many American Jews whose roots are also in the precommunist Russian empire, their lives have been shaped by different forces: the Bolshevik revolution, the suffering and losses of World War II, and the unique conditions of life in a communist state, including, for Jews, discrimination and persecution. Like American Jews, contemporary émigrés are distinguished by high levels of skill and education, are urban and disproportionately professionals. Unlike most American Jews, they have had minimal exposure to formal Jewish training and Jewish religious life, and no experience with a highly organized Jewish community.

In terms of settlement and absorption, their experience differs from that of earlier Russian immigrants in the extensive resettlement services they receive from both Jewish agencies and the government. These address the basics of housing, employment, and health, as well as language training and acculturation into both American and Jewish society.

Enormous resources have been invested in this immigration, by both the U.S. government and the organized Jewish community. The process began with the political struggle to win the right for Jews to emigrate and now includes the panoply of agencies and programs devoted to easing their way into new lives as Americans and as Jews. Approximately 20 years have passed since serious immigration began, time enough to begin to evaluate

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[1] HIAS, Annual Statistics, 1965–1993. From 1988 to the present, persons from the former Soviet Union have been the largest refugee nationality to enter the U.S. For example, during fiscal year 1992, Kings County (Brooklyn), New York, home to the nation's biggest Soviet Jewish community, was the number one destination for refugees arriving in the United States. The nearly 15,000 refugees who settled there were approximately double the number opting for the second most popular county of destination—Los Angeles—home to another major Soviet refugee community. Mark Littman, *Office of Refugee Resettlement Monthly Data Report for September 1992* (Washington, D.C., Office of Refugee Resettlement).

how Soviet Jews have fared and are faring, how well they are integrating into American society, and to what extent the hopes and expectations of American Jews have been realized—to see their beleaguered co-religionists free to be Jews in ways that were denied them in the USSR.

SOURCES OF DATA

Relatively little research has been carried out on Soviet Jewish émigrés. The paucity of research is striking when compared to the burgeoning literature on earlier Jewish migrants as well as on contemporary immigrant and refugee groups such as Cubans, Koreans, Vietnamese, Mexicans, and Chinese. Further, given the enormous efforts expended by the American Jewish community over the last 25 years to rescue Soviet Jewry, it is surprising that so little energy has been devoted to investigating the fate of this sizable population whose very presence represents the culmination of years of heroic effort. The lack of federal research may reflect the government's view of Soviet Jews as a group that adjusts fairly rapidly, that has the benefit of Jewish community help in resettlement, that poses no serious social problems, and thus requires little special attention. On the Jewish side, it has been suggested that communal agencies have been wary of research because findings both negative and positive could present problems, e.g., criticism of the agencies or reduction in federal funds.[2] It seems equally likely that agencies pressured by the immediate demands of resettling new arrivals were unable or unwilling to use limited human and financial resources for this purpose. From a practical standpoint, research on Soviets is difficult because once émigrés leave the resettlement program, they are hard to follow up, especially if they move to another locale.

Still, a growing body of research on Soviet Jews does exist.[3] It consists of many small pieces that do not lend themselves to easy comparisons or synthesis. Studies were conducted at various times over the last 20 years, using different questions, with samples representing different locations. Research undertaken through different organizations reflects disparate interests. Studies supported by religious agencies, for example, address chiefly religious concerns. Reports funded by federal government agencies, such as the INS (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service), the Bureau of the Census, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) downplay ethnic

[2]Barry R. Chiswick, "Soviet Jews in the United States: An Analysis of Their Linguistic and Economic Adjustment," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 102, Summer 1993, pp. 260–85.

[3]Although the Soviet Union no longer exists, the term "Soviet Jews" is used for convenience. The term "Russian Jews" is not used because it applies to only a portion.

and religious questions and may not even distinguish among Jews, Armenians, Pentecostalists, and other migrant groups from the former USSR.

Still another body of research on Soviet Jewish émigrés has been carried out by academics—historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and others. Their studies reflect the particular theoretical and methodological concerns of the researcher's particular scholarly discipline. Statistical and quantitative studies are helpful for assessing the general trends of Soviet émigrés' status in the United States, their income, synagogue membership, age, and so forth,[4] but are less likely to capture the rich, complex, and often contradictory nature of the Soviet Jews' experience. Studies of this sort tend to suffer from small sample sizes and from the fact that those willing to cooperate with a researcher may not be representative of the entire community, a well-known phenomenon among recent immigrants. Finally, there is good reason to question the validity of former Soviets' responses to telephone surveys, since they are noted for their distrust and manipulation of bureaucrats.[5]

Other studies use qualitative methodology, whereby the researcher involves him or herself with émigrés over a period of time. Using this approach, the subtle and complex experience of Soviet Jews' lives is explored and recorded. Further, participant observation methods are well suited for observing émigrés over time as they adjust to life in the United States.[6] However, such techniques are limited in their ability to represent a broad cross-section of the population and may be especially subject to the researcher's personal biases and style of relating to subjects.

A third body of information on Soviet Jewish émigrés applies neither qualitative nor quantitative research methodologies, but rather conveys the

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[4]The two nationwide studies of this type are Rita J. Simon, Julian Simon, and Jim Schwartz, *The Soviet Jews' Adjustment to the United States* (Council of Jewish Federations, 1982), also published in Rita J. Simon, ed., *New Lives: The Adjustment of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in the United States and Israel* (Lexington, Mass., 1985); and Barry A. Kosmin, *The Class of 1979: The "Acculturation" of Jewish Immigrants from the Soviet Union* (North American Jewish Data Bank, CUNY Graduate School and University Center, 1990).

[5]See Hesh Kestin, "Making Cheese from Snow," *Forbes*, July 29, 1985, pp. 90–95; Wayne Di Francisco and Zvi Gitelman, "Soviet Political Culture and Covert Participation in Policy Implementation," *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3, 1984, pp. 603–21.

[6]See Fran Markowitz, "The Not Lost Generation: Family Dynamics and Ethnic Identity Among Soviet Adolescent Immigrants of the 1970s," paper presented at the Wilstein Institute for Jewish Policy Studies Conference, Soviet Jewish Acculturation—Beyond Resettlement, Palo Alto, June 1991; idem, *A Community in Spite of Itself: Soviet Jewish Emigres in New York* (Washington, D.C., 1993); Steven J. Gold, *Refugee Communities: A Comparative Field Study* (Newbury Park, Calif., 1992); Annalise Orleck, "The Soviet Jews: Life in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn," in *New Immigrants in New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (New York, 1987), pp. 273–304. The present author has conducted fieldwork with Soviet Jews in California from 1982 to the present. Several quotes and observations contained in this article have their origins in this research.

experience and outlook of persons who work with émigrés. A number of articles by religious and community service professionals published in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* fall into this category.

In addition to the above, the present study draws on two relatively recent data sources. One is the 1990 U.S. census, specifically the data on Soviet émigrés from the two largest locations of their settlement, New York City and Los Angeles County.[7] These two locations account for about 45 percent of post-1965 migrants in the 1990 census.[8] In addition, a comparison of descriptive statistics of these two populations shows a very high degree of similarity.

The question of the Jewish proportion of former Soviets in the census requires some clarification. According to the 1990 census, 336,889 persons born in the USSR reside in the United States. Although the census does not provide information on religion or ethnicity, HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the major Jewish resettlement agency, reported a figure of 173,535 Soviet Jews resettled by it from 1966 through 1990.[9] (The 1990 National Jewish Population Study found 160,000 USSR-born Jews in the United States.) Others entered the country under different auspices or programs, and still others came to this country prior to World War II. Thus, estimating conservatively, somewhat over half of the census's Soviet population nationwide is presumed to be Jewish, and some experts believe it is higher. Additionally, we have increased the likelihood that the tabulations for New York and Los Angeles represent a population with a high fraction of Jews by excluding Armenians (the other major group of post-1965 immigrants from the former USSR) from our analysis.[10]

The second data source is the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study, the data for which were released early in 1994. This is the most recent and most comprehensive survey of a sample of Jews from the former Soviet Union—who were interviewed by Russian-speaking interviewers—and is thus a primary source of information.[11]

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[7]Data were drawn from the 1990 census (5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample).

[8]Office of Refugee Resettlement Program (hereafter ORR), *Report to Congress 1990*, p. 10.

[9]According to Linda Gordon, a demographer currently employed by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, with years of previous experience at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, HIAS data on Soviet Jews are an accurate and reliable source.

[10]According to the 1990 census, 41,995 persons born in the USSR migrated to L.A. County from 1965 to 1990. Of these, 28,267 (67 percent) were Armenians (i.e., they reported Armenian ancestry or spoke Armenian at home). In contrast, of the 60,044 post-1965 émigrés from the former USSR in New York City, only 543 (1 percent) were Armenian. After the late 1980s, the fraction of Armenians entering the U.S. as refugees declined.

[11]Many of the findings from this study have been published in Bethamie Horowitz, *The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study* (United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1993). For the present study, computer runs were made from the data tape, made available by the North American Jewish Data Bank.

This article utilizes all the sources described to present what can be considered an interim report on Soviet Jews in the United States—who they are, how they are faring, and the nature of their relationship to the larger Jewish community.

MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT

The Migration Process

The exodus of Jews from the USSR has been shaped by a complex of factors involving developments within Soviet society, foreign relations—chiefly with the United States—and the impact of international public opinion.[12] Because of an official policy that discouraged emigration, few Jews left the country before 1970. In the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet policy on emigration loosened considerably, but remained unpredictable. Thus, from 1976 to 1979, the pace of emigration increased rapidly, then dropped steadily through 1986, then began to climb again, reaching its highest levels ever in the years 1989–1992. (See table 1.) Peak years of entry for these two periods were 1979, when 28,794 arrived, and 1992, when 45,888 Jews from the former Soviet Union entered the United States.[13]

One of the factors influencing emigration was the rise of a Soviet Jewry movement, within the USSR itself and in the worldwide Jewish community. Following the Six Day War in 1967, Soviet Jews—long isolated from their Jewish peers elsewhere—experienced a surge of Jewish self-consciousness and identification with Israel. Endemic anti-Semitism and growing discrimination in higher education, employment, and other areas contributed to the pressure to consider leaving. Among Jews in other countries, the prospect of "rescuing" Soviet Jewry ("Let my people go!") ignited a passionate and effective advocacy movement that succeeded in enlisting the support of most Western governments. On the Soviet side, a desire to develop trade and financial ties with the West, and the linkage by the U.S. Congress of trade and emigration produced greater openness to the idea of emigration.

Under Soviet law, emigration was at least theoretically permitted for reasons of family reunification or national repatriation; however, permission was not granted automatically, and restrictions could be imposed. By and large, those Jews pressing most insistently to leave sought to join family in Israel. Within the Soviet Jewry advocacy movement, the rescue of Soviet

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[12]A number of specialists have analyzed the reasons for the fluctuations in Soviet policy. See, for example, Robert O. Freedman, ed., *Soviet Jewry in the 1980s: The Politics of Anti-Semitism and Emigration and the Dynamics of Resettlement* (Durham, N.C., 1989).

[13]ORR, *Report to Congress 1990*; HIAS, Annual Statistics, 1965–1993.

Jews was always viewed in Zionist terms, it being understood that the Jewish state would be their new home. In the early 1970s, Soviet Jews began requesting and receiving from relatives in Israel *vyzovs*, affidavits for exit visas, and growing numbers of applicants were approved. Up to 1974, nearly 100 percent of these emigrants went to Israel. By the late '70s, however, more and more emigrants were "dropping out" at the transit station in Vienna, opting to go to some other country instead, chiefly to the United States, which accorded most of them refugee status. By the late 1970s, the proportion going to Israel had fallen to one-third; by the late 1980s, less than 10 percent chose to settle in the Jewish state. However, by 1989–90, when the mass exodus of the current wave reached its peak, many more Soviets went to Israel (258,032) than to the United States (68,021). This trend has continued, although the proportion going to Israel has decreased. In 1993, roughly twice as many (69,132) went to Israel as to the United States (35,581).

Some authorities claim that Israel simply became a less attractive destination after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and that reports of work and housing difficulties in Israel discouraged many. Another factor was the change in the composition of the emigration stream in the late '70s. Those choosing Israel were primarily from Georgia, Central Asia, and the Baltic states—areas in which Jews had retained more of Jewish life and culture and a commitment to return to Zion. By contrast, those from the heartland—Russia and Ukraine—were the most Russified and the most distant from Jewish life and identification and had no religious or Zionist motivation.[14]

The change in the direction of the emigration in the 1970s gave rise to conflict between the Zionist and Israeli factions, on one side, and those supporting freedom of choice for the emigrants, on the other. The tension eased in the early 1980s, as emigration virtually dried up. It could have become a problem again in the late '80s, when the Soviets opened the doors wide, and large numbers of Jews began to express an interest in leaving. However, the United States stopped accepting individuals with exit visas for Israel who were "dropping out," and instead established its own system for processing would-be immigrants. This system established an unofficial annual limit of 40,000 Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union and gave first priority to those applicants who already had close relatives living in the United States. Soviet Jews were required to apply from Moscow—thus eliminating the dropout option. (Jews also had the opportunity to enter with parole status, but this would deny them any refugee benefits.)[15]

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[14]Zvi Gitelman, "The Quality of Life in Israel and the United States," in Simon, *New Lives*, p. 47.

[15]Elaine Woo, "Anticipated Reunion Turns into a Nightmare for Soviet Emigre," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 24, 1989, pp. B1, B12; *New York Times*, "Visa Applicants Deluge

When interviewed on the subject, Jews from the former Soviet Union cite several reasons for their preference for the United States over Israel, among them greater economic opportunity, a higher level of national security, and the fact that there is no compulsory military service. (For a group who paid a great human price in World War II, the latter considerations are of major significance.) Some émigrés assert that they feel more comfortable in the secular and pluralistic United States than they would in Israel, which they refer to as "an Orthodox country."[16] Finally, some Russian Jews say they are accustomed to being part of a big nation and prefer exchanging one superpower for another, as opposed to moving to a tiny country whose total population is less than that of their former city of residence.

The number of all Soviet refugees currently permitted to enter the United States (Jewish and non-Jewish) is limited to 50,000 a year. Priority is given to selected groups of former Soviets whom the U.S. Congress has identified as likely targets of persecution. These include Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and followers of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Eligible persons with close legal-resident relatives (parent, spouse, children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren) in this country are granted priority for entry. Members of these denominations who have immediate relatives (parent, spouse, or unmarried minor child) who are U.S. citizens must apply as immigrants rather than refugees.[17]

The Resettlement Process

Since the mid-1970s, a number of programs have been adopted by Congress to encourage the smooth adjustment of refugees from several nations, including the former Soviet Union. The most important of these is the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–212), reauthorized in 1991. This legislation was intended to provide "transitional assistance to refugees in the United States," to make "employment training and job placement available in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as

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Embassy in Moscow," Oct. 3, 1989, p. 4; Madeleine Tress, "United States Policy Toward Soviet Emigration," *Migration* 3/4, nos. 11/12, 1991, pp. 93–106.

[16]Gold, *Refugee Communities*. According to the 1991 Jewish population study of New York, the fraction of former Soviet Jews who have seriously considered living in Israel exceeds the rate of all Jewish New Yorkers by only 11 percent. (30 percent of post-1965 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union have considered living in Israel, while 19 percent of the entire Jewish community have done so.)

[17]The number of former Soviets currently entering the U.S. as immigrants (not refugees) is rather small, accounting for only about 4 percent of all former Soviet arrivals in 1991. However, INS officials expect this number to grow in the future. Linda Gordon, INS statistician, personal communication, Sept. 1993; *New York Times*, "Visa Applicants Deluge Embassy in Moscow," Oct. 3, 1989, p. 4; Washington Processing Center (Instructions for application for refugee status), ND.

possible," to offer refugees English-language training, and to ensure "that cash assistance is made available to refugees in such a manner as to not discourage their economic self-sufficiency."[18]

The services enabled by the Refugee Act of 1980 as well as other legislation are delivered and administered by a diverse network of government, religious, nonprofit, and profit-making agencies and organizations. A major role in the resettlement of refugees is carried out by 13 voluntary agencies, or VOLAGS, which are funded by charitable contributions and by the federal government. Refugee cash assistance (RCA) is distributed by county welfare departments.

While the largest numbers of refugees in recent years have been resettled by the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), nearly all Soviet Jews as well as members of other groups have been resettled by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).[19] HIAS, in turn, works through a national resettlement network composed of local Jewish family service agencies and federations, and in New York with the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA), the largest Jewish resettlement agency in the country. The HIAS model of resettlement coordinates centralized policy-making, administration, and data collection with the provision of service at the local level, which allows each community the flexibility required to help clients according to local conditions and needs. For example, HIAS mandates certain program standards, such as reunion with relatives and "earliest appropriate job placement" in order to "avoid fostering reliance on public and private institutions." However, actual service provision is carried out by the professional staff members of local agencies in coordination with family members already residing here and community volunteers. "Consequently, the nature of programs developed within each community is often unique to that community's specific environment."[20]

FUNDING RESETTLEMENT

All resettlement agencies receive Reception and Placement Grant funds of roughly equivalent per capita amounts through the Department of State. In addition, agencies are eligible for Matching Grant funds through the Department of Health and Human Services, to cover expenses beyond the

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[18]Section 311, quoted in Michael Murray and Associates, *A Report on Refugee Services in San Francisco* (Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement, San Francisco, 1981).

[19]See Timothy J. Eckles, Lawrence J. Lewin, David S. North, and Dangole J. Spakevicius, "A Portrait in Diversity: Voluntary Agencies and the Office of Refugee Resettlement Matching Grant Program" (Lewin and Associates, 1982), p. 42.

[20]ORR, *Report to Congress 1993*, pp. C-10, C-11.

initial basic services.[21] Because the agencies working with Soviet Jews are highly centralized and integrated, long established, and well funded, they tend to be in a better position than agencies devoted to other ethnic and nationality groups to raise funds needed to qualify for Matching Grants. As a result, a higher proportion of newcomers resettled by Jewish agencies benefit from Matching Grant funds (fewer, for example, being placed on welfare). In fiscal 1992, the Matching Grant Program (then administered by the Council of Jewish Federations, but since 1994 by HIAS) received almost $34 million to resettle almost 34,000 refugees, of whom 90 percent were Soviets. During the same year, four other agencies received a total of $5.2 million to resettle just over 5,000 refugees who were members of other ethnic and nationality groups.[22]

In addition to HIAS, resettlement of Soviet Jews is underwritten by local Jewish communities and agencies and by the social service departments of the states in which they settle. Finally, to help defray costs of resettlement, so-called anchor families—established relatives of recently arrived émigrés—are expected to contribute money or in-kind services to the resettlement agency. If families are unable to contribute, other community resources are utilized.

HIAS itself is funded by a combination of government funds, allocations from Jewish federations throughout the United States and Canada—especially New York UJA-Federation—and by other sources, such as memberships, contributions, and repayments of loans from migrants. In 1992, HIAS's total expenses were $10.3 million, while its income was $15.5 million. Income included $10 million from government, $2.3 million from Jewish federations, and $2.3 million from contributions and bequests.[23] More recently, because of difficult economic conditions in the United States, both public and private funds for refugee resettlement have become more scarce, resulting in cutbacks in many programs.[24]

As refugees, émigrés are entitled to a series of benefits including health care, housing assistance, job and language training, and public assistance. Local agencies may also offer supplementary services such as job placement, aid with social adjustment, assistance in opening small businesses, and a variety of cultural and religious activities. Because of the constitutional separation of church and state, resettlement activities with a religious con-

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[21]Eckles et al., "Portrait in Diversity"; HIAS, *Financial Statement and Auditor's Report*, Dec. 31, 1991; HIAS, Annual Statistics, 1965–1993.

[22]ORR, *Report to Congress 1993*, p. 29.

[23]HIAS, *Financial Statement and Auditor's Report*, Dec. 31, 1992.

[24]Len Schneiderman, Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, *FY 91–92 Actual Expenses and FY 92–93 Resettlement Projections*, Summer 1993.

tent may not be supported with governmental funds.

The period of eligibility for these benefits was 18 months in the early 1980s, but it has gradually been scaled back to 8 months. Support in the first month is provided to émigrés by the U.S. Department of State Reception and Placement Grant. For many refugees, resettlement activity in the second through fourth months is funded through the Matching Grant Program, as noted above, with funds furnished in equal parts by Jewish federations and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The next four months of benefits are delivered by the social service departments of the states in which refugees reside. After eight months of residency in the United States, émigrés no longer have special entitlements. Their applications for governmental or Jewish community services are treated (and funded) in the same manner as would be the case for U.S. citizens.[25]

AGENCIES OFFERING SERVICES

Depending on the community, services to Soviet Jews are available from a number of coordinated agencies and may vary both in terms of benefits available and quality of services provided. Intake services, vocational and language training, and health care are often accessible from public agencies and community colleges or adult schools. The Jewish Family and Children's Service provides counseling, financial aid, and case management. The Jewish Vocational Service offers job placement and occasionally job training. Jewish community centers (JCCs) and YMHA/YWHAs deliver social and recreational activities, and the Bureau of Jewish Education contributes a variety of religious and cultural activities. Many synagogues, Jewish camps, and Jewish day schools have developed programs on their own or in concert with Jewish federations to welcome émigré families. For example, in Los Angeles, Chabad has used its own resources as well as those from the Jewish federation and the city of West Hollywood to support several Soviet émigré programs. Jewish agencies for the elderly extend services such as health care, transportation, housing, and social activities to the many aged Soviet refugees. Local families, communities, and synagogues provide émigrés with a whole variety of volunteer services including home visits, informal job and language training, transportation, invitations to religious services and Sabbath dinners, housing, furniture, and other benefits.

Just as the services available to Soviet émigrés vary according to the resources of the local Jewish agencies resettling them, benefits available through state and local sources also vary. For example, due to state regula-

[25]Miriam Prum Hess, Refugee Acculturation Coordinator, Jewish Federation Council of Los Angeles, personal communication, Sept. 1993; Schneiderman, Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, Summer 1993.

tions, a refugee family of four living in California in 1989 was eligible for $734 monthly in AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) benefits. The same family living in Texas received a maximum of $221. Further, while two-parent, indigent families are eligible for AFDC in California, they are not in Texas.[26]

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Size: Through the end of 1993, HIAS resettled a total of 289,719 Soviet Jews in the United States. This figure refers only to Soviet Jews who have come to the United States over the last 28 years, not to the size of the current Soviet Jewish community, which is harder to estimate. For one thing, the number of émigrés has been diminished by mortality. Because former Soviets are an elderly population, their mortality rate is undoubtedly fairly high. At the same time, Jews from the former Soviet Union have given birth to an unknown number of American-born children, who are part of the Soviet émigré community and consequently contribute to its size. Finally, there is the question of whether all those resettled can be considered Jewish. For example, an extended family whose members include an intermarried couple and the non-Jewish spouse's parents contains at least three non-Jews, who nevertheless have been resettled and counted by HIAS as Jews.[27] In sum, while there is no definite figure for the size of the Soviet Jewish community, an accepted estimate is around a quarter of a million.

Origins: The greatest number of resettled Soviet Jews come from the Russian and Ukrainian republics of the Soviet Union, which also have the largest Jewish populations. However, while the Russian Republic has the largest number of Jews, Ukraine is the major source of émigrés. Of the 194,047 Soviet Jews who entered the United States between 1980 and May 1993, 42 percent (81,421) were from Ukraine, 24 percent (46,391) from the Russian Republic, 13 percent (24,437) from Belarus, 6 percent (12,591) from Uzbekistan, 6 percent (11,113) from Moldova, 2 percent (4,715) from Azerbaijan, and 2 percent (4,486) from Latvia. The remainder (4 percent) came from other Soviet republics or had unknown origins.[28] (See table 2.)

Age: Soviet Jews are consistently reported as being the oldest of refugee

[26]Ruben Rumbaut, "The Structure of Refuge: Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States, 1975–1985," *International Review of Comparative Public Policy* 1, 1989, p. 103.

[27]Bethamie Horowitz, "Where Do Jewish New Yorkers Come From?" New York UJA-Federation, 1993.

[28]Simon et al., "Soviet Jews' Adjustment"; Rita J. Simon and Melanie Brooks, "Soviet Jewish Immigrants' Adjustment in Four United States Cities," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 60, no. 1, 1983, pp. 56–64; Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; HIAS, Annual Statistics, 1965–1993.

groups entering the United States, and there is reason to believe that their average age has been slowly rising. Between 1983 and 1991, the average age of all Soviet refugees entering the United States was 31.[29] Allowing for about 20 percent non-Jews in this population—a generally younger group—the average for Soviet Jews was undoubtedly somewhat higher. According to HIAS, the median age of entering Soviet Jews in 1993 was 35.5; this compares to a median age for all entering refugees (from all countries) of 28 years. The Soviets' age distribution also differs significantly from that of the total refugee population. For example, the former includes 12.5 percent young children; the latter 20.2 percent. In the older age category (65 and over), the Soviet Jewish proportion is 17.5 percent, compared to 8 percent in the total refugee population.[30] Females tend to be older than males, due to greater life expectancy and the impact of World War II.

Male/female ratio: There have consistently been slightly more females than males in the Soviet Jewish émigré population, averaging around 53 percent, compared with a more equal distribution in the total refugee population.[31]

Family size: Family size for Soviet Jews tends to be small. Rounding statistics, three-person nuclear families are consistently reported. Based on anecdotal evidence, it appears that a fair number of émigré families are having more than one child in the United States.[32]

Family type: Soviet Jewish families are usually intact and often include three generations. Prior to the removal of migration restrictions in the late 1980s, Soviet emigration policy fostered the exit of multigenerational families. When a Soviet citizen applied to emigrate, "consent from both parents for permission to leave was also required regardless of the individual's age or nature of relationship to the parent. When parents provided consent, they too were viewed as 'traitors' and they too were harassed," thus increasing the likelihood that they themselves would emigrate.[33] Accordingly, a very high proportion of Soviet Jewish families are multigenerational and, as noted above, they include a very elderly population.

Intermarriage: Soviet survey data suggest that Soviet Jews value marital endogamy (marrying within one's own group) far more than other Soviet ethnic and nationality groups. Nevertheless, they display relatively high

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[29]ORR, *Report to Congress 1992*, p. 48.

[30]HIAS, *Statistical Abstract FY 93*, Feb. 1994, p. 14.

[31]ORR, *Report to Congress 1987*; HIAS, ibid.

[32]Eckles et al., "Portrait in Diversity," p. 26; Rita J. Simon, "Refugee Families' Adjustment and Aspirations: A Comparison of Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese Immigrants," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 6, no. 4, 1983, pp. 492–504; HIAS, *Annual Statistics 1979–1991*, 1991.

[33]Diane Drachman and Anna Halberstadt, "A Stage of Migration Framework as Applied to Recent Soviet Emigres," *Social Work with Immigrants and Refugees*, ed. Angela Shen Ryan (New York, 1992), p. 67.

rates of intermarriage.[34] The 1979 Soviet census "shows that an estimated 33 percent of the Jewish population of the RSFSR [Russian Republic], 19 percent of the Jews in the Ukraine and 14 percent of the Jews in Byelorussia live in mixed families." Most recently, Sergio DellaPergola has estimated the rate of outmarriage of Jews in the USSR as of the late 1980s to be between 45 and 54.9 percent, or approximately the same rate as in the United States.[35]

The data on Soviet Jews' marriage patterns in the United States are limited. In Kosmin's 1990 study of émigrés living in the United States at least eight years, 87 percent were currently married, and the reported rate of mixed marriages was somewhere between 8 and 12 percent. (This is considerably lower than the known rate for all Soviet Jews, and may simply reflect the small sample size or that this is a case of selective migration.) Finally, attitudinal data from the 1991 New York Jewish population study indicate that Jews from the former Soviet Union are much less tolerant of intermarriage (with non-Jews) than is the larger New York Jewish community. While 60 percent of all New York Jews report that they would accept, support, or strongly support their child's marriage to a non-Jew, only 33 percent of former Soviets would accept or support such a union, while 58 percent would oppose it. However, if the non-Jewish spouse were to convert to Judaism, acceptance or support of the marriage climbs to 70 percent. By comparison, 84 percent of all Jews polled in New York would then support the marriage.

PATTERNS OF RESETTLEMENT

Geographic Distribution

While we know the total number of Soviet Jews who have been resettled in the United States, we have less specific information about the size of populations in various localities. We do know that rates of secondary migration (émigrés who leave their initial place of settlement in the United States for another destination) are relatively high, especially for those initially settled in small communities in the Midwest and South. For example, as of 1990, according to the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco,

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[34]Rasma Karklins, "Determinants of Ethnic Identification in the USSR: The Soviet Jewish Case," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 10, no. 1, 1987, pp. 27–47.

[35]Benjamin Pinkus, "National Identity and Emigration Patterns Among Soviet Jewry," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 15, no. 3, 1985, p. 11; Sergio DellaPergola, "Israel and World Population: A Core-Periphery Perspective," in *Population and Social Change in Israel*, ed. C. Goldscheider (Boulder, 1992), p. 55. See also Sergio DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population," AJYB 1993, pp. 434–37.

about 10 percent of the Bay Area's Soviet Jewish population were secondary migrants. Similarly, the Jewish Federation of Chicago estimates that about 2,000 of its 16,500 émigrés are secondary migrants.[36]

Chiswick's analysis of 1980 census data determined that 36 percent of post-1965 Soviet immigrants resided in the New York Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 16 percent in Los Angeles/Long Beach, 7 percent in Chicago, 4 percent each in San Francisco/Oakland and Boston, and 3 percent in Miami. In all, these six SMSAs accounted for 70 percent of Soviet immigrants.[37]

State-level data from the 1990 census reveal that 30 percent of USSR-born American residents (Jews and non-Jews) live in New York, 23 percent in California, 6 percent each in New Jersey and Illinois, and 5 percent each in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Hence, 80 percent of those born in the Soviet Union reside in seven states. (See table 3.) As noted above, there is no sure way of knowing what proportion of these are Jews. Los Angeles, for example, is the major point of settlement for Soviet Armenians. Analysis of the 1990 census reveals that only 33 percent of post-'65 former Soviet residents in Los Angeles county are *not* of Armenian ethnicity. In contrast, only about 500 of the more than 60,000 post-'65 former Soviets in New York City are of Armenian ethnicity.[38]

CHOICE OF LOCATION

The Jewish communal resettlement process is predicated on the assistance and participation of family members already resident in this country. Thus, the initial choice of settlement location for a new émigré is based primarily on the presence of "anchor" relatives in a given community. If there are no relatives, or if relatives are unwilling or unable to help out, newcomers are referred to other communities. There is some correlation between the size of a city's Jewish community and the number of émigrés resettled there. At the same time, the size of a given community's Soviet Jewish population is influenced by newcomers' decisions to leave the initial place of settlement for other locations through secondary migration. Apart from the presence of family or friends, secondary migrants generally select a given city because of preference for the climate or the availability of jobs or cultural amenities.

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[36]Anita Friedman, "Status Report on Soviet Jewish Resettlement in the San Francisco Bay Area," Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties Emigre Program, 1990; Joel M. Carp, "Absorbing Jews Jewishly: Professional Responsibility for Jewishly Absorbing New Immigrants in Their New Communities," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 66, no. 4, 1990, pp. 366–74.

[37]Chiswick, "Soviet Jews in the United States," p. 275.

[38]ORR, *Report to Congress 1991,* and 1990 census.

Research reveals that certain émigré communities in the United States are disproportionately drawn from specific cities or regions of the USSR. For example, the North Shore of Massachusetts has a heavy representation of émigrés from the Russian Republic. Kosmin suggests that Odessans settle in Cleveland; those from Kiev move to Philadelphia; and Jews from Minsk and Azerbaijan migrate to Baltimore. Markowitz as well as Simon and Brooks found that Chicago has a heavy representation of émigrés from the heartland Ukrainian cities of Kiev and Kharkov, as well as Minsk in Belarus. Even neighborhoods within a single city may develop a regional focus. Barber discovered that, despite the existence of a lively (and largely Ukrainian) émigré community in Brooklyn, professionals from Moscow and Leningrad self-consciously created their own enclave, a lengthy subway ride away in Manhattan's Washington Heights.[39]

Regional differences reflect differences in cultural and other background factors as well as the ways in which émigrés view and relate to each other. In general, those from the former Russian Republic—Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg)—consider themselves to be culturally superior to other émigrés. Ukrainians have lower status. Odessans are seen as skilled in deal-making, and not as refined as Russians. Émigrés from the Baltic republics, which have been under Soviet hegemony only since the 1940s, are much more likely to know Yiddish, while those from the less cosmopolitan eastern regions of the USSR are less assimilated (to Russian culture) and accordingly are noted for their religiosity and stable family and community structures.[40]

While regional differences are often overcome in the United States, connections with communities of origin still hold some sway among Soviet Jews, especially among those of eastern and Sephardic origins.[41] Hence, regional differences, along with those based on social class, former occupa-

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[39]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, p. 16; Jewish Family Service of the North Shore, Mass., *Social Needs Survey of Immigrants to the North Shore from the Soviet Union*, 1990; Markowitz, "The Not Lost Generation," p. 47; Simon and Brooks, "Soviet Jewish Immigrants' Adjustment"; Jennifer Barber, "The Soviet Jews of Washington Heights," *New York Affairs* 10, no. 1, 1987, pp. 34–43.

[40]Barber, "Soviet Jews of Washington Heights"; Gold, *Refugee Communities*; Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*; Zvi Gitelman, "Soviet Immigrants and American Absorption Efforts: A Case Study in Detroit," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 55, no. 1, 1978, pp. 77–82; Mitchell Serels, "The Soviet Sephardim in the United States," New York: Yeshiva University, 1990; Marilyn Halter, "Ethnicity and the Entrepreneur: Self-Employment Among Former Soviet Jewish Refugees," in *New Migrants in the Marketplace: Boston's Ethnic Entrepreneurs*, ed. Marilyn Halter (Amherst, Mass., in press).

[41]According to the 1991 Jewish population study of New York, 8 percent of post-1965 Jews born in the former Soviet Union are of Sephardic ethnicity, 70 percent are Ashkenazic, and 22 percent are unsure of their ethnicity. This distribution is nearly identical to that of the larger New York Jewish community.

tion, and educational level contribute significantly to the development of both connections and antipathies among Jews from the former Soviet Union. As Zvi Gitelman notes:

> If the unsophisticated American social worker can't tell the difference between the Leningrad accent of a scientist and the Latvian accent of a technician, the immigrants themselves certainly can. Thus, the immigrants themselves will resist attempts to get them to "cooperate," to associate with and help people with whom they feel they have little in common.[42]

OBTAINING U.S. CITIZENSHIP

Soviets show a higher propensity to naturalize and do so more rapidly than the other major refugee groups (Cubans and Southeast Asians) that have entered the United States in recent years. From 1980 through 1991, almost 60,000 persons born in the USSR became citizens. This represents about 57 percent of those who arrived in the country between 1975 and 1985 as refugees.[43] The former Soviets' rapid naturalization provides members of this group with opportunities for political participation, eligibility for jobs and scholarships, and a higher priority ranking when assisting relatives to gain entry into the United States.[44]

Employment and Economic Factors

As a group, Soviet Jews are highly educated and experienced in technical and professional fields. Simon and Brooks, in a nationwide sample, found the average educational level to be 13.5 years, and a study of émigrés in Massachusetts' North Shore found that 97 percent of adults had a bachelor's or higher degree and a professional occupation prior to migration. The average educational level of Soviet Jews exceeds that of the U.S. population by a year and is among the highest of all immigrant groups entering the country.[45] Data from the 1990 census are consistent with Simon and Brooks's estimate. Average education was above 13 years for Soviet-born persons in both New York City and Los Angeles, and 58 percent of former Soviets in New York City and 72 percent in Los Angeles County had one or more years of college. (See tables 4–5.)

Surveys indicate that Soviet Jewish émigrés generally experience rapid

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[42]Gitelman, "Soviet Immigrants and American Absorption Efforts," pp. 74–75.

[43]ORR, *Report to Congress 1993*, p. 61.

[44]According to the 1991 Jewish population study of New York, 33 percent of post-1965 Jews born in the former Soviet Union are registered to vote.

[45]Simon and Brooks, "Soviet Jewish Immigrants' Adjustment"; Jewish Family Service of the North Shore, "Social Needs Survey"; Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 43.

economic adjustment. Average family income in 1989 for those in the United States 8 years or more was $34,000. In the North Shore of Massachusetts, 63 percent were making over $30,000.[46]

These findings appear to be supported by the 1990 census, which shows that, with the exception of recent arrivals (those in the country three or fewer years), the income of all Soviet émigrés was relatively high, particularly in Los Angeles. Employed Soviet men residing in New York City who arrived between 1975 and 1981 earned on average $32,000 annually in 1990—more than all foreign-born men ($25,871) but less than both native-born white men ($45,677) and all foreign-born white men ($36,224). In Los Angeles, Soviet men were making over $43,000 on average—more than both all foreign-born white men ($41,527) and all foreign-born men ($24,083) and only slightly less than the average for native-born white men ($46,285). Employed Soviet women who entered the United States between 1975 and 1981 made about $22,500 in New York—about the same as all foreign-born white women ($22,991) and more than all foreign-born women ($19,048), but less than native-born white women ($31,114). In Los Angeles, Soviet women earned approximately $26,000 on average, about the same as native-born white women ($26,473) and more than both foreign-born white women ($23,388) and all foreign-born women ($16,376). As might be expected, recently arrived Soviet men and women made much less in 1990 than those émigrés with longer tenure in the country. (See table 6.)

While the average income of Soviet immigrants suggests a generally successful merger into the American middle class, the economic profile of this population actually includes a wide range, from poverty to significant wealth. For example, in June 1991, about 30 percent of refugees (Jews and non-Jews) from the former USSR who had been in the United States for a year or less were receiving cash assistance. Among Soviet Jewish émigrés in the United States eight years or more in 1989: 42 percent of households in New York and 36 percent in Los Angeles were making less than $20,000 per household; 50 percent in New York and 48 percent in Los Angeles were earning $20,000–$60,000; 8 percent in New York and 16 percent in Los Angeles were earning over $60,000.[47] Soviet Jews in Los Angeles proudly describe the financial success of their community as they refer to the many emigrants who own homes in Mount Olympus, an affluent neighborhood adjacent to Beverly Hills.[48]

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[46]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Jewish Family Service of the North Shore, "Social Needs Survey"; Chiswick, "Soviet Jews in the United States," p. 274.

[47]ORR, *Report to Congress 1992*, pp. A-18, A-19; Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, pp. 24–25.

[48]Si Frumkin, "Who Are the Russians?" *Jewish Journal* (Los Angeles), Nov. 19–25, 1993, p. 17.

LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION

Labor-force participation rates for Soviet Jews in the United States have generally been quite high. However, with the large numbers arriving since 1990 and the depressed economic conditions they encounter in many receiving communities, a sizable fraction of recent arrivals are underemployed.

The 1990 census determined that the labor-force participation rate for all Soviet immigrants in New York City (arriving since 1965) was 76 percent for men and 57 percent for women. Excluding recent arrivals, the labor-force participation rate was 89 percent for men and 68 percent for women. Roughly similar trends were evident in Los Angeles, where the labor-force participation rate for Soviet immigrant men was 79 percent and 63 percent for women. Excluding recent arrivals, the rate was 88 percent for men and 71 percent for women. Excluding those in the United States three years or less in 1990, unemployment rates were quite low, less than 7 percent for men or women in New York and Los Angeles. (See table 7.)

DEPENDENCE VS. SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Data from the 1990 census show that 14 percent of Soviet-born men and 13 percent of Soviet-born women (aged 24–65) in New York City and 7 percent of Soviet-born men and 11 percent of Soviet-born women in Los Angeles County were on SSI, AFDC, or General Relief in 1990. However, excluding recent arrivals, dependency rates decline to 5 percent for men and 10 percent for women in New York and 5 percent for men and 9 percent for women in Los Angeles. Clearly, once settled, refugees are able to reduce their rates of dependency. (One exception is the over-65 age group, a large fraction of which receives SSI.) (See table 8.) Data produced by the Council of Jewish Federations[49] show that the self-sufficiency rate for Soviet Jews after four months was 24.6 percent for those arriving in 1990, 23.8 percent for those entering in 1991, and 18.3 percent for those arriving in 1992. In general, it appears that émigrés arriving in smaller cities had a better chance of being self-supporting after four months than those who settled in larger cities. For example, Baltimore achieved an 80-percent-plus rate of self-sufficiency among Soviet Jews after four months in the years 1989–1992. By contrast, the four-month self-sufficiency rate for Los Angeles émigrés was between 22 percent and 12 percent for the same years; émigrés coming to New York achieved four-month self-sufficiency rates around 5 percent after 1989. The difference between smaller and larger community size may be related to the relative ease of placement when agency staff have more

[49]Harvey Paretzky, *An Employment Profile of Soviet Jewish Refugees in the United States* (Council of Jewish Federations, 1993).

manageable caseloads. In addition to community size, other factors, such as the state-determined availability of public assistance, may also influence self-sufficiency rates. The fact that New York and California have much more generous benefit programs than does Maryland may partly explain the higher rates of self-sufficiency evident in Baltimore as compared with Los Angeles and New York.[50] (See table 9.)

Although the combination of large numbers of émigrés entering the United States and the recession since 1990 have made initial job-finding difficult for former Soviets, their dependence on RCA (refugee cash assistance) actually declined between 1990 and 1991. To quote from the Office of Refugee Resettlement *Report to Congress 1993*: "The RCA utilization rate for the Soviets is the lowest of any large group (28 percent) and represents a dramatic decrease from the previous year (50 percent), when a surge of arrivals in the winter and early spring of 1991 contributed to heavy RCA utilization."[51] The high skill levels of émigrés, their motivation to find work, and the assistance provided them by agencies and community members can be credited for this impressive performance.

AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT

As the above statistics demonstrate, Soviet Jews in the United States appear to be successful in finding jobs and earning a good living within a relatively short period after arrival. One problem they confront, however, is an inability to meet their previous level of occupational prestige. For example, a study of New York's Soviet Jewish community found that, while 66 percent had professional, technical, and managerial occupations in the USSR, only half of these, 33 percent, found similar jobs in the United States.[52] Data from the 1990 census offer similar findings, tabulating professional, technical, and managerial employment rates at 34 percent for men and 37 percent for women in New York, and 47 percent for men and 41 percent for women in Los Angeles. (See table 10.)

Highly skilled Soviet Jews have problems finding appropriate American jobs because they lack job-related licenses and certification, have limited English-language skills, or because certain Soviet occupations are simply not in demand. For example, there are few American job opportunities for classical accordion players, coaches of sports seldom played in the United States, or engineers who designed tundra-friendly (and by U.S. standards, hopelessly outdated) structures for the Siberian oil industry. A large pro-

[50]Council of Jewish Federations, *Immigration Data*, 1993; Harvey Paretzky, personal communication, Sept. 14, 1993.

[51]ORR, *Report to Congress 1993*, p. 24.

[52]Paretzky, *Employment Profile.*

portion of recent Soviet Jews are able to adapt to the U.S. economy by finding jobs in the skilled trades, bookkeeping and accounting, computer programming, and engineering.[53] (See table 11.)

Self-employment is the traditional means by which many immigrant Jews have supported their families. This long-standing pattern characterized the German Jews of the 1850s and the Eastern Europeans of the 1880–1920 era, and applies to contemporary Israelis and Iranians. The literature on Soviet Jewish émigrés includes several descriptive accounts of émigré entrepreneurship. Former Soviets gravitate toward various types of enterprises, including engineering companies, restaurants and grocery stores, retail trade, and construction and real estate. In a study of Soviet émigré businesses in Boston, Halter determined that, while a relatively small fraction of Soviet Jews enter self-employment, they tend to be successful. In describing business owners, she noted a preponderance of women proprietors, an individualistic (rather than communal) entrepreneurial style, and a high degree of compatibility between entrepreneurship and their Soviet-based, secular Jewish identity.[54]

In the 1980s, taxi companies in New York and Los Angeles employed many Soviets, but émigrés often leave this risky occupation after only a few years. In Los Angeles, two taxi cooperatives enabled émigrés to develop the connections, skills, and capital sources that allowed their eventual movement into more extensive self-employment activities.[55] The Moscow-born vice-president of one cooperative described his experience as typical for a Soviet Jewish cab owner:

> When I got here first, I got a job in East L.A. in a garment factory. I worked very hard by the way, always sweating. Just moving around cloth—I sure wasn't satisfied. And then I found out about cab association. It's got 201 members, 94 are Russians. And I found out I can make a little more money driving a cab. I worked as a lease driver at first, and in 1978, I bought my own cab. Now I lease it at nights to other Russian driver.
>
> I'm not going to drive my cab for all my life. I'm planning for the future to go to some kind of different business—a shop or restaurant. My wife already has a beauty parlor.
>
> So that's why we have so many Russians. Most of them—like me—are business-minded people. Driving a cab is a start. In the future, a lot of them will go into

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[53]Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, *Jewish Identification and Affiliation of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in New York City—A Needs Assessment and Planning Study*, 1985.

[54]Kestin, "Making Cheese from Snow"; Nancy Lubin, "Small Business Owners," in *New Lives*, ed. Rita J. Simon, pp. 151–64; Orleck, "Soviet Jews: Life in Brighton Beach"; Steven J. Gold, "Refugees and Small Business: The Case of Soviet Jews and Vietnamese," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11, no. 4, 1988, pp. 411–38; Gold, *Refugee Communities*; Halter, "Ethnicity and the Entrepreneur"; Raymond Russell, *Sharing Ownership in the Workplace* (Albany, 1985).

[55]Russell, *Sharing Ownership*.

other businesses. A lot are already in businesses—stores, restaurants, body shops. They rely on partnerships.[56]

Through such business networks, Soviet émigrés obtain a variety of resources useful in opening and running a successful operation. Well-established entrepreneurs often give novices advice about contracts, licenses, and appropriate store locations.[57] Members also offer each other opportunities for investment. For example, in San Francisco, a Soviet Jewish realty company distributed information about available storefronts and supplied real-estate speculators with lists of homes that could be purchased and refurbished for resale. Soviet entrepreneurs also supplied one another with investment capital.[58]

For many members of the business subgroup, self-employment provides not only a source of income, but also a sense of personal and ethnic identity, a means of access to American society, and a social life. As such, ethnic identity and solidarity are reinforced through economic cooperation. Because these émigrés came from a secular society, their understanding of Jewish identity draws more from Jews' accomplishments than from religious teachings and practices. Many even see a predisposition toward business as a central component of Jewish ethnicity, priding themselves on an ability to survive under any and all conditions.

In Los Angeles, over 100 Soviet doctors formed a professional association. Because foreign medical graduates find it difficult to obtain certification in a specialty, they seldom obtain employment in hospitals or HMOs (health maintenance organizations). Instead, many enter private practice—a form of self-employment. Their offices are located adjacent to neighborhoods where Russian émigrés—who prefer to visit Russian-speaking physicians—live. Soviet émigré doctors happily accept their fellow refugees' government-provided health benefits. In turn, émigré doctors and dentists support self-employed Russian pharmacists, physical therapists, dentists, and the like. Finally, émigré doctors buy a large proportion of the advertising in the Russian-language print and broadcast media. For example, in 1991, 50 of the 108 advertisements in the 1991 Los Angeles Russian-language telephone directory offered various medical services.

Data from the 1990 census suggest that a sizable fraction of Soviets are self-employed. In New York, 15 percent are self-employed (21 percent of men and 8 percent of women), with higher rates in Los Angeles, where 25

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[56]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, pp. 202–03.

[57]Lubin, "Small Business Owners"; Halter, "Ethnicity and the Entrepreneur."

[58]Gold, "Refugees and Small Business"; Steven J. Gold, "Patterns of Interaction and Adjustment Among Soviet Jewish Refugees," *Contemporary Jewry* 9, no. 2, 1988, pp. 87–105; idem, "Nascent Mobilization in a New Immigrant Community: The Case of Soviet Jews in California," *Research in Community Sociology* 2, 1991, pp. 185–208.

percent (33 percent of men and 17 percent of women) are self-employed. (See table 12.) When compared to 1980 census data about various migrant groups, the Los Angeles figure puts Soviet Jews among those groups with the highest rates of self-employment. This is an impressive finding, considering that, as refugees from a communist nation, Soviet Jews lack two of the most essential resources for entrepreneurship—business experience and investment capital. On the other hand, the rate of entrepreneurship among Jewish immigrants to the United States has always been high, since it was viewed as a viable adjustment strategy.[59]

WOMEN IN TECHNICAL FIELDS

One economic asset of the Soviet Jews over natives or other immigrant groups is the unusually high number of women with professional and technical skills: 67 percent of Soviet Jewish women in the United States were engineers, technicians, or other kinds of professionals prior to migration. In contrast, only 16.5 percent of American women work in these occupations.[60] (See table 13.)

According to the 1990 census, 29 percent of all Soviet émigré women in New York City and 26 percent of Soviet émigré women in Los Angeles County work as professionals in the United States. In New York, a smaller proportion of Soviet-born men are employed in these occupations; however, Soviet-born men in Los Angeles exceed Soviet-born women's professional employment by 2 percent. (See table 10.)

Simon et al., using 1981 data, report that, despite their high rates of education and professional experience, Soviet Jewish women were still making less than 60 percent of Soviet Jewish men's income in the United States. Results from the 1990 census suggest that the income gap has not closed a great deal, although women who arrived in the United States between 1975 and 1981 and live in New York City make about 70 percent of their male counterparts' incomes. (See table 6.) Simon et al. also found that Soviet women are generally less satisfied with their work situation in the United States than are Soviet men. About 30 percent of women said their work

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[59]Gold, "Patterns of Interaction and Adjustment"; Boris Z. Gorbis, "Give Us Your Poor Homeless Organizations: A Review of California's Soviet-Jewish Organizations," in *New Voices: The Integration of Soviet Emigres and Their Organizations into the Jewish Communal World*, ed. Madeleine Tress and Deborah Bernick (Council of Jewish Federations, 1992), pp. 17–23.

[60]Simon, *New Lives*, p. 17; Rita J. Simon, Louise Shelly, and Paul Schneiderman, "Social and Economic Adjustment of Soviet Jewish Women in the United States," in *International Migration: The Female Experience*, ed. Rita James Simon and Caroline B. Brettell (Totowa, N.J., 1986), pp. 76–94; Eckles et al., "Portrait in Diversity," p. 29; *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1984*, p. 416.

situation was better than in the USSR, compared to 40 percent of men. In contrast, 49 percent of women called their work situation worse, while only 41 percent of men felt this way.[61]

Relations with Resettlement Agencies

Soviet Jews in the United States enjoy perhaps the best-funded and most professionally staffed resettlement system provided to any recent immigrants and refugees.[62] Soviet Jews generally have positive evaluations of the services they receive in resettlement. Gitelman found that 80.4 percent of émigrés to the United States rated their resettlement agencies as working "very well; well; or not badly" (versus 44.3 percent of Soviet Jews in Israel).[63] A New York-based study found that 71 percent of émigrés had a positive impression of NYANA (their major resettlement agency), while only 29 percent had a negative impression.[64]

Still, émigrés confront difficulties in adjusting to the United States, particularly in regard to what Simon et al. call "bread and butter issues": learning English, finding a job, earning enough money, and missing family and friends.

Unlike most immigrants, who have little experience in obtaining government services, former Soviets come from a society in which substantially more of life's necessities are distributed by government agencies than is the case here. Despite their experience in interacting with bureaucracies, however, former Soviets have to learn new ways of interacting with agencies in a dramatically different social context. A fairly large literature addresses Soviets' encounters with American-style bureaucracy in various areas of service provision, including cash assistance, physical and mental health, job placement, and community socialization.[65]

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[61]Simon et al., "Social and Economic Adjustment," p. 89.

[62]Eckles et al., "Portrait in Diversity"; GAO (U.S. General Accounting Office), *Soviet Refugees: Processing and Admittance to the United States*, GAO/NSIAD-90–158, 1990, p. 25.

[63]Gitelman, "Quality of Life," p. 62.

[64]Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, "Jewish Identification," p. 39.

[65]Steven J. Gold, "Dealing with Frustration: A Study of Interactions Between Resettlement Staff and Refugees," in *People in Upheaval*, ed. Scott Morgan and Elizabeth Colson (New York, 1987), pp. 108–28; idem, *Refugee Communities*; Fran Markowitz, "Jewish in the USSR, Russian in the USA," in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany, 1988), pp. 79–95; idem, *Community in Spite of Itself*; Meryl Brod and Suzanne Heurtin-Roberts, "Older Russian Emigres and Medical Care," *Western Journal of Medicine* 157, no. 3, 1992, pp. 333–36; Rochelle P. Stutz, "Resettling Soviet Emigres: How Caseworkers Coped," *Social Work*, Mar.-Apr. 1984, pp. 187–88; Dorsh de Voe, "Framing Refugees as Clients," *International Migration Review* 15, no. 1, 1981, pp. 88–94; Maria Coughlin and Regina Rosenberg, "Health Education and Beyond: A Soviet Women's Group Experience," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 60, no.

The difficulties involved in resettlement result from the near impossibility of the task at hand—delivering elusive elements of social membership on demand. No matter how well funded a resettlement agency nor how skillful its staff, the major goals of resettlement—economic self-sufficiency and cultural adjustment—are difficult to attain. Economic self-sufficiency is largely dependent on economic factors beyond any resettlement worker's control. Similarly, cultural adjustment, learning English, and coping with the mental trauma brought on by the refugee experience itself can only be achieved through the efforts of refugees themselves, expended over protracted periods of time.

Further complicating matters are the differences in cultural backgrounds of providers and recipients of services. For many refugees, resettlement staff are the first representatives of American society with whom they have any significant contact, and even the most basic interactions involve various forms of cultural conflict. Thus, to do their job at all, resettlement agencies, schools, and the like must socialize their clients in the ways of American society. In the words of one government resettlement report: "There are aspects of American life with which refugees must simply learn to cope."[66]

LANGUAGE

Soviet émigrés (with the exception of the elderly) tend to make excellent progress with language. Several studies found that, while about half spoke no English on arrival, within a few years upward of two-thirds or more rate themselves as "good" (or better) in the English language and a large proportion (50–70 percent) have taken English classes.[67]

JOB PLACEMENT

The development of economic self-sufficiency is one of the major responsibilities of the refugee resettlement system. Staff and clients alike agree that refugees should find jobs, but recently arrived refugees who lack compe-

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1, 1983, pp. 65–69; Nina Dorf and Fay Katlin, "The Soviet Jewish Immigrant Client: Beyond Resettlement," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 60, no. 2, 1983, pp. 146–54; Drachman and Halberstadt, "A Stage of Migration Framework," pp. 63–78; Joann Ivry, "Paraprofessionals in Refugee Resettlement," in Ryan, ed., *Social Work with Immigrants and Refugees*, pp. 99–117.

[66]Donald J. Cichon, Elizabeta M. Gozdziak, and Jane G. Grover, *The Economic and Social Adjustment of Non-Southeast Asian Refugees*, vol. 1: *Analysis Across Cases* (Research Management Corp., Dover, N.H., 1986), p. 87; Lewin and Associates, *Assessment of the MAA Incentive Grant Initiative*; ORR, *Report to Congress 1986*.

[67]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Simon, *New Lives*; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, "Jewish Identification"; Jewish Family Service of the North Shore, "Social Needs Survey," table 6.

tence in English generally have little understanding of the American economy and the means of finding jobs within it. Adding to the difficulty, many Soviet Jewish refugees entered the U.S. job market during the early 1980s and a decade later, in the late 1980s and early 1990s—periods marked by recession and high unemployment rates—when jobs were often scarce.

All the relevant factors—the need for jobs, the scarcity of job opportunities, and refugees' lack of understanding of American job-finding practices—must be confronted during face-to-face interactions in the job-placement units of refugee resettlement agencies, most commonly the Jewish Vocational Service. Émigrés are heavy consumers of job-placement services. According to data from the 1990–91 Jewish population study of New York, one in four post-1965 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union sought help in finding a job in the 12 months prior to the date of the survey. In contrast, only one in ten members of the larger Jewish community sought such services.

Because of the vast differences between Soviet and American procedures for finding employment, some recently arrived émigrés have particularly difficult interactions with American job-placement workers. Some émigrés interpret their interactions with the Jewish Vocational Service in light of past encounters with Raspredelenie, the Soviet state employment agency. Under this system, qualified workers simply showed their diplomas and credentials to the centralized placement office and were assigned appropriate jobs. Elements typical of the American job-search process, such as finding openings, dealing with employment services, preparing resumes, and selling one's self in interviews were nonexistent. Hence, émigrés are often overwhelmed by the complexity and uncertainty of the American process. Drawing upon their Soviet experience, in which desired services were often delivered by bureaucrats in exchange for favors, émigrés who are not referred to jobs of their liking sometimes assume that agency staff are holding out in order to receive a payoff.[68] Accordingly, émigrés have occasionally attempted to bribe staff or offer indirect payment in the form of contributions to the Jewish federation.

Émigrés have also tried to acquire jobs through Soviet-style political machinations involving "*blat*" (influence) and "*sviazy*" (connections). This quote from a job-finding class for émigré engineers at a California JCC illustrates a common émigré mind-set:

> All of this training, it's no good. This is what we should do. Do you know the director of the Jewish Federation? Does he make appointments with people like us? We will talk to him. He could go to the president of big engineering company, Jewish president, and tell him to hire some of us. There are only a few of us. He could hire one of us each week.[69]

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[68]Di Francisco and Gitelman, "Soviet Political Culture."

[69]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 147.

Émigrés like this see American institutions through the lens of their Soviet experience. Rather than following the suggestions of agency staff, they try to apply job-finding techniques that worked in the USSR.

The fact that many Soviet Jewish refugees are professionals only serves to intensify the conflicts with job-placement agencies. With university education and years of experience, they identify strongly with their previous occupations and are unhappy about accepting the lower-status positions to which they are often referred. Some Soviet Jews may be angered by their job-placement experience to the point of distancing themselves from the Jewish community. They may complain of inadequate guidance and career counseling, not enough personal involvement, and of being pushed to accept low-level jobs.

In the words of a Los Angeles Soviet Jewish activist, some of the complaints are justified, and some of the expectations are realistic. Yet for many, there is only a one- or two-time exposure to a counselor of family or vocational service. Those who are dissatisfied tend to view the whole Jewish community in America in a negative light.[70]

MENTAL HEALTH

Another area in which extensive cultural conflict and misunderstanding arise between resettlement staff and their Soviet Jewish clients is that of psychological therapy. When health assessments revealed that refugees suffer from a variety of mental-health problems, the government and resettlement agencies established mental-health programs specifically for this population. Unfortunately, Soviet Jews often lack the cultural prerequisites of a successful American-style therapy interaction, such as a willingness to confide in bureaucrats and a belief in the unconscious. Most refugees also do not see a connection between the process of therapy and the problems that, for them, are most pressing.

Social workers and therapists who work with Soviet refugees describe extensive conflicts based on mistrust, the stigmatized status of mental-health problems in the USSR, and the fact that mental illness was generally treated by medication rather than psychological therapy. "Depression, for example, is perceived in the Soviet Union as a biological entity and biochemical treatment is offered. A refugee client experiencing depression, therefore, expects to be treated with a pill. A service provider who attempts to deal with the depression through a commonly used method of talking therapy is not only perceived as strange but is also viewed as incompetent as the client doesn't receive what he/she thinks is needed."[71]

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[70]Ibid., p. 149.

[71]Drachman and Halberstadt, "A Stage of Migration Framework," p. 73.

Despite their generally negative impression of American-style therapy interactions, immigrants apparently do consume such services at a fairly high rate. According to the 1990–91 Jewish population study of New York, 11 percent of post-1965 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union sought personal, group, or family counseling in the previous year, compared with 17 percent of all New York Jews. However, former Soviets sought help with their children's emotional or behavioral problems at twice the rate of members of the Jewish community at large.

In sum, culture-based conflicts in several areas of service delivery are challenging to resettlement staff and clients alike. Moreover, since job placement, religious socialization, and mental-health services account for a significant portion of the encounters between Soviet Jews and American Jewish agencies, the images that the two communities often develop of each other in a hostile setting may overwhelm the mutual good will with which they began their relationship.

School and Social Adjustment

SCHOOL

School-aged émigrés are generally well educated and tend to excel in American schools. For example, in a 1991 comparison of the 12 largest immigrant groups in the New York City public schools, grades 3–12, who had been in the country three years or less, students from the former Soviet Union ranked first in reading scores, second in math, and fifth in English. Their reading and math scores were much higher than those of all students in New York schools, including the native-born. In addition, their mean increase in score over the previous year was the highest among all groups in both reading and English and among the highest in math.[72]

Despite their academic prowess, Soviet youth often experience frustration in American schools and may have difficulty working toward their own goals. Schools in the former USSR are generally more rigorous and accelerated than their American counterparts, with students attending a ten-year (most recently eleven) rather than a twelve-year system. Soviet students begin studying advanced subjects such as calculus and biology before Americans and consequently are years of ahead of Americans of the same age.[73]

Because of the lack of structural congruency between the two educational

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[72]*Test Scores of Recent Immigrants and Other Students, New York City Public Schools, Grades 3–12* (New York City Public Schools, Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, 1991).

[73]Steven J. Gold and Mia Tuan, "Jews from the Former Soviet Union in the United States," *New Faces of Liberty*, 1993.

systems, Russian students are frequently required to repeat earlier work, which tends to erode the high levels of achievement motivation they come with initially. Students' frustration is compounded by the fact that their limited English ability prevents them from expressing themselves or demonstrating their advanced knowledge.[74]

A few young émigrés who experience their years in American high schools as an unwarranted delay that prevents them from achieving preset life goals choose to follow an alternative educational path. Having discovered that junior colleges will often accept students without a diploma, they drop out to pursue what they see as the fast track to a college education. Some follow the correct procedures for withdrawal, while others simply stop coming to school. If their plans to obtain the AA degree are thwarted, such students find themselves lacking even basic English skills and a high-school diploma and accordingly find few options for employment.

FAMILY PATTERNS

Unlike most immigrant and refugee groups, which are characterized by a youthful population, many Russian Jewish families contain elderly individuals. Refugee families experience problems because the elderly have difficulties learning English, finding employment, and making their way in the United States. Families that have successfully adapted to American life express concern over the relative isolation of elderly family members.

Generational conflict, which exists among all immigrant families, may be aggravated by the gaps in levels of adjustment between the generations. For example, Sasha, a 35-year-old Russian Jew, was making $30,000 a year as a computer programmer two years after his arrival in this country in 1982. His position contrasted dramatically with that of his parents, who knew almost no English, did not drive, and were unemployed. Consequently, Sasha had to support them financially, serve as their translator, and provide transportation in addition to managing his own career and family life. To offer the parents some independence, the family resided in a Russian-speaking neighborhood, but this was far from his job, requiring Sasha to make an 80-mile commute.[75]

Many patterns typical of Soviet émigré families, including small size, employment of both parents outside the home, and the high priority placed on children's education facilitate their adjustment to American society. At

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[74]Gloria Zicht, "The Effects of Emigration on Soviet Jewish Children: Latency to Adolescence," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Fall 1993, pp. 57–63.

[75]Gold, *Refugee Communities*. See S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (New York, 1956); and Carlos E. Sluzki, "Migration and Family Conflict," *Family Process* 18, no. 4, 1979, pp. 381–94.

the same time, certain family and cultural patterns pose difficulties in the new setting. In the former Soviet Union, parents tend to be highly involved in their children's lives. In contrast, the peer group, a central force in American adolescents' socialization, has relatively little influence. This is especially so among Jewish families, because parents feel their efforts are necessary to shield children from anti-Semitism and ensure chances for success. Carried over to the United States, this desire to protect children may foster excessive dependence and prevent émigré youth from dealing with American life on their own terms.[76] A San Francisco resettlement worker referred to this as she observed that many Soviet Jewish adolescents lack a life of their own:

> I have seen such cases of depressing loneliness in a 20-year-old boy or girl. It is easy if they live on the campus—that's a real chance to meet people. But many don't do it. They come and go to City College or a business school for a year.
>
> Then they go to work and they live with their parents. If they don't have friends among other immigrants, it's unbelievable. I know this one 22-year-old. She's beautiful, she's subtle. I think you would say she is a very intelligent young girl. She spends most of her time at work and then she spends time with her family. There is no outlet to go out because she doesn't know how to.[77]

In general, Soviets show a marked preference for social interaction with other émigrés, and this extends to the younger generation.[78] In a pilot study of dating behavior, for example, Fruchtbaum and Skager found that teenage émigré girls who had lived in the United States from 8 to 14 years (and so were quite acculturated) all "expressed their preference for Russian men as boyfriends and marriage partners," because they believed it would be easier to understand, trust, and become close with a young man with whom they shared a common background. The girls' parents openly encouraged them to date Russians. "The need for the boyfriend to be accepted by the parents and the family, and the importance of good communication between parents and the boyfriend were expressed by all of the participants."[79]

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[76]Michael Aronowitz, "The Social and Emotional Adjustment of Immigrant Children: A Review of the Literature," *International Migration Review* 18, no. 2, 1984, pp. 237–57; Phillis Hulewat, "Dynamics of the Soviet Jewish Family: Its Impact on Clinical Practice for the Jewish Family Agency," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 58, no. 1, 1981, pp. 53–60.

[77]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 85.

[78]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, pp. 15–37; Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*.

[79]Simcha R. Goldberg, "Jewish Acculturation and the Soviet Immigrant," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 57, no. 1, 1981, pp. 154–63; Steven J. Gold, "Differential Adjustment Among New Immigrant Family Members," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 17, no. 4, 1989, pp. 408–34; Irene Fruchtbaum and Rodney Skager, "Influence of Parental Values on Dating Behavior of Young Russian Women: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," UCLA Department of Education, 1989, pp. 18–19.

COMMUNITY TIES

Soviet Jews have considerable social interaction with each other, but take part in few organized activities. They tend to live in geographically concentrated communities, which allows the many aged émigrés to mingle easily. Neighborhood networks of family and friends are important not only as sources of social connection but as resources for information and practical help.[80] The many ethnic small businesses in these areas direct their goods and services to émigrés. Various publications, especially *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* (New York) and *Panorama* (Los Angeles), are available as well as Russian-language TV and radio. Émigrés are also frequent consumers of American media.[81]

As already noted, the Soviet Jewish communities are marked by divisions based on region of origin, educational level, occupation, and other factors. At the same time, Jews from the former Soviet Union, especially the great majority from the European republics, have many social similarities. They tend to be educated, urbanized, and Russian-speaking, and to share many common values. Generally more conservative than the Jewish and non-Jewish Americans near whom they reside, émigrés often complain about gays, minority groups, graffiti, the crime rate, drug use, pornography, and lack of discipline in schools. While retaining a fear of anti-Semitism, they nevertheless have a strong identity as whites and sometimes make disparaging comments regarding blacks and Asians. They are especially incensed by liberals (heavily represented in the American Jewish community) who oppose nuclear power, distrust the military, and demand civil liberties for social misfits.[82]

These views separate them politically from many of their co-ethnic hosts. Jews from the former Soviet Union have been described as "a community that is staunchly conservative Republican and is quite puzzled by the left-leaning liberalism of American Jews." A Soviet Jewish journalist commented on Soviet Jews' differences with their American counterparts: "Most American Jews are used to being liberals. But Russian Jews, having very tough experience, know what socialism does mean. They are very close to the right wing, politically. We have gotten involved with the campaigns. I think that almost everybody voted for Republicans."[83]

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[80]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Orleck, "Soviet Jews: Life in Brighton Beach"; Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*.

[81]Gold, "Refugees and Small Business"; idem, "Patterns of Interaction and Adjustment"; Orleck, "Soviet Jews: Life in Brighton Beach"; Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*.

[82]Gold, *Refugee Communities*; Leo Noonan, "Russians Go Republican," *Jewish Journal* (Los Angeles), Nov. 18–24, p. 31. Markowitz, in *Community in Spite of Itself*, describes how New York's Soviet Jews strongly supported Bernard Goetz, a white man who shot four black youths demanding money in the subway.

[83]Frumkin, "Who Are the Russians?" p. 17; Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 209.

RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN JEWS

It appears that Soviet Jews do not form many close relationships with American Jews or non-Jews. One reason is the cultural and linguistic gap between émigrés and American Jews, including the differences in social and political attitudes. Another, particularly in large metropolitan areas, is geographic separation—Soviet Jews tend to live in self-contained enclaves. A Soviet Jewish woman who had lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for ten years commented on the difficulty of developing friendships with Americans:

> From the beginning, everybody wants to be assimilated, to get out of this ghetto, and nobody wants to accept it that they are in a ghetto in the Richmond District, Sunset District. But after that, people get out and a lot of them probably didn't fill up their expectation and they had a problem socializing with Americans [Jews] and this is not their language. And after a while, they get back together and about 25 percent of the community still wanted to get out and 75 percent completely satisfied with what they have.[84]

Émigrés are also drawn together as they encounter the resentment that some American Jews harbor toward them. In interviews, émigrés bristled at American Jews' assertion that they should have settled in Israel or that because they lacked religious knowledge, they were not "real Jews."

> I remember, even when I didn't know the language so well, I could hear the question "How do you know you are a Jew if you didn't do this and you didn't know that." And "Why didn't they go to Israel?"

> I tell you, each family have some that died in the Ghetto. That's the kind of experience that you grow up with as a kid. Not long ago, we had a discussion on Jewish religious education with American Jews and we told them, "We are Jewish enough and sometimes more than enough."[85]

Soviet Jews who arrived prior to 1990 disliked being called "*noshrim*" (dropouts) for not settling in Israel. Whenever Jewish agencies discussed measures to force Soviets to settle in the Jewish state, émigrés expressed their displeasure, pointing out the hypocrisy of such statements, saying, "Let my people go, indeed!" In the words of a Los Angeles activist:

> This is a very sensitive problem, but we have to face it and be honest, because unfortunately, I have to say that I've heard a lot of statements on behalf of American Jews, okay, which I can only describe as a double standard. Why should they sit in Beverly Hills and accuse me of not going over to Israel and I left Russia with $120 and he has all the money in the world?[86]

The feeling of being rejected by American Jews provides Soviet Jews with yet another reason to turn toward fellow émigrés.

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[84]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 208.
[85]Ibid.
[86]Ibid., pp. 162–63.

RESISTANCE TO ORGANIZATION

Émigrés generally avoid formal organizations. This is both because they lack experience in creating voluntary associations, and also because in the USSR, such entities were imposed by government bureaucrats rather than voluntarily created by members. Consequently, émigrés assume that persons who take leadership roles in communal activities do so only in order to obtain some personal benefit. According to a report on Soviet Jewish émigré organizations, émigrés "developed a very strong negative attitude toward such organizations and activities," and "the figure of the social activist acquired a permanent negative classification in the minds of many new immigrants."[87] Studies on both coasts describe émigrés' difficulties in creating viable associations.[88]

Nevertheless, several types of formal organizations have come into being: broad-based groups that seek to unite all Russian Jews or "new Americans"; veterans' associations; networks of entrepreneurs (as described above); professional associations; and groups involved with leisure and cultural activities, such as sports and music. In the religious sphere, the Chabad-Lubavitch organization has organized synagogues for Russian speakers in several localities. In different ways, these entities seek to help newcomers adapt to the United States, retain Russian-language culture, and develop a Jewish identity. They vary widely in terms of their emphasis on a Russian or Jewish cultural orientation, their financial well-being, stability, and relations with American Jewish groups.

In considering the communal life of Soviet Jews, it has been noted that the high levels of skill they possess—together with the many benefits they receive from the Jewish community and the U.S. government—may actually reduce their need to create mutual-aid associations of the type common among other migrant communities, including earlier cohorts of Russian Jews.[89] Consequently, by their very existence, resettlement services may offer a disincentive to group formation.

JEWISH IDENTITY AND BEHAVIOR

Jewish identity is a complex issue for Soviet émigrés. Although most have had little formal Jewish education (Kosmin reported 4 percent having had

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[87]Pavel Ilyin and Mikaella Kagan, "Finding a Niche in American Jewish Institutional Life—Soviet Jewish Emigre Organizations," paper presented at the Wilstein Institute for Jewish Policy Studies Conference, Soviet Jewish Acculturation—Beyond Resettlement, Palo Alto, 1991, p. 5.

[88]Gold, *Refugee Communities*; Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*.

[89]Eckles et al., "Portrait in Diversity."

one year prior to migration), many appear to have deep feelings of connectedness and a strong sense of ethnic or national identification as Jews.[90]

The Soviet émigré population is marked by generational variation in religious background. Three generations of Soviet émigrés in the United States—the elderly, the middle-aged, and the young—have each had a different experience with Judaism.[91] The elderly are often familiar with the traditional Eastern European Judaism that they learned from their parents or before the Stalinist crackdowns of the 1930s. Middle-aged Soviet Jews grew up in an atheistic environment that encouraged them to assimilate and deprived them of any Jewish content in their lives. An engineer in his forties describes his lack of Jewish knowledge:

> No Jewish culture at all . . . you know our family lost it completely. It was a shame. When we went to Vienna [after leaving the USSR], they were kind of sorting people who the agencies would be taking care of. And they looked at our family—we didn't look like Jews to them. And they started to ask questions what we know about Jewish life. Do we know any holidays? And we were so ashamed—we didn't know any. Then I remembered. When I was a little kid, my grandfather gave us Hanukkah gold—Gelt. I recalled getting presents. And I told them about the Hanukkah Gelt—they started to laugh like crazy.[92]

Finally, émigré children who have spent a few years in the United States have by now had some exposure to contemporary Judaism, since numerous religious activities, scholarships to Jewish camps, schools, and the like are made available as part of their resettlement program.

In general, Jewish identification among émigrés is secular or nationalistic rather than religious. Kosmin found that over 60 percent of émigrés surveyed felt that the meaning of being Jewish in America was "Cultural" or "Nationality," while less than 30 percent felt it was "Religious." The New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies found similar results, with 79 percent favoring "Nationality," 62 percent "Culture/History; Ethnic Group," and 24 percent "Religion" as definitions of Jewish identity in the United States.[93]

Emigrés from the former Soviet Union are in various ways more "ethnic" than many American Jews in their involvement with other Jews, networks, and outlooks. In this sense—following the analysis of sociologist Herbert Gans—the Soviet Jews are at an earlier stage in their group identity. According to Gans, assimilated, third-plus-generation American white ethnics

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[90]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Markowitz, "Jewish in the USSR."

[91]Alexander Orbach, "The Jewish of Soviet-Jewish Culture: Historical Considerations," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 58, no. 3, 1980, pp. 145–53; Lionel Kochan, ed., *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917* (London, 1978).

[92]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 36.

[93]Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985, p. 21; Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, p. 35.

(notably Jews) maintain "symbolic ethnicity" through self-selected, identity-related expressive behaviors, whereas first-generation individuals rely extensively on their own ethnic communities and networks for the fulfillment of basic needs.[94]

Evidence of the Soviet émigrés' strong ethnic ties can be gleaned from their responses to several questions in the 1990–91 New York Jewish population study (table 14). For example, Jews from the former Soviet Union are more competent in Yiddish, more likely to be members of Jewish community centers (JCCs) or YMHAs, and read more Jewish publications than all New York Jews. They are much more likely than all New York Jews to have close friends or immediate family living in Israel, to have Jews as their closest friends, and to believe that when it comes to a crisis, Jews can only depend on other Jews. Finally, as noted above, Jews from the former USSR have more negative views of intermarriage, even when the non-Jewish spouse converts to Judaism, than do all New York Jews. These measures suggest that, despite Russian émigrés' lower rates of Jewish education and religiosity than American Jews, their Jewish identity is expressed in a variety of other ways.

Soviet Jews in Brighton Beach (Brooklyn), for example, have created their own rituals, such as bar mitzvahs and weddings, that take place in Russian restaurants and feature Russian-speaking American rabbis. Symbolically blending and reconciling Jewish and American identities in the context of a Russian nightclub/restaurant, they demonstrate that the bar mitzvah child, and by extension the family and all others present, are fully accepted as Jews in America, and also, that being Jewish is worthy and fun.[95]

The 1991 Jewish population study of New York found that post-1965 émigrés are especially likely to be involved in certain Jewish community celebrations. For example, their rates of attendance at "activities that support Israel or Soviet Jewry," Purim carnivals, Israel Independence Day, and Holocaust commemorations all exceed those of the greater New York Jewish community. The high rates of former Soviets' involvement in these may be the result of effective programming by Jewish community agencies. (See table 15.)

Yiddish

Different studies report different levels of Yiddish knowledge among émigrés, depending in part on what exactly was asked. A 1985 New York

[94]Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1, 1979, pp. 1–20.

[95]Markowitz, *Community in Spite of Itself*, p. 161.

study reported that 68 percent of émigrés understand, and 43 percent speak, Yiddish; the 1990–91 New York Jewish population study found that 42 percent of post-1965 Soviet Jewish émigrés speak Yiddish, in contrast to 38 percent of all Jews in New York. However, the percentage that can read or write the language is smaller, 13 percent or less. As might be expected, the elderly tend to have much more Yiddish ability. Krautman's Los Angeles study found that 50 percent understand Yiddish. Kosmin reported that 43 percent speak Yiddish. According to the 1990 census, 2.3 percent of émigrés in New York and 0.3 percent of émigrés in Los Angeles speak Yiddish at home, while 1.4 percent in New York and 1.9 percent in Los Angeles speak Hebrew at home.[96] (See table 16.)

Religious and Communal Participation

A number of surveys have explored Soviet Jews' participation in specific Jewish rituals and behaviors and found it to be roughly similar to that of American Jews. Émigrés who have been in the United States longer and are financially better off tend to be more involved in Jewish life.[97] (See table 17.)

SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

Kosmin found that around 40 percent of Soviet Jews belong to synagogues, with Reform being the dominant affiliation. This finding is consistent with the 1990–91 Jewish population study of New York, which determined that 42 percent of post-1965 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union are dues-paying members of a synagogue or temple, the same proportion as in the larger New York community. The rank order of their membership—Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist—is the same as that of the larger community. In the New York study, the Soviets' pattern of synagogue attendance differs somewhat from that of other Jews: roughly 40 percent of Soviets attend only on High Holy Days, compared with 16 percent of all Jews; but the proportions saying they attend once a month or more are about the same. (See table 18.)

Krautman's 1990 Los Angeles study found that 28 percent of Soviet émigrés had belonged to a synagogue at some point during their stay in the

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[96]Jerry Allan Krautman, "A Study of the Acculturation and Jewish Identity of Soviet Jews Emigrating to Los Angeles Between 1972 and 1989" (MBA thesis, University of Judaism, 1990), p. 21; Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, p. 19; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985, p. 11.

[97]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, p. 53; Simon, *New Lives*, p. 36; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985, pp. 28–29, 38. In comparing the figures, Simon found lower rates on most practices. This may be due to the fact that her data were collected at an earlier date. The higher rates may also reflect the interviewees' perception of desired response.

United States, with far higher membership (42 percent) among those who came prior to 1980. In Los Angeles, Chabad was the most commonly cited form of synagogue membership, followed by Reform. For example, nearly all Soviet Jews in Los Angeles can name the two Russian Chabad rabbis, while far fewer are familiar with American rabbis or synagogues.[98]

OTHER JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to synagogues, Soviet Jews are most often involved with Jewish community centers. Kosmin, in a national sample, found about 20 percent with some JCC involvement. Krautman found that Los Angeles émigrés were most often involved with health and resettlement agencies, the Jewish Federation Council, and the JCC. The 1985 New York Federation study found the JCC and YM-YWHA were the most common Jewish affiliations, with 35 percent involved. In the 1991 New York study, 24 percent of post-1965 émigrés indicated participation in YM-YWHA activities, compared with 13 percent of all Jews. Asked whether they had heard of New York UJA-Federation, 89 percent of all Jews had, compared with 56 percent of Soviets.[99]

JEWISH EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Surveys reflect a strong interest on the part of émigré parents to promote their children's involvement in Jewish activities. When free or reduced day-school tuition is offered to recently arrived Soviet Jewish children, a large proportion accept. However, as fee waivers expire, many leave these schools. Émigré parents' desire to send their children to day school is motivated not only by religious goals but by concern about the lack of safety, attention, and discipline they associate with urban public schools. Barber asserts that Soviet Jews generally favor academic over religious training and often object to expending more than what they consider to be a minimal amount of time on Judaic studies.[100]

Kosmin found that 80 percent of 12-year-olds were being sent to some kind of Jewish education. He indicates that Jewish education is most directly associated with preparation for the bar or bat mitzvah, with participation falling off rapidly after age 13. Income is significantly correlated with

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[98]Krautman, "Study of the Acculturation . . . Los Angeles"; Gorbis, "Give Us Your Poor Homeless Organizations"; Kosmin, *Class of 1979*.

[99]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Krautman, "Study of the Acculturation . . . Los Angeles"; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985; 1991 New York Jewish Population Study.

[100]Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985; Barber, "Jews of Washington Heights."

children's receiving Jewish education. In Los Angeles, 20 percent of the young people surveyed were getting some kind of Jewish education.[101]

The 1991 New York study found that 28 percent of post-1965 adult Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union had received some formal Jewish education as children, compared to 77 percent for all members of the larger New York Jewish community. While members of the larger community most often received their Jewish education in afternoon schools, the most common form of Jewish education for Soviets was day school. Twenty-four percent of émigrés in the New York study report having had "a bar or bat mitzvah or confirmation" when they were young, in contrast to 55 percent of all New York Jews. The Soviet figures seem high in light of what is known about the absence of Jewish education under Communism, and we may assume that some of this Jewish education was acquired after arrival in this country. Also, since the late 1980s, more Jewish educational activities have been available in the former USSR. Finally, the New York study does not specify the amount of Jewish education, so that even a one-time study session might qualify as "Jewish education" (in contrast to the Kosmin study, which specified one year).

By and large, émigré parents encourage their children to get a Jewish education and to engage in Jewish activities. For example, Simon found that 79 percent would encourage or strongly encourage children to get a Jewish education; the 1985 New York study found that 97 percent feel it is important or very important to be educated about Jewish history and culture, while 76 percent of those surveyed want their children to get a Jewish religious education.[102] (See table 19.)

Jewish Socialization

The Jewish agencies involved in the resettlement of Soviet Jews see one of their primary functions as enhancing ethnic ties and integrating émigrés into the life of the American Jewish community. Accordingly, resettlement policy has been directed at including Soviet émigrés in American Jewish activities rather than encouraging the creation of Russian or Russian-Jewish activities. Conflicts involving the religious and cultural socialization of Soviet émigrés were most intense during the early years of resettlement (prior to the mid-1980s), when media exposure to the image of the pious refusenik led most American Jews to assume that Soviet Jews would be both religious and anti-Soviet. The executive director of Jewish Family Service of Akron exemplified this position when he described the "assimilation

[101]Kosmin, *Class of 1979*, p. 39; Krautman, "Study of the Acculturation . . . Los Angeles," p. 25.

[102]Simon, *New Lives*, p. 38; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1985.

task" for Soviet exiles in a 1980 article: "If our program succeeds in its goal of awakening Jewish consciousness, then these new Americans, in the near future, should become vital, responsible, and contributing members of our Jewish community."[103]

The arrival in the United States of Russian Jews who did not fit the preconceived notion of either Yiddish-speaking shtetl characters or of knowledgeable, committed Jews and Zionists caused consternation in many Jewish circles. David Harris, then Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, pointed out that "it has become somewhat misleading to assert that the Soviet Jew, among other reasons, 'emigrates for a new life as a Jew'—at least, that is, if he is going to the United States. On the contrary, he emigrates to the United States (or Canada, etc.) to seek a new life as a freer individual, and, often, to have, at least in the beginning, a brief respite from being a Jew."[104]

A Soviet Jewish activist in San Francisco put it this way:

> First of all, we are not like your grandparents, people from Shalom Aleichem. We are educated, professional people. If you talk about the community in general, it's a non-religious community and that's it. Because we don't have religious ground. You have to form this ground first, but I don't think this will be an overnight thing. Right now, I try really to impress to American community, for us, Jewishness is non-religious.[105]

With time, some Soviet émigrés respond positively to the Jewish socialization component of resettlement, joining synagogues, sending their children to Jewish day schools and camps, participating in Jewish community activities, and raising funds for Jewish philanthropic activities. In the 1991 New York study, for example, 57 percent of émigrés reported giving to Jewish charities in the year prior to the survey, while 66 percent of all New York Jews did so. Not surprisingly, émigrés were the most likely to give $100 or less and the least likely to give $1,000 or more. (See table 17.)

Just as émigrés sometimes resist efforts at religious training, most also retain a strong Russian identity. While most Soviet Jews generally dislike communism, many retain a feeling of attachment to the culture, language, cuisine, literature, landscape, and way of life of their homeland and are unwilling to abandon their traditions in favor of American ways. When Americans approach former Soviets with strident criticism of Russia and clear expectations that they should forsake their background, émigrés are alienated. In this they surely resemble the earlier generations of Russian

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[103]Larry R. Schwartz, "Soviet Jewish Resettlement: Operationalizing Jewish Consciousness Raising," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 57, no. 1, 1980, p. 55.

[104]David Harris, "A Note on the Problem of 'Noshrim,' " *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 6, no. 2, 1976, p. 108.

[105]Gold, *Refugee Communities*, p. 209.

Jews who resisted the Americanization programs of German Jews.[106]

While officially there has been a strong emphasis on the inculcation of religion in Soviet Jewish resettlement activities, in reality, many resettlement personnel distance themselves from this task. Social workers realize that émigrés' most immediate interests involve achieving economic stability and ensuring secure careers for their children, not studying Hebrew or going to temple.[107]

By the late 1980s, acknowledgment was finally given at the organizational level to the fact that most Soviet Jews were not religiously active. Initial hopes to "create a Jewish need" or "foster Jewish language skills" and make Soviet émigrés into "vital, responsible, and contributing members of our Jewish community" were replaced by a more realistic acknowledgment of Soviet émigrés' secular and ethnic rather than religious identification.[108] An American rabbi who works with Soviet Jews reflected this realization: "One of the disappointments that many rabbis felt was that most of the Soviet Jews did not find a need to express their Jewishness. We should have understood this, because they come from a secular, atheistic country, but it was difficult to accept."[109]

By the early 1990s, there were scattered reports of religious or communal involvement on the part of some former Soviets, suggesting that the picture was not entirely uniform. For example, the Reform Beth Shalom People's Temple in Bensonhurst (Brooklyn), New York, had attracted some 500 Soviet Jewish members with programs intended to welcome émigrés on their own terms. Similarly, in Los Angeles, Russian-born rabbis involved in the Chabad movement created a number of programs, including a synagogue, where some 1,400 émigrés attended services on Yom Kippur in 1993.[110]

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[106]Markowitz, "Jewish in the USSR"; Bernard Farber, Charles H. Mindel, and Bernard Lazerwitz, "The Jewish American Family," in *Ethnic Families in America*, 3rd ed., ed. Charles H. Mindel, Robert Habenstein, and Roosevelt Wright, Jr. (New York, 1988), pp. 400–37.

[107]Gayle Zahler, "Jewish Identity and the Soviet Emigre Newcomer," paper presented at the National Conference of Jewish Communal Workers, Boca Raton, Fla., 1989.

[108]Simcha R. Goldberg, "Jewish Acculturation and the Soviet Immigrant," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 57, no. 3, 1981, pp. 154–63; Schwartz, "Soviet Jewish Resettlement"; Alvin I. Schiff, "Language, Culture and the Jewish Acculturation of Soviet Jewish Emigres," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 57, no. 1, 1980, pp. 44–49. See also Kosmin, *Class of 1979*; Zahler, "Jewish Identity"; and Carp, "Absorbing Jews Jewishly."

[109]Barber, "Soviet Jews of Washington Heights."

[110]Walter Ruby, "Russian Jews in America," *Long Island Jewish World*, Apr. 2–8, 1993, pp. 16–19; Naftoli Estulin, "Chabad Russian Immigrant Program and Synagogue," leaflet, Sept. 1993.

CONCLUSION

The patterns of economic and social adjustment and the political outlook of Soviet Jewish émigrés appear to be fairly clear. Highly skilled and educated, learning English fairly quickly, and taking advantage of excellent services, émigrés generally do well in their economic adaptation, if not always in the same high-status jobs they held in the USSR. Socially, most prefer the company of fellow émigrés, in an informal context that emphasizes their Russian culture and politically conservative views. It can be said that their general adaptation to American life appears to be following a predictable course.

What remains to be seen is the degree to which these émigrés will become involved in Jewish life in the future, either on their own terms or in consort with the American Jewish community. While identifying as Jews, most are not religious, but they maintain an ethnic attachment to their community that is more intense than that of American Jews. The general consensus regarding former Soviet Jews' communal and religious lives suggests that they are not drawn to formal organizations and are not religiously motivated; however, that image is beginning to be challenged. We have noted recent reports showing small groups of émigrés in various communities throughout the country creating organizations and becoming involved in Jewish life.

As today's émigrés often point out, the recently arrived Jews from the former Soviet Union are drastically different from the cohort of their *landsleit* who came to these shores from Russia almost a century ago. They want to be accepted on their own terms, as individuals and as Jews, and to win respect for their culture and background. They care deeply about the traditions of their European way of life and, while grateful to America for the opportunities and freedom it offers, strongly guard their independence from established Jews whom they see as over-zealously planning their American and Jewish acculturation. Like previous waves of immigrants before them, they will shape an identity that is uniquely their own—in their own way and in their own time.

TABLE 1. SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES[a] (BY CALENDAR YEAR)

Year	Number	Year	Number
1965	12	1980	15,461
1966	36	1981	6,980
1967	72	1982	1,327
1968	92	1983	887
1969	156	1984	489
1970	135	1985	570
1971	214	1986	641
1972	453	1987	3,811
1973	1,449	1988	10,576
1974	3,490	1989	36,738
1975	5,250	1990	31,283
1976	5,512	1991	34,715
1977	6,842	1992	45,888
1978	12,265	1993	35,581
1979	28,794		
		Total	289,719

[a]HIAS-assisted émigrés, who account for most of the total Jewish immigration.
Source: HIAS.

TABLE 2. ORIGINS OF SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRES IN THE U.S. BY YEAR OF ARRIVAL

Republic	1980 to 1989		1980 through May 1993		1990 through May 1993	
Ukraine	43%	(32,850)	42%	(81,421)	41%	(48,571)
Russia	27	(20,237)	24	(46,391)	22	(26,154)
Belarus	14	(10,419)	13	(24,437)	12	(14,018)
Moldova	4	(3,376)	6	(11,113)	7	(7,737)
Latvia	3	(2,313)	2	(4,486)	2	(2,173)
Uzbekistan	4	(3,111)	6	(12,591)	8	(9,480)
Azerbaijan	2	(1,608)	2	(4,715)	3	(3,107)
Unknown		(10)	1	(2,856)	2	(2,846)
Other	3	(2,405)	3	(6,037)	3	(3,632)
Total	100%	(76,329)	100%[a]	(194,047)	100%	(117,718)

[a]Exceeds 100% due to rounding.
Sources: HIAS 1991; 1993.

TABLE 3. LOCATION OF PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR CURRENTLY RESIDING IN THE U.S., 1980 AND 1990

1980 (By Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas)		1990 (By State)[a]	
New York SMSA	36%	New York	30%
Los Angeles/Long Beach	16	California	23
Chicago	7	Illinois	6
San Francisco/Oakland	4	New Jersey	6
Boston	4	Massachusetts	5
Miami	3	Florida	5
		Pennsylvania	5
Six SMSAs total = 70%		Seven states total = 80%	

[a]As of writing, SMSA data are unavailable.
Sources: 1980 data from Barry R. Chiswick, "Soviet Jews in the United States: An Analysis of Their Linguistic and Economic Adjustment," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 2, 1993; 1990 U.S. Census.

TABLE 4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

Educational Level	New York City			Los Angeles County		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
8th grade or less	7%	8%	8%	5%	6%	6%
Some high school	11	8	9	7	9	8
Finished high school	23	26	25	15	14	15
Some college	20	23	22	14	28	21
College grad or more	38	35	36	59	43	51
(One or more years college)	(58)	(58)	(58)	(73)	(71)	(72)

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 5. AVERAGE YEARS OF EDUCATION BY PERIOD OF ARRIVAL, PERSONS AGED 24–65, BORN IN THE USSR, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

Period of Arrival	New York City		Los Angeles County	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1987–90	13.5	13.4	14.1	13.6
1980–81	13.4	12.9	14.3	13.6
1975–79	13.5	13.3	15.3	14.2

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 6. AVERAGE EARNINGS BY PERIOD OF ARRIVAL, EMPLOYED PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

Period of Arrival	New York City			Los Angeles County		
	Men	Women	Ratio Women/Men	Men	Women	Ratio Women/Men
1987–90	$19,372	$ 8,187	42%	$19,672	$12,604	64%
1980–81	$31,748	$22,732	72	$44,619	$27,521	62
1975–79	$33,050	$22,495	68	$43,061	$25,031	58

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 7. LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE BY PERIOD OF ARRIVAL FOR PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

	New York City					
	Men			Women		
	1965–90	1965–86	1987–90	1965–90	1965–86	1987–90
In labor force	76%	89%	60%	57%	68%	41%
(Employed)	(65)	(86)	(35)	(48)	(63)	(25)
(Unemployed)	(12)	(3)	(24)	(9)	(4)	(16)
Not in labor force	24	11	41	43	32	59
	Los Angeles County					
	Men			Women		
	1965–90	1965–86	1987–90	1965–90	1965–86	1987–90
In labor force	79%	88%	53%	63%	71%	42%
(Employed)	(71)	(81)	(43)	(58)	(68)	(30)
(Unemployed)	(8)	(7)	(10)	(6)	(3)	(12)
Not in labor force	21	12	47	37	29	58

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 8. WELFARE USE[a] BY PERIOD OF ARRIVAL, PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[b]

Period of Arrival	New York City		Los Angeles County	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1965–90	14%	13%	7%	11%
1965–86	5	10	5	9
1987–90	26	18	12	15

[a]AFDC, SSI, General Relief.
[b]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 9. LARGE-CITY REFUGEE TOTALS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY RATES, 1989–1992[a]

City	Total Refugees at 4 Months[b]	No. Self-Sufficient	Self-Sufficiency Rate
Baltimore			
1989	239	191	80.0%
1990	893	721	80.7
1991	472	409	86.7
1992[c]	610	503	82.4
Boston			
1989	1,073	286	26.7%
1990	1,254	336	26.8
1991	572	47	8.2
1992	1,008	94	9.3
Chicago			
1989	1,381	169	12.2%
1990	3,000	403	13.4
1991	990	129	13.0
1992	2,333	293	12.5
Los Angeles			
1989	1,467	245	16.7%
1990	2,449	535	21.8
1991	1,370	198	14.4
1992	2,066	244	11.8
New York			
1989	10,162	1,220	12.0%
1990	19,973	969	4.9
1991	8,131	395	4.5
1992	16,760	905	5.4
Philadelphia			
1989	723	68	9.4%
1990	1,474	174	11.8
1991	558	103	18.5
1992[c]	745	162	21.7

TABLE 9.—*(Continued)*

City	Total Refugees at 4 Months[b]	No. Self-Sufficient	Self-Sufficiency Rate
San Francisco			
1989	726	129	17.7%
1990	1,665	566	34.0
1991	806	114	14.1
1992	1,572	109	6.9
Total for 7 cities			
1989	15,771	2,308	14.6%
1990	30,708	3,704	12.1
1991	12,899	1,395	10.8
1992	25,094	2,310	9.2
Total for whole CJF system			
1990	41,349	10,155	24.6%
1991	19,352	4,599	23.8
1992	33,620	6,151	18.3

[a]Years shown are Matching Grant Program Years: 1989 = 10/1/88–9/30/89; 1990 = 10/1/89–12/31/90; 1991 = 1/1/91–12/31/91; 1992 = 1/1/92–12/31/92.
[b]Total at 4 months is total number of Matching Grant refugees who completed 4 months of service during each year.
[c]Baltimore and Philadelphia's 1992 figures do not include data for final period of 1992.
Source: HIAS Matching Grant Department.

TABLE 10. OCCUPATIONS OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

	New York City			Los Angeles County		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Manager/Administrator	12%	8%	10%	19%	15%	17%
Prof/Tech	22	29	25	28	26	27
Sales	11	6	9	11	16	13
Clerical	6	25	15	5	20	12
Craft	25	2	15	20	6	14
Operative	3	4	3	2	4	3
Transport	11	0.3	6	8	0	4
Laborer	2	1	2	1	0	1
Service	7	23	14	3	13	8
Farm				1	0	1

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 11. SOVIET REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS, 1992 (INDIVIDUALS)

Last Employment in USSR	First Employment in USA											
	Arch Engin	Math Science	Comput Progm	Soc Sci Educ	Medcl Health	Human Art/Mus	Manag Adm/Clr	Bkkp Acct	Sales Service	Barber Cosm	Skill Trds	Total
Arch/Engin	83	8	4	1	5	2	7	29	5	0	108	252
Math/Science	8	9	2	2	5	1	2	2	0	0	5	36
Computer Prog	4	0	75	2	1	0	2	5	0	0	1	90
Soc Sci/Educ	0	0	2	26	3	2	7	59	3	6	6	114
Medical/Health	0	0	0	1	18	1	0	4	3	4	5	36
Human/Art/Mus	0	0	0	1	0	25	2	2	5	1	21	57
Mng/Adm/Clerk	0	1	0	4	1	0	2	5	3	0	8	24
Bookkeep/Acct	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	57	3	3	3	71
Sales/Service	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	8	2	6	19
Barber/Cosmet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	21	0	22
Skilled Trades	6	1	2	3	1	2	8	10	6	0	240	279
TOTAL	102	19	86	42	35	34	31	175	36	37	403	1,000

Note: Analysis based on 1,000 most recent job placements recorded in NYANA computer system as of May 21, 1992.
Source: Operations Analysis Dept., New York Association for New Americans.

TABLE 12. ECONOMIC SECTOR OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 24–65, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

Economic Sector	New York City			Los Angeles County		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Private	70%	78%	74%	62%	78%	69%
Public	10	14	11	6	5	5
Self-employed	21	8	15	33	17	25

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 13. FORMER SOVIET JEWISH PROFESSIONALS & ENGINEERS[a] IN THE U.S., 1979–1992[B]

Sex	Men	Women	Total
	Professionals		
N	15,425	27,111	42,536
% of total labor force	15	27	41
	Engineers[a]		
N	12,475	6,557	19,032
% of total labor force	12	6	19
	Professionals & Engineers Combined		
N	27,900	33,668	61,568
% of total labor force	28	33	61
	All Occupations		
N	50,641	50,492	101,133
% of total labor force	50	50	100

[a]These two occupational categories for former occupation are tabulated separately. Engineer category also includes architects.
[b]Data for 1979–1991 are for calendar year; data for 1992 are fiscal year. 1990 data are not available.
Source: HIAS 1979–1993.

TABLE 14. ETHNIC TIES OF NEW YORK JEWS, 1991

Speak Yiddish:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	38%	42%

Respondent or any member of household has been a dues-paying member of a YMHA or Jewish Community Center within the past 12 months:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	15%	17%

Regularly read any Jewish publications:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	41%	49%

Respondent or spouse has close friends or immediate family living in Israel:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	46%	83%

Of the people respondent considers closest friends:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Few or none are Jewish	6%	0.2%
Most, almost all or all are Jewish	66%	96%

When it comes to a crisis, Jews can only depend on other Jews.

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Disagree	47%	25%
Agree	50%	68%

Source: The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study.

TABLE 15. INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY EVENTS OF NEW YORK JEWS, 1991

Participate in activities that support Israel or Soviet Jewry:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	50%	56%

Attended a Purim carnival or celebration during the past year:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	34%	67%

Celebrated Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day) in any way during the past year:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	19%	30%

Attended a Holocaust commemoration during the past year:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Yes	22%	34%

Source: The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study.

TABLE 16. LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, PERSONS BORN IN THE USSR, AGED 5+, NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1990[a]

	New York City		Los Angeles County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Russian	53,133	91.1	12,000	89.0
Yiddish	1,363	2.3	46	0.3
English	1,267	2.2	543	4.0
Hebrew	820	1.4	252	1.9
Hungarian			185	1.4
Syriac			144	1.3

[a]Persons migrating to the U.S. since 1965. Anyone with Armenian ancestry or who reported speaking Armenian at home was excluded.
Source: 1990 Census.

TABLE 17. COMPARATIVE JEWISH BEHAVIORS, SOVIET JEWS AND U.S. JEWS[a]

	Soviet Jews in U.S.		Soviet Jews in N.Y.		U.S. Jews[b]
Study and Year Data Collected	Simon 1981	Kosmin[c] 1989	N.Y. Fed. 1984	NYJPS[d] 1991	NJPS 1990
Fast on Yom Kippur	50%	84%	65%	78%	58%
Attend Passover seder	—	67	75	90[d]	89[e]
Light Hanukkah candles	58	68	70	94[d]	83[e]
Light Sabbath candles	22	27	41	64[d]	43[e]
Kosher meat	—	20	20	—	17[f]
Two sets of dishes	12	18	—	70[d]	—
Member of synagogue	—	41	—	42	41[f]
Give to Jewish charity	—	82	58	57	62[f]
UJA contribution	—	57	10	—	45[f]
Visited Israel	—	21	—	33	31
Avoid bread on Passover	53	—	41	—	—

[a]Questions are not always identical. These are approximations for comparative purposes. For actual questions, see original studies.
[b]Jewish by religion.
[c]Respondents in the U.S. at least 8 years.
[d]While many of these responses seem quite high, the rates for all Jewish New Yorkers in certain behaviors are the same or higher, e.g., seder attendance (93%), Hanukkah candles (93%), two sets of dishes (78%), and Jewish charity (66%).
[e]Sometimes, Usually, Always.
[f]Households, not individuals.
Sources: Rita J. Simon, ed., *New Lives: The Adjustment of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in the United States and Israel* (Lexington, Mass., 1985); Barry A. Kosmin, *The Class of 1979: The "Acculturation" of Jewish Immigrants from the Soviet Union,* North American Jewish Data Bank, CUNY Graduate School and University Center, 1990; Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, *Jewish Identification and Affiliation of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in New York City—A Needs Assessment and Planning Study,* 1985; Bethamie Horowitz, *The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study,* United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1993; Sidney Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey," AJYB 1992 (fast, seder, candles); Barry A. Kosmin et al., *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey,* Council of Jewish Federations, 1991.

TABLE 18. SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP, DENOMINATION, AND ATTENDANCE OF NEW YORK JEWS, 1990

Respondent or any member of household currently a dues-paying member of a synagogue or temple:

All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
42%	42%

Jewish denomination of respondent:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Conservative	34%	20%
Orthodox	15	11
Reform	35	29
Reconstructionist	2	5
Something else	12	19

Frequency of attendance at any type of organized Jewish religious service:

	All Jews	Post '65 Soviets
Not at all	16%	8%
Once or twice a year	11	9
Only on special occasions	8	2
Only on High Holy Days	16	39
3+ times a year	19	11
About once a month	7	7
Several times a month	5	6
About once a week	6	10
Several times a week	6	7

Source: The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study.

TABLE 19. IMPORTANCE OF JEWISH ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AS RATED BY SOVIET JEWISH PARENTS[a]

Study and Year Data Collected	Simon (U.S.) 1981	N.Y. Fed. 1984	Krautman (L.A.) 1990
Marry another Jew	87%	84%	90%
Observe Sabbath	45	69	—
Give to Jewish charities	87	—	89
Belong to Jewish orgs.	76	74	75
Have mostly Jewish friends	74	70	—
Visit Israel	—	80	90
Get a Jewish education	79	97–76[b]	—

[a]Questions are not always identical. These are approximations for comparative purposes. For actual questions, see original studies.

[b]97% Jewish history and culture; 76% Jewish religion.

Sources: Rita J. Simon, ed., *New Lives: The Adjustment of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in the United States and Israel* (Lexington, Mass., 1985); Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, *Jewish Identification and Affiliation of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in New York City—A Needs Assessment and Planning Study,* 1985; Jerry Allan Krautman, *A Study of the Acculturation and Jewish Identity of Soviet Jews Emigrating to Los Angeles Between 1972 and 1989,* MBA thesis, University of Judaism, 1990.