SOVIET JEWS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: THE REBUILDING OF A COMMUNITY

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Background

WHEN the second wave of Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union began in 1987,[1] the then prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, approached North American and Western European officials and pointed out that since these Soviet Jews had exit visas for Israel, he wanted guarantees from Western leaders that refugee status would be denied to these émigrés so that they would have to be resettled in Israel. Owing to the increasing number of asylum requests throughout the 1980s, most members of the European Community were willing to comply; but the Federal Republic of Germany explained that because of its 'historic past', it would not close its borders 'just for Jews from the Soviet Union'.[2] Moreover, both the government of the Republic and the media indicated that the re-establishment of a flourishing Jewish community would be welcome. German Jewish citizens were concerned about their demographic decline, after the losses during the Nazi era, and because of the present low fertility rate, the ageing community, and an accelerating rate of intermarriage — but they did not voice that concern formally, although they believed that the immigration of Soviet Jews would help to rebuild Jewish life in Germany.

There has been so far comparatively little published data on the results of research on Soviet Jewish immigrants in Germany — in contrast to studies of foreign-born residents, such as guest workers, asylum seekers, and repatriated ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*), and works on xenophobia and right-wing political violence in the country. Bodemann and Ostow have contributed reports on Jews in contemporary Germany for the *American Jewish Year Book*, while there have been some published and unpublished results of research projects and also some newspaper and magazine articles in both the United States and Germany, providing mainly anecdotal information.

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I have made use of all these sources available to me as well as of the literature on the resettlement of Soviet Jews in other countries. But the primary data on which the present article is based were collected in Berlin in 1993 in the course of interviews with key informants and with officials, and other members, of the Jewish community of Berlin. I conducted the interviews myself, recorded and transcribed them.

Migration

The Federal Republic of Germany has the greatest number of Soviet Jews permanently resettled in the country, after Israel and the United States (see Table 1). The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that a refugee is an individual with a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted in his country of origin for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion'. The 1980 German Act on Measures for Refugees, strengthened by the 9 January 1991 Bonn Resolutions of the State Minister-Presidents, has distinguished Soviet Jews from other refugees.

TABLE 1. *Soviet-Jewish Immigration to Israel, The United States and The Federal Republic of Germany (By Calendar Year)*

Year	*Israel*	*U.S.A.*	*FRG*
1974	16,816	3,490	N.A.
1975	8,531	5,250	N.A.
1976	7,279	5,512	N.A.
1977	8,348	6,842	N.A.
1978	12,192	12,265	N.A.
1979	17,614	28,794	N.A.
1980	7,570	15,461	N.A.
1981	1,767	6,980	N.A.
1982	731	1,327	N.A.
1983	387	887	N.A.
1984	340	489	N.A.
1985	348	570	N.A.
1986	206	641	N.A.
1987	2,072	3,811	569
1988	2,166	10,576	546
1989	12,172	36,738	568
1990	181,759	31,283	8,513
1991	145,005	34,715	8,000
1992	64,057	45,888	4,000
1993	69,132	35,581	14,759
1994	68,100	32,835	N.A.

Sources: National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, Federal Administrative Bureau (Cologne), World Jewish Congress

Throughout the 1980s, most Soviet Jews came to Germany with visitors' visas and then either applied for asylum under the old Article 16.2.2 of the Basic Law of Germany or acquired residence and work permits through their affiliation with the country's Jewish

communities, as will be shown below. That article stated: 'Persons persecuted on political grounds shall enjoy the right of asylum'. On 1 July 1993, a more restrictive law came into effect; and amendments now allow border police to turn back asylum seekers from Geneva Convention countries, border states, and 'safe' countries. However, because Soviet Jews have not been considered to be individual asylum seekers since the Bonn Resolutions, but are recognized instead as 'quota refugees', these more restrictive measures have had little impact on the acceptance of Soviet Jews. On the other hand, there has been a retrenchment in resettlement benefits.

Following Fix and Passel,[3] I distinguish between immigration and immigrant policy: the Federal government in Bonn determines immigration policy; it has enacted legislation concerning contract labourers, guest workers, asylum seekers, quota refugees, and *Aussiedler* (who are not considered foreigners). But it is the *Länder*, the constituent states of Germany, which decide how immigrants are to be integrated into the German economy and society.

The easing of travel restrictions throughout the Warsaw Pact countries facilitated the emigration of both Soviet Jews and *Aussiedler*. The latter, under Article 116 of the Basic Law, are not considered to be foreigners or immigrants, but as persons entitled to be 'resettled' under a 'right to return' provision; but the number of applicants has recently decreased, partly because of the efforts of the Federal government to offer economic aid and cultural activities to persuade would-be emigrants to remain in their countries of residence (mainly the former Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania). Soviet Jews who wished to settle in Germany represented a minute proportion of the number of total immigrants (that is, individual asylum seekers or *Aussiedler*) to Germany in the late 1980s; but by August 1990, the Federal government was not only advising its Soviet consulates to refuse to process new visa applications by Jews, but was also calling on the East Germans to act similarly.[4] As a result, 10,000 Jews applied during that year as *Aussiedler* at the Moscow embassy and a support committee was established in Frankfurt. Most of these requests, with the exception of spouses of *Aussiedler*, were rejected by the Federal authorities.

During the 1980s, Soviet Jews had also begun to enter the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or 'East Germany') as tourists, hoping that they would be able to seek asylum in West Germany — essentially entering the West through the back door.[5] If the Federal Republic denied entry, then the GDR would guarantee refugee status to these Jews. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Jewish Cultural Association of East Berlin lobbied parliamentarians for legislation that would grant permanent residence rights to Soviet Jews. But when the two Germanies were unified, the Federal government announced that all foreigners living in the former GDR must return to their countries of

TABLE 2. *Asylum-Seekers, Ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) and Soviet Jews Resettling in the FRG*

Year	*Asylum-Seekers*	*Aussiedler*	*USSR Aussiedler*	*Soviet Jews*
1979	N.A.	355,381[a]	7,226	N.A.
1980	107,818	52,071	6,954	N.A.
1981	49,371	69,455	3,773	N.A.
1982	37,423	48,170	2,071	N.A.
1983	19,737	37,925	1,447	N.A.
1984	35,278	36,459	913	N.A.
1985	73,832	38,968	460	N.A.
1986	99,650	42,788	753	N.A.
1987	57,379	78,523	14,488	569
1988	103,076	202,673	47,572	546
1989	121,318	377,055	98,134	568
1990	193,063	397,073	149,950	8,513
1991	256,112[b]	221,995	147,320	8,000
1992[c]	438,191[d]	230,489	195,576	4,000
1993	322,842	218,888	N.A.	14,759
1994	127,210	222,591	ca. 167,000	N.A.

Sources: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, Federal Administrative Bureau (Cologne), German Information Service (New York), *Migration News Sheet* — January 1995, *Deutschland Nachrichten* — 13 January 1995

[a] Includes 1970–79
[b] Includes 5,690 from the former Soviet Union
[c] In 1992, there were also 36,200 de facto refugees from the former Soviet Union living in Germany. These are persons not granted political asylum but who cannot be deported because of the non-refoulement clause in the Geneva Convention.
[d] Includes 10,833 from the former Soviet Union

origin. The Jewish communities of western Germany pleaded for an exception to be made for their co-religionists, who numbered several thousand in the former GDR. Bonn proposed that admission of these émigrés be limited to a thousand each year, stating that Jews were no different from any other non-German ethnic group whose members desire to settle in Germany.[6] The Central Council of Jews in Germany questioned the wisdom of linking Jewish immigrants with the generality of other immigrants; and the Federal government then agreed to honour the status accorded by the GDR.[7]

On 9 January 1991, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Minister-Presidents of the sixteen German states (the *Länder*) met in Bonn and agreed that Soviet Jews be admitted on humanitarian grounds as quota refugees, under the provisions of the 22 July 1980 procedural law on refugees, and further decided that all Soviet Jews who had been admitted by the individual *Länder* after 1 June 1990 should be considered retroactively quota refugees. From 15 February 1991, only German consulates in the Soviet Union would accept applications for refugee status; these applications would be dealt with immediately, without any lengthy bureaucratic and legal procedures. Approved applications are forwarded to the Federal Administrative Bureau in Cologne, the agency that deals with the distribution of quota refugees

among the individual states; it sends the applications to the Central Admissions Offices in each state, which always have to approve entry, and provide support, for new arrivals. Refugee allocations are made in proportion to the total population of a particular state. The Cologne bureau then sends the approved applications back to the consulates in the former Soviet Union, which notify the applicants of the conditions attached to the entry permits. The process takes about a year.

Applications for quota refugee status must be made in the former Soviet Union. Those who enter Germany without refugee status must petition the immigration authorities for change upon arrival. The general regulations of the Immigration Act apply both to Jews migrating directly from the former USSR and to secondary migrants, such as those who left Israel during the Gulf War. An extended stay could be obtained only by observing the relevant Immigration Administration proceedings.[8] The ministers of the Interior of the various *Länder* estimated in 1991 that they could collectively absorb up to 10,000 Jewish refugees annually and they decided that the policy would be reviewed if the number of arrivals exceeded that limit.[9] However, the ceiling of 10,000 was never enforced and 'the historical resonance of the potential renewal of German Jewry after all that has happened was hardly mentioned'.[10]

Quota refugee applicants to Germany have to prove their Jewish descent by producing an identity card, a passport, a birth certificate, and other documents which can verify their claim to be Jewish. But German embassies in the successor states have some discretion in interpreting the evidence presented. For example, if the passport lists 'Ukrainian' as nationality but the applicant states that he or she has a Jewish grandparent, the application will generally not be accepted: applicants are considered to be Jewish if they are so entitled by Orthodox Jewish law, the *halakha*, because their mother was Jewish; or according to Soviet law, if either parent was Jewish.[11]

Basic Demographic Characteristics

In 1933, when Hitler came to power, there were approximately 500,000 Jews in Germany; between 1936 and 1939, 330,000 fled; and just before the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, only about 120,000 remained.[12] More than 50 years later, on 31 December 1992, the statistical unit of the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany stated that there were 37,498 Jews registered with the various communities in Germany; but the total number has been estimated to be well over 40,000.[13] There are three main groups of Jews in Germany: those who are descended from the immediate pre-war population; displaced persons who found themselves in the country when the Second World War had just ended; and migrants who arrived in later years. Very few survivors of the Holocaust returned to their

original home country: the vast majority went to Israel, the United States, and various other countries. Only about 15 per cent of the present Jewish community in Germany are either Holocaust survivors and their offspring or returning exiles and their offspring, all of whom had been living in both East and West Germany after the Second World War. Displaced persons, numbering about 20,000, have remained in Germany because they found themselves to be there when the Allied troops occupied the country; but they were not former German nationals. The third group, those who migrated in later years, included Israeli economic immigrants who came to Germany during the 1960s and refugees from Warsaw Pact countries, following antisemitic outbreaks there, and lived in both East and West Germany. In that group, there were three waves of Polish Jews (1956, 1969, and 1972); Hungarians in 1956; Czechs in 1968; Romanians throughout the post-war period; and two waves of Soviet Jews, in 1973–82 and from 1987 to the present.[14]

No detailed records exist about these two waves of Soviet migrants in either the Federal or the *Länder* statistics,[15] and neither did East Germany keep such documentation before the Berlin Wall was pulled down in 1989. It is also important to note that the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany keeps records of only those émigrés who are registered with Jewish communities and whose Jewish identity is verified according to the principles of Orthodox Jewish law, the *halakha*; but the Federal German authorities include in the quota refugee group not only individuals with only one Jewish parent (father or mother, while in *halakha* a Jew is a person born of a Jewish mother), but also their non-Jewish kinsmen. It has been claimed that about 20 per cent of the quota refugees to Germany, as well as to Israel and the United States, produced forged documents as evidence of Jewish ancestry.[16] It must be added that some Soviet Jews have come to Germany and been accepted, although they had not arrived under the legal categories of refugee or asylum seeker: a contingent was admitted to Berlin in early 1991 as 'tolerated' individuals,[17] which meant that they could remain in the country but had no legal status and no social rights.

In what may be called an unofficial form of reparations for the Nazi persecutions and the Holocaust, all foreign Jews in Germany — even 'tolerated' Jews — are granted special privileges (that is, privileges not accorded to other foreign groups in the country). Proof of registration with a Jewish community in Germany will enable a foreign Jew to obtain a residence permit at once from the immigration authorities and a work permit from the Labour Bureau.

Table 3 shows arrivals and admissions from 1987 to the end of 1993. It can be seen that the numbers rose dramatically in 1989 and 1990, when the Soviet Union liberalised its emigration policies and the Federal Republic treated the Soviet Jews in East Germany as new

migrants. All available figures (from the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany as well as the Federal government and other sources) show that the admission of about 25,000 Soviet Jews from 1987 to the end of 1993 has meant a 50 per cent increase in the German Jewish population in the past decade.

TABLE 3. *Soviet-Jewish Arrivals and Admissions to the FRG, 1987–93*

Year	*Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany*	*Other*	*Federal Administrative Bureau*
1987	569[a]		
1988	546		
1989	568	6,000	
1990	5,000	4,600[b]	8,513[c]
1991	8,000		
1992	4,000[d]		
1993	N.A.		14,759[e]

Sources: *American Jewish Year Book* — 1989–1993 and the Federal Administrative Bureau (Cologne)

[a] Country of origin not stated.
[b] This figure represents the number of Soviet Jews who resided in the German Democratic Republic at the time of unification.
[c] This number represents those who arrived in Germany between 1 June 1990 and 15 February 1991 and were retroactively counted as quota refugees.
[d] The Central Welfare Board reports 12,000 newcomers for 1991 and 1992 combined. It is therefore assumed that approximately 4,000 Soviet Jews registered with the communities in 1992.
[e] This number includes all Soviet Jews who entered as quota refugees between 15 February 1991 and 2 November 1993.

There have been more than 58,000 applications since the beginning of the quota refugee programme; these include arrivals and those in the 'pipeline', that is, individuals granted refugee status who are still in the former USSR. In 1993 it was stated that there was also a backlog of about 7,100 persons who had filed applications and were awaiting approval for refugee status.[18]

Many Jews in the Newly Independent States of the former USSR have applied for immigration visas as an 'insurance policy', but they are aware that they face formidable obstacles before they can leave their native land and come to Germany as legal migrants. Before a Jew can leave the former Soviet Union, there are several hurdles to be overcome: affidavits from relatives, former employers and utilities bureaus stating that there are no outstanding debts. Local police departments must check that the person has no criminal record. But when all documents have been obtained, the hopeful migrant must then pay very large bribes to ratify the verification of all papers and permissions; and bribes must be paid not only to the exit authorities of the Newly Independent States, but also to the authorities of any bordering State and indeed it is claimed that even taxi drivers at train stations and airline workers threaten to delay departure unless they are paid off. For those who pass through the Russian Federation on the way

out, roubles must be purchased at great cost since they may hold only the devalued currency of their native State. These allegations of corruption in the Russian Federation and in the Newly Independent States are consistently made and must be taken seriously. Indeed, the data available in Berlin and Düsseldorf show that most Soviet Jews now living in the Federal Republic of Germany originate from the European republics of the former USSR, with Russia and Ukraine providing the largest percentages, followed by the Baltic States (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. *Soviet Jewish Emigration by Region Republic of Origin (As a Proportion of the Total Arrivals to Berlin and Düsseldorf)*

Region/Republic	*Berlin 1992* %	*Düsseldorf 1992** %
Baltics	8.1	1.1
Belarus	N.A.	3.6
Central Asia	3.5	2.5
Georgia/Caucasus	2.6	1.6
Moldova	2.8	1.4
Russia	29.6	33.7
Ukraine	30.2	31.7
All Others	23.2	24.6

* Reported as of January 1993.
Source: Julius H. Schoeps, *Das Deutschlandbild Jüdischer Einwanderer aus der GUS* — 1993

Berlin

As stated above, it is official policy for Germany to distribute refugees according to regional quotas. However, Berlin and the eastern *Länder* have had more than their theoretical share as a result of cultural and political factors. Soviet Jews look upon Berlin as more 'eastern' and cosmopolitan than other German large cities and indeed Berlin is the centre of Soviet Jewish life in the country.[19] In the *Länder* bordering on Berlin, the Soviet migrants can rejuvenate 'virtually geriatric existing Jewish communities and establish new ones' and they can reclaim former Jewish communal property on behalf of the Jewish communities of the area, lest it fall otherwise into the hands of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization.[20] Many pre-war Jewish communal properties in the former GDR had not been dealt with in restitution agreements. Unless it could be demonstrated that a presently existing Jewish community could use the former property, the Organization would acquire the property. There is also more temporary housing in Berlin than in other parts of the Federal Republic: mainly disbanded army camps and other East German properties.

In October 1993, there were about 10,000 Jews registered with the Berlin Jewish community; only 3,000 of these had lived in the city since

the late 1940s; a total of 6.000 Soviet Jews came to Berlin during the two main waves of immigration. In 1990, the number of Soviet migrants led Berlin's Jewish community to increase from 6,411 to 9,000; most of them were only 'tolerated' individuals, since only 101 of the 14,759 quota refugee migrants until the end of 1993 had been assigned to the *Land* of Berlin by the Federal authorities. Soviet Jews also constitute a disproportionate part of the foreign-born population of the city: although they account for less than one per cent of the foreign-born population in the country, they represent five per cent of the city's foreign-born residents.

Resettlement Services

The *Land* agencies provide the major part of resettlement services to refugees; but the benefits cease one year after arrival. The various Jewish communities in the country provide additional services, with the help of funds raised through the religious tax (*Kirchensteuer*), a tax raised by the government primarily as a voluntary payroll deduction of ten per cent. Jewish communities claim that this religious tax system does not even begin to offset resettlement costs and have requested additional funds from the Federal government.[21]

The procedure for resettling refugees begins with an assessment of the needs of the new arrivals and of their required adaptation to local conditions. Basic essentials such as food, clothing, and shelter are provided and then refugees are encouraged to lead a 'normal' life, with the adults finding employment and the children attending school. Table 5 lists the benefits available; the Soviet Jewish refugees can live in government-run hostels for up to two years and can find adequate medical care: there are several such services which co-exist, from private, to collective, to state-run clinics.

Religious Socialization

In Germany, case management and vocational services are supervised by public agencies; but the Soviet immigrants have brought with them their deep distrust of state-run institutions — even of those run by the Jewish communities. The latter's social workers have frequently reported that they have been offered vodka and hard currency in order to obtain more readily resettlement benefits[22] because the refugees had gathered before coming to Germany that the Jewish community would act as mediator between them and the state authorities. German Jewish communal organizations do serve as agents of the state in explaining general German principles of civil society integration; but they also help to provide religious socialization or Jewish acculturation. With the exception of 'refusniks' such as prominent Zionists who had been denied exit visas to Israel for years (for example, Natan Sharansky and Ida Nudel), there is probably little difference in Jewish background or

TABLE 5. *Refugee Benefits in the Federal Republic of Germany*

Benefit	*How Provided*
Initial housing	Subsidized entirely by state (*Länder*) government; refugee usually placed in special hostel (*Wohnheim*) for refugees and asylum-seekers for up to 2 years after arrival
Permanent housing	Needy eligible for rent assistance; otherwise no subsidy; Jewish communities aid in search
Furniture	Donated by Jewish communities
Initial clothing	Subsidy from state government and donated by Jewish communities
Children's toys	Donated by Jewish communities
Food	Subsidy by state government
Cash assistance	'Social allowance' (*Sozialamt*) from state government, averaging about $325/month/adult and $195/month/child provides basic financial support; Employment Exchange (*Arbeitsamt*) supports refugees through the end of 8 months; thereafter refugees eligible for unemployment benefits (*Arbeitlosenhilfe*)
Medical assistance	Insured under government health plan and released from obligations to pay insurance contributions
Educational services	State-run and Jewish schools available; all schooling subsidized by the state; university or professional schooling available as well
Child care	State government
General case management services	State governments and Jewish communities
Language instruction	German language training (GLT) mandated by state governments for eight months; instruction provided by public agencies, the Jewish communities, and sub-contractees such as the Goethe Institute
General social	In conjunction with GLT
Jewish acculturation	Jewish communities
Employment services	State government and Jewish communities
Employment training	State government, Jewish communities, and/or private sub-contractees
Legal services	Jewish communities

Source: Jeroen Doomernik, 'The migration of Jews from the (former) Soviet Union to Berlin (1990-1992)' — 1993

motivation between most Soviet Jewish émigrés, wherever they are now settled. Their Jewishness in the former Soviet Union had been defined mostly in terms of Soviet state policy and antisemitism. Those in Germany are in the main less interested than their counterparts now in Israel in living a Jewish life.

As a consequence, many refugees are ambivalent about the acculturation programmes to which they are subjected. Acculturation programmes ironically contradict the stated goal of giving arrivals the opportunity of regaining control over their own lives. Some refugees are in conflict with Jewish communal organizations despite their 'segmental assimilation' into the German Jewish communities.[23] Soviet Jews can adapt in one of three ways: acculturate and integrate into German society, to the extent of other Jews; do the opposite, by remaining highly visible and vulnerable foreigners through combined residence in refugee hostels and dependence on the state and private charities for support; or combine rapid progress with deliberate

preservation of the Soviet Jews' values and solidarities by creating a niche similar to that of the Turks in the country.[24] The Jewish communities in Germany prefer the first option. However, the acculturation programmes they offer reflect a paternalistic attitude, contrasting with the government public services which aim to foster independence.[25] The Jewish communal organizations are concerned that increasing numbers of their co-religionists, who have been settled in Germany for some time, are less willing to affiliate formally with the Jewish organizations and they attempt to revitalize their communities with arrivals from the former Soviet Union. Acculturation programmes are aimed to affect whole families — children, parents, and older adults. The migrant children usually attend Jewish day-schools, which are wholly subsidized by the German authorities through the religious tax. The chairman of the Jewish community in Berlin has asserted that the majority of day-school students are refugees.[26]

There are also extra-curricular activities for children: fine, applied, and performing arts opportunities —such as painting, sculpting, and embroidery classes, ballet, Israeli and Jewish folk-dancing, and music lessons, often taught by émigrés. There is an emphasis on physical fitness, with gymnasiums and swimming pools managed by the Jewish organizations. There is little or nothing particularly Jewish in many of these programmes, except that they occur in a Jewish setting and they provide an opportunity for refugees to meet other Jews and through them to become acquainted with other forms of Jewish activities. In larger cities, the Soviet Jews are more likely to learn German in government or other non-Jewish premises; but Jewish organizations tempt the newcomers with acculturation programmes in German language training, as part of the provisions for social integration. Some social workers claim that many newcomers welcome such programmes because they were denied a 'normal' Jewish life in their country of birth; but others point out that the newcomers view religious socialization in much the same way as they did the courses in Marxism-Leninism to which they had been subjected.

A Jewish activist in Berlin commented that 'Judaism in Germany is not fun; it is a burden of the past'; that attitude seems to permeate the level of émigré commitment. Soviet Jews in Germany are much more likely than their counterparts in the United States to be affiliated to Jewish organizations; but they are nevertheless more likely to be interested in recreational and artistic activities which do not have a Jewish content. The newcomers turn to the services provided by their co-religionists for such things as special computer classes, professional advisory groups led by first-wave migrants, science and technical discussion clubs, etc. But, according to one resettlement worker, only about ten per cent of the refugees integrate deliberately into the Jewish community; the large majority seem to prefer to adapt to German civil

society and they are successful in doing so to a greater degree than they would have been by being active members of the Jewish communities in Germany.

Nevertheless, German Jewish communities boast of their success in attracting hundreds of newcomers to celebrations of the major Jewish holidays and festivals; of the Russian divisions of Germany's Keren Hayesod; and the settled émigrés who volunteer to be of assistance to the more recent newcomers. Since there is a disproportionate group of artists and intellectuals, cultural achievements are highlighted. An art gallery was recently opened in eastern Berlin under the auspices of the Jewish Community of Berlin and has featured the work of the émigrés as well as of Jews still living in the former USSR. There is a new theatre company, whose 18 members are immigrants from Russia and Ukraine; it has received assistance from Berlin's Ministry of Culture, several theatrical groups, and from the Jewish community of Berlin.[27]

On the other hand, the communal officials seem reluctant to give more formal power to the newcomers. At present, Jews must be registered with a Jewish community for at least six months before they can vote in communal elections, and according to the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, some communities are petitioning the Council to change voting eligibility to a five-year residence requirement; they fear that the influx of Soviet Jews will erode their own traditional power base. But in an interview I had with the president, he stated that it would be undemocratic to make such changes and that the communities should be more concerned with facilitating the integration of the newcomers.[28]

Socio-economic Integration

One of the first things which a newcomer to Germany must learn is the German language; that is mandatory and language teaching starts when a migrant arrives, to facilitate entry into the labour force. However, Freinkman and Fijalkowski found in their 1992 study[29] of second-wave Soviet migrants in Berlin that only ten per cent of their sample claimed to understand, speak, read and write German well, after being in the country for three years; about two thirds (63 per cent) stated that they had some knowledge of German but could not make themselves understood. As for gainful occupation, the country's employment exchanges will usually subsidize the cost of professional training or retraining courses. Those wishing to attend university may do so under the Federal Law supporting education, the *Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*, commonly abbreviated to *Bafög*. However, Schoeps found that only 16.7 per cent of refugees in his sample of respondents in 13 cities were gainfully employed,[30] perhaps because lack of linguistic ability diminishes employment prospects. Furthermore, 80 per cent of individuals active in the labour force

considered themselves to be under-employed.[31] Schoeps noted that among those with no paid employment, more than a third (37.5 per cent) were collecting unemployment benefits, a quarter (25 per cent) were enrolled in German-language courses and receiving initial refugee benefits, ten per cent were in job-retraining programmes, and nine per cent were students.[32]

Doomernik and Freinkman and Fijalkowski[33] found that the refugees were greatly dependent on the black economy (*Schwartzarbeit*); that included import-export business, casino work (changing money for the gambling machines or selling snacks and beverages), and the sale of small consumer goods purchased with government subsidies. In Berlin, according to a 1992 study, 60 per cent of newcomers reported that they were dependent on the black economy for their own economic survival.[34] The remaining Soviet troops in eastern Germany were a lucrative source of trading in various articles. However, with the withdrawal of all Warsaw Pact soldiers, this sector of the informal economy has greatly diminished.

Conclusion

It is difficult to discover whether there are substantial numbers of Soviet Jews in Germany who are not affiliated to the various Jewish communities of the country. These communities have energetically taken part in the efforts to help the émigrés and have endeavoured to heighten their sense of Jewish identity. But it is of course difficult to identify migrants who have entered Germany because they have produced evidence that they were Jewish, and who later made the deliberate decision to distance themselves from their co-religionists. They may have simply joined non-Jews in Germany who are of the same professional or occupational background and established a network of informal friendship with them. It will be interesting to discover in time whether the Soviet Jews who have settled in Germany will continue to develop their own associations, as an ethnic group, distinct from their religious persuasion and not affiliated to indigenous Jewish organizations. The Kurds in Berlin, for example, have established women's groups, youth clubs, language classes, small printing facilities, and neighbourhood cafés.[35] Similar associations are beginning to emerge amongst Soviet Jews, but they remain mostly informal with cafés (particularly the Perestroika café) as the main meeting point.[36] It is too early to determine whether these associations reflect a realization of the Berlin Jewish community's slogan of 'help to self help' or if they are merely a mirror of a civil society and state with an ethnic understanding of membership in a polity (that is, the *völkisch* conception of citizenship),[37] coupled with difficulty in integrating, culturally, politically, and economically.

There is some anecdotal evidence about a burgeoning 'Russian mafia' in Germany, but since there are substantial numbers of former non-Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union settled in Germany, including over 600,000 *Aussiedler*, it is arguable whether 'Russian' organized crime is dominated by Jews.

If integration can be measured by naturalization rates, then Soviet Jews have been successful. The German Information Center[38] reports that nearly 10,000 Soviet Jews from the first wave have become German citizens, after meeting the requirement of legal residency in Germany (from eight to 15 years, depending on the age of the applicant). The second wave of migrants will be eligible for citizenship from 1995 onwards.

Germany, in common with many Western countries, is becoming a post-industrial society; its restructured economy places more emphasis on high technology, whereas many migrants entered the labour force with traditional jobs in manufacturing and industry. The unification of East and West Germany has also taken its toll, with unemployment rates hovering at about nine per cent; these rates are average for Western Europe but they are nevertheless among the highest unemployment figures in the world's leading capitalist economies.

There is a concern that refugees in Germany run the risk of being put in the category of the 'unworthy poor' as a result of increasing activities of nativist and xenophobic movements and the limitations recently imposed on the provision of welfare for legal migrants. Since Soviet Jews live in concentrated geographical areas and in housing usually provided by the *Länder*, they are easily identifiable and therefore more likely to be subjected to right-wing political violence. On the other hand, given the continued instability of the former Soviet Union, we can expect to see more Soviet Jews migrating to Germany in the next few years.

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NOTES

[1] The first wave of emigration began in the early 1970s, peaked in 1979 and ended around 1981. The second wave continues as of this writing (early 1995).

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[3] Michaël Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, *Immigration and Immigrants. Setting the Record Straight*, Washington, D.C. (The Urban Institute), 1994.

[4] Y. Michael Bodemann, 'Federal Republic of Germany' in *American Jewish Year Book*, New York and Philadelphia, 1992, pp. 360–72.

[5] Charles Hoffman, *Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era*, New York, 1992, p. 203.

[6] Andrei S. Markovits and Beth Simone Noveck, *The World Reacts: The Case of West Germany*, Santa Cruz, CA (Board of Politics, University of California), unpublished manuscript, 1992.

[7] David Kantor, '800 Soviet Jews Now in East Germany, Thousands More Applying in Moscow', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin*, 5 September 1990, p. 3.

[8] 'Das Kontingent gilt nur für Juden aus der Sowjetunion', *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung*, 21 February 1991, p. 11.

[9] 'Federal Republic of Germany' in U.S. Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey*, Washington, D.C., 1992, pp. 70–72.

[10] Frank Stern, *German Unification and the Question of Antisemitism*, New York (American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations), 1993, p. 5.

[11] *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung*, op. cit. in Note 8 above.

[12] Hoffman, op. cit. in Note 5 above.

[13] Robin Ostow, 'Federal Republic of Germany' in *American Jewish Year Book*, New York and Philadelphia, 1994, pp. 306–27.

[14] Uri R. Kaufmann, 'Jewish Life in the Federal Republic of Germany' in Uri R. Kaufmann, ed., *Jewish Life in Germany Today*, Bonn, 1994, pp. 9–14.

[15] Jeroen Doomernik, 'The migration of Jews from the (former) Soviet Union to Berlin (1990–1992). Preliminary findings of a research project', paper presented at Neue Mobilitäten Bausteine der europäischen Integration, Berlin, 23–24 April 1993; Julius H. Schoeps, *Das Deutschlandbild Jüdischer Einwanderer aus der GUS: Dokumentation der Ergebnisse einer aktuellen Umfrage zur Prolematik der sozialen Integration und kulturell-religiösen Selbstbehauptung vor dem Hintergrund von Ausländerfeindlichkeit und Antisemitismus*, Duisburg/Potsdam (Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute and Moses Mendelssohn Center), 1993.

[16] Doomernik, op. cit. in Note 15 above.

[17] Y. Michal Bodemann and Robin Ostow, 'Federal Republic of Germany' in *American Jewish Year Book*, New York and Philadelphia, 1993, pp. 282–300.

[18] Doomernik, op. cit. in Note 15 above.

[19] Michael Brenner, 'Jewish Life and Jewish Culture in Berlin After 1945' in Uri R. Kaufmann, ed., op. cit. in Note 14 above, pp. 15–26.

[20] Bodemann and Ostow, op. cit. in Note 17 above.

[21] Bodemann, op. cit. in Note 4 above.

[22] Doomernik, op. cit. in Note 15 above.

[23] Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, in 'Should Immigrants Assimilate?', *The Public Interest*, no. 116, 1994, pp. 18–33, use this term to define the process immigrants undergo in the United States. However, given the increasing heterogeneity of German civil society and its ethnicization of politics, 'segmental assimilation' can equally apply to Germany.

[24] Joachen Blaschke, 'Refugees and Turkish Migrants in West Berlin' in Danièle Joly and Robin Cohen, eds., *Reluctant Hosts: Europe and its Refugees*, Brookfield, VT, 1980, pp. 86–103.

[25] Steven J. Gold, 'Dependency, Stigma and the Structure of Refugee Resettlement', paper presented at the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, August 1989; Steven J. Gold, *Refugee Communities. A Comparative Field Study*, Newbury Park, CA, 1992; and Steven J. Gold, 'Soviet Jews in the United States' in *American Jewish Year Book*, New York and Philadelphia, 1994, pp. 3–57.

[26] Personal interview with Jerzy Kanal, 27 September 1993, Berlin.

[27] 'Jüdisches Theater Berlin eröffnet', *Deutschland Nachrichten* (German Information Center, New York), 18 February 1994, p. 7.

[28] Personal interview with Ignatz Bubis, 29 September 1993, Berlin.

[29] Nelli Freinkman and Jürgen Fijalkowski, *Jüdische Emigranten aus den Ländern der ehemaligen Sowjetunion, die zwischen 1990 und 1992 eingereist sind in Berlin leben — eine Studie über Besuchs-, Zeitarbeits- und Niederlassungsinteressenten*, Berlin (Immigration Committee of the Berlin Senate/Free University of Berlin: Institute on Migratory Workers, Refugee Movements and Minority Policy), unpublished manuscript, November 1992.

[30] Schoeps, op. cit. in Note 15 above.

[31] Freinkman and Fijalkowski, op. cit. in Note 29 above.

[32] Schoeps, op. cit. in Note 15 above.

[33] Doomernik, op. cit. in Note 15 above; Freinkman and Fijalkowski, op. cit. in Note 29 above.

[34] Freinkman and Fijalkowski, op. cit. in Note 29 above.

[35] Blaschke, op. cit. in Note 24 above.

[36] Freinkman and Fijalkowski, op. cit. in Note 29 above.

[37] Thomas Faist, 'How to Define a Foreigner? The Symbolic Politics of Immigration in the German Partisan Discourse, 1978–1993', *West European Politics* vol. 17, 1994, pp. 50–71.

[38] *Focus on. Foreigners in Germany: Guest Workers, Asylum-Seekers, Refugees, and Ethnic Germans. Facts and Reflections*, New York (German Information Center), 1991.