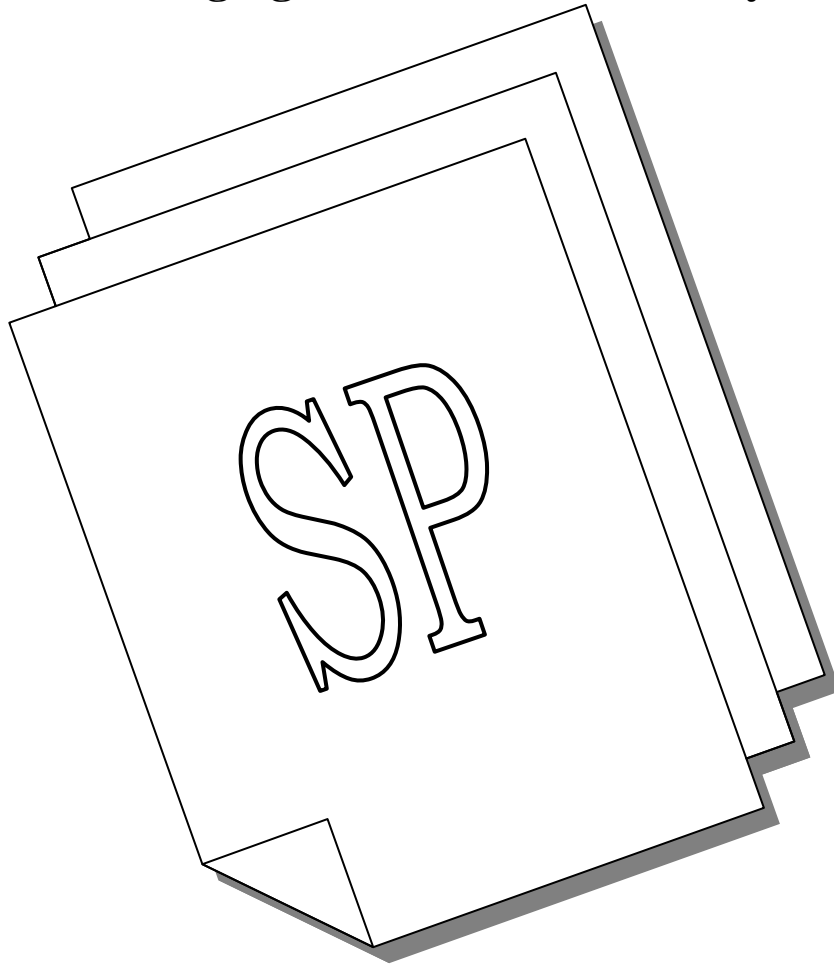


*Sociological Papers*

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**Volume 12, 2007**

**Sponsored by the Leon Tamman Foundation for Research into Jewish  
Communities**



**SOCIOLOGICAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES  
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY**

# «Wie mächtig sind die Russen in Berlin?» Inside and Outside of the post-Soviet Russianness in Germany<sup>1</sup>

“Berlin ist eine russische Stadt, der erste Vorposten des Ostens im Westen. Wie schon einmal Anfang dieses Jahrhunderts zieht die deutsche Metropole sie an – die Geschäftsmänner, Goldminensucher und Flüchtlinge, die Intellektuellen, Maler und Musiker“.  
Stern, 34/1998

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## **Abstract**

Over the 1990s and early 2000s, Germany received large numbers of Russian-speaking immigrants – over 2,7 million ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) and over 220,000 Jewish “special contingent refugees”. This essay explores the issues of self-identity as experienced by the newcomers from the former Soviet Union, their relations with German mainstream culture and society, and the reflections of these relations in the German and Russian-language press. The essay also reflects on the evolving meanings of geopolitical and social boundaries for the former Soviet citizens now living in Europe.

## **Introduction**

This article explores the transformations of collective identity and the meaning of symbolic boundaries in the old and new living spaces for the Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany. Geopolitical fragmentation of society in the wake of the demise of the USSR was concomitant to mass migration and formation of post-soviet diasporas, causing reconfiguration of established spatial patterns and familiar semiotic markers. Drawing on the analysis of printed media and ethnographic study among post-soviet migrants in Berlin in 1997-2001, I will focus on the cultural imagery of Russian immigrants that circulates within the community itself and in the surrounding

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<sup>1</sup> „Wie mächtig sind die Russen in Berlin?“ (How powerful are Russians in Berlin?), the title of the series of articles in the national tabloid «Bild».

The article is partly based on the author’s dissertation published in German: Darieva, Tsypylma. *Russkij Berlin. Migranten und Medien*, Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2004. The research was supported by the Heinrich Bell Foundation and German Research Society (DFG). The main body of this article was prepared for the international conference «Beyond the Empire: Images of Russia in the Eurasian Cultural Context», Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University. December 2006.

I would like to thank Prof. Larissa Remennick for her profound editing and excellent translation of my paper written in Russian.

host society. I will also reflect on the changes in presentations of public spaces as they emerge from the Russian-language press in Germany. A newspaper is not just an information source and linguistic outlet but also a social agent that may shape local events and spaces in the complex global context loaded with its own multiple symbols. Journalists and editors like architects transform social and cultural realities into linguistic, visual and spatial presentations loaded with meaning. They create new virtual meeting grounds for inter-group communication in diverse societies and help the readers to navigate complex and dynamic information worlds.

I will follow how members of the last Soviet generation who had migrated to Germany construe their own placement “abroad” and how they create their “new world” in Germany. How does surrounding German majority perceive Russian newcomers in Berlin? Is the old contention between the East (Eastern Europe, Socialist bloc) and the West (Germany, Western Europe, NATO domain) still come to the fore in the contemporary media discourse? Since collective image of immigrant groups both reflects and shapes immigrant-host relations, I will start from the discursive properties applied to former Soviet immigrants in the mainstream German press, including three leading national newspapers - *Die Zeit*, *Spiegel* and *Tageszeitung*. As the reader will see, these images often reflect popular clichés and stereotypes taking root in the historic relations between USSR and Germany, as well as more recent reflections of the post-communist developments in the former Soviet Union (FSU).

### **Cultural adaptation of post-soviet immigrants in Germany**

The ironic term “sausage immigration” (*kolbasnaya imigratsiya*) is often applied to the recent wave of émigrés from the FSU to the West, stressing the primarily economic motives of their move. This label is often juxtaposed with the ideological and political motivations of the earlier historic waves of emigration from Russia and USSR, e.g. after the 1917 revolution or during the Cold War. However, in Germany this gastronomic description of the last immigrant wave from the FSU is less common than in North America or in Israel. Although the wish for economic security was among the key motives for the recent migrants, the underpinnings of the resettlement process and its perception by the German public were more complex, reflecting specific confessional and ethnic grounds for this immigration wave.

Former Soviet migrants in Germany fall into two major ethnic categories, both of which enjoyed special legal status in the German immigration laws of the 1990s. One was ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*), descendants of Volga region German minority who suffered of discrimination and deportations by Stalin’s regime and was invited to repatriate to Germany after the fall of the Soviet Empire. The total number of these “ethnic return immigrants” during the period 1991-2005 has exceeded 2.7 million. Another, much smaller group of migrants included about 220 thousand of former Soviet Jews defined by the 1991 law as “special refugee contingent.” They were welcomed to Germany to redeem for Nazi crimes during World War II and to ensure future existence and growth of the small and aging community of German Jews. Thus, over the last 15-17 years total population of former-Soviet immigrants in Germany has reached almost three million, with major concentrations in the large cities – Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich, and others. In Berlin alone, the Russian-speaking population is estimated at 250,000 (Darieva, 2004). Both groups are rather privileged in terms of access to German citizenship (the Germans get it soon upon arrival and the Jews can apply after several years of residence), while it is seldom granted to most

other immigrants (e.g. the Turks and other “guest workers”). The moral and ideological framing of these immigrants’ right to live in Germany substantially mitigated the process of their entry and resettlement, including expedient processing of their visas and multiple entitlements in the generous German welfare system: health care, housing, language courses, and unemployment benefits. Given economic safety net these immigrants were granted by the state, the main emphasis was placed on their social and cultural adjustment to the mainstream German society.

Therefore, the flawed acculturation of former Soviet immigrants came under the spotlight of German welfare state and the media, with particular emphasis on their lack of integration in the ethno-confessional institutions they were expected to join. Specifically, many “contingent refugees” could not or would not participate in the Jewish communal structures (*Judisches Gemeinde*) because German Orthodox communities only accepted Halachic Jews and rejected half-Jews on paternal side and non-Jewish family members. At the same time, over half of all Jewish families included non-Jews, reflecting prevalent intermarriage in the FSU. Therefore, many immigrants were excluded from the system of social support provided by the *Gemeinde* (e.g. could not be buried in the Jewish cemetery with subsidized funeral services or place their children in a subsidized synagogue kindergarten). Others left the *Gemeinde* after taking advantage of their resettlement services because they did not like the religious emphasis of its activities or ethnically-exclusive membership policies, or else would not pay substantial membership fees. As a result, less than half of all Jewish immigrants were members of the *Gemeinde* by the early 2000s, which is interpreted by many hosts as their being “not real Jews” and hence entering Germany under false pretences. “Real Jews” were expected to attend synagogue regularly, keep kosher and identify with the Holocaust victims, none of which was true after seven decades of Soviet policy of atheism and cultural unification of all citizens. This caused a lot of resentment among local Jewish leaders and general German public alike (Schoeps et al., 1999).

For similar reasons, many German returnees had to undergo “purity checks” into their German heritage, i.e. knowledge of one of German dialects, affiliation with one of the accepted churches, keeping ethnic holidays and culinary traditions at home, etc. By the late 1990s, both ethnic Germans and Jews of Soviet origin were labeled as “not enough German or Jewish” but rather “Russian,” bearing clear traces of a long soviet legacy in their culture, lifestyle and everyday behavior. The media depictions of this new wave of “Russian” immigration often referred to the historic pictures of Berlin’s Russian life of the 1920s in so-called *Charlottengrad* (an ironic name for *Charlottenburg* – an area of West Berlin where many post-revolutionary émigrés from Russia lived and established thriving cultural institutions) or else implied the grave role of the Soviets in the divided Berlin of the Cold War era. Thus, both Russian Jews and Germans were associated with their Russianness as primary identity marker, and both were construed as *Auslander* (foreigners). A 1996 citation from *Die Zeit* is typical:

*In 15 minutes, Russians will be in Kurfurstendamme [central commercial artery of West Berlin] – sang German rock-musician Udo Lindenberg in the mid-1880s,... and indeed, here they are. Nowadays, they sell emblems*

*with Lenin, painted wooden spoons and Red Army fur hats to American tourists from Ohio at the flea market*<sup>2</sup>.

“How powerful are these new Russians in Berlin?” – under this title popular tabloid *BZ* published a series of reports on the informal (including criminal) Russian institutions in Berlin<sup>3</sup>. Thus, stereotyped imagery created by the media and common generic traits of former Soviets - coming from an array of places (Central Russia, the Caucasus, Siberia, Central Asia, etc.) and ethno-cultural backgrounds - pooled them all together under an umbrella category of “Russians.” At the same time, by the late 1990s the mainstream German media reflected the processes of redressing of the old cultural stereotypes leading to “normalization” of the ubiquitous presence of “Russians” in Europe generally and in Germany specifically. If for the post-war generation of Germans “der Russe” meant Russian soldier - ruthless enemy, a savage and occupier of Berlin, for contemporary media consumers “Russians” have lost the features of nemesis and became relatively peaceful and mundane “internal strangers.” On the multicultural scene of Berlin (and other large cities) a new legitimate cultural minority has emerged. The scary image of the Russian soldier erecting the red flag over Reichstag was replaced by a peaceful, even disoriented, local dweller with an exotic hard-to-pronounce name and permanent residency in both Berlin and Moscow.

Thus, in the semiotic meaning of the ethnonym “Russian” the traditional contentious tones have been waning reflecting general redressing of the discursive presentations of World War II during the last two decades, including rethinking of the relations between the victors and victims in this war. As the Great War is becoming more distant history, its tangible symbols may attain new meaning as cultural artifacts. Thus, the hostile graffiti left by the Russian soldiers on the walls of Reichstag (“*Zdes’ byl soldat Laptev*”, “*Berlinu kryshka!*,” etc.) were for decades perceived as political taboo, the epiphany of historic humiliation of the German nation, and were generally concealed and silenced. Recently, these “written mementoes” became an inseparable part of the cultural landscape of new Germany and salient landmarks of modern European history. Today soldiers’ graffiti are re-defined as art by designer Norman Foster, framed and displayed in the renewed building of Reichstag (Liebchen, 2004). The public display of previously sacrilegious symbols in the political heart of contemporary Germany and their “showcasing” as tourist attractions may signal trivialization of recent history, but at the same time it highlights seminal changes in the perception on everything “Russian” as common and unthreatening.

This transformation also resulted in “personification” of the abstract “Russians” who have attained human features as actual men and women. The new portrayal, however, often drew on the emerging stereotypes of the newly rich businessmen with dubious sources of wealth that dominated mass media of the FSU and Eastern Europe during the 1990s. The following press excerpts are typical:

*They carry their cash wads sloppily crammed in the pockets and pay in cash for Versace fashion items...In an upscale boutique, they point to the row of hangers with evening gowns for their lady priced in six digits and slice the bills from the thick wad emerging from their pockets...In a*

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<sup>2</sup> Marlies, Menge, Berlin. Kurfuestenprospekt, in: Die Zeit, No. 29, 12.07.1996, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> «Wie mächtig sind die Russen in Berlin?», *BZ*, 28.10.1998, p. 6.

*Friedrichstrasse car dealership they pay in cash for an S class Mercedes, while their women dressed in diamonds and sables and holding Chanel handbags look on...*

Up until recently, the traditional unappealing characters “made in Russia” were exclusively male, invoking associations of menace, crude force and violence, including potential threat for the women, as well as rough manners and barbarian appearance. Over the last few years, women’s images have joined this portrayal – often as tall and pretty Russian blonds on high heels that replaced traditional images of shapeless Russian grandmas - “babushkas” in heavy grey coats and head scarves. The images of new Russian women often stress their sex appeal and carry an “overdose” of erotic symbols so untypical of contemporary German women in the everyday life. The hyper-feminine image of the “Russische frau” is augmented by the demonstrative display of wealth and sexuality: the overpriced brands, expensive perfume, deep cleavage and long legs in black stockings and spikes - all hint at sexual license and implicitly refer to the image of expensive prostitute. Thus both male and female images of “Russians” sustain the stereotype of “primitive” newly rich who have yet to learn how to use their wealth in a decent and appropriate way. These images highlight rampant and demonstrative consumption and sloppy use of money, the backbone and central symbol of capitalist society that is repeatedly underscored by the image of a thick wad of bills carried in the trouser pocket rather than in a “civilized” wallet (or, even better, a credit card). The practice of wild and uncontrolled use of capital, depicted as amoral and dangerous, lays the basis of the “new Russian” imagery in the Western media. It reflects a deeper rejection by the natives of the sets of values and economic behavior that these external signs of the “New Russian” represent.

### **Self-identity of “Russians” in Germany**

Over the last decade, the younger segment of former Soviet immigrants has learned how to get by and succeed in the German society. Perhaps the best known example of this adjustment is a young novelist Vladimir Kaminer who writes in German about the experiences and travails of a Russian-Jewish family recently resettled in Germany. “Russian Disco” and other books by Kaminer “explain” a seemingly irrational Russian mindset and lifestyle to a German reader, using humor and farce as the literary means. The books by Kaminer and other immigrant authors, reflecting on their own condition and place in the new society, significantly contribute to the transformation of the collective identity of the newcomers in Germany. By way of an insider joke (but with a trace of seriousness too), many immigrants associate their resettlement and adaptation saga with the highly popular image of soviet intelligence officer Stierlitz – a protagonist in a cold-war period soviet TV series *17 Moments of the Spring*. Relatively smooth mimicry of many Russian immigrants into the mainstream of urban German life is compared with a seamless and silent work of fake *Shturbannfuehrer* Stierlitz in the heart of the Third Reich’s military machine. Successful “penetration” of today’s sons of Stierlitz in the German society is accomplished by imitating the lifestyles of the German middle class, the way it is depicted by a Russian journalist in Berlin: “...they speak almost perfect German, do not call their relatives in the FSU, do not use Russian even with their children, in brief – like Stierlitz, noiselessly stir sugar in their tea cup and elegantly replace the spoon on a china plate” (Gurova, 2002).

Yet, this observer wryly notes that, despite their strive to pass as natives, successful Russian immigrants may still inadvertently reveal their true origins: “What betrays them is their habit to squint a right eye while sipping tea” or, like in a joke from the popular “Stierlitz series:” “Stierlitz, are you a Jew? – asks Mueller [an SS officer, another central character in the series] – No, I am Russian, answers Stierlitz, removing his Red Army cap (*budionovka*) and tacking away his parachute.” By using this ironic line of cultural references from the cold war epoch familiar to every former Soviet citizen, the author underscores the split identity of contemporary Russian in German society. The iconic images, such as *budionovka*, serve to remind the newcomers about their roots, but also carry an element of parody as they date back to the early Bolshevik years long past. Up until recently, the image of Red Army soldier in *budionovka* from the Soviet poster of the early 1920s was used in commercial ads run by Berlin’s Russian newspapers, for example to sell international calling cards<sup>4</sup>. The author completes her article by a reflexive piece on her own confusing national identity that she describes as a “nightmarish limbo:” “We are ostensibly fine both here and there, like fish in the water, or rather an amphibian. But we all know that Ihtindr [a character in a Soviet film “The Amphibian Man”] was in fact poorly adapted to both land and water, he belonged to no place. This is a good description of us – people of no place, no belonging, falling in between” (Gurova, 2002:19). This reflection attests to the fact that the worlds of Russianness and German-ness are perceived by many immigrants as opposing and incompatible, making it difficult to belong to both of them at the same time or to find an optimal middle ground and combine peacefully both parts of self-identity.

This binary perception of identity as either Russian or foreign (German) draws on a rigid view of nation-states as monolith and immutable, as well as merging of the state and civil society typical of the Soviet propaganda and geopolitical paradigm. This outlook entails the view of “people on the move” (i.e. crossing national borders) as by default problematic and in a way deviant. In soviet mass consciousness, the idea of the state border was both hermetic (*granitsa na zamke*) and sacral – a division between “us” and “them,” between the center (our country) and periphery (the rest of the world, abroad). The school system and state propaganda have created the notion of the “Soviet motherland” as a huge and ideal space encompassing multiple time and climatic zones and populated by idealized “soviet people” of various ethnicity and language. By way of paradox, this self-seclusion came hand in hand with the pride for the global role of the Socialist System, the historic mission of internationalism and bringing justice to other countries and peoples. The popular adage about Russia occupying one-sixth part of all land on the planet (*shestayaya chast’ zemli s nazvanijem kratkim Rus’*) was concomitant to the shared understanding of the sacred nature of its borders and crossing them as an almost sacrilegious act. The external world beyond the border (*zagranitsa*), unfamiliar and hence dangerous, attained the properties of an unattainable and almost unreal domain, as distant from a regular Soviet citizen as the sky or the stars (Guseinov, 2005). In the ideological discourse, this dichotomy came to the fore in demonization of the West and vilification of anyone who expressed interest or established connections with foreigners. It is hardly surprising that emigration to the West during Soviet times was construed as betrayal or even symbolic/social death.

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<sup>4</sup> The same iconic image of the Russian Civil War era is commonly used in the Russian-language press (e.g. humor magazine *Beseder*) and commercials also in Israel – obviously, for the same reasons. See the Russian-German version of this classical poster in the picture attached [Editor’s note].

On the other hand, like everything prohibited, the imaginary “abroad” and everything coming from the damned “West” attained special attraction, especially for the younger generations of Soviet people. In his book about the last Soviet generation, cultural anthropologist Alexei Yurchak (2006) cogently described how members of the educated soviet class in the big cities tried to build their own home-grown model of the imaginary West, carefully collecting records of rock musicians, buying Levi’s jeans on the black market for exorbitant prices, exchanging books smuggled from abroad, etc. This activity in the “parallel world” had to be kept private in a small circle of friends and family, but it was the only way to make living under deteriorating Soviet regime more tolerable (Weil and Genis, 2001).

Soviet émigrés in Europe by way of miracle found themselves in the real West after dreaming for many years about the imaginary West. Moving from Moscow, Minsk or Kiev to Berlin or Munich was perceived by many of them as an exiting and until recently inconceivable opportunity to cross the border into the dream world, to embark on a great adventure of their lives. Many immigrants, especially those who left FSU during the last years of the regime (including the above-mentioned V. Kaminer) underscored the “accidental” and “magic” nature of their waking up in Berlin one morning, describing emigration as a personal miracle. The subsequent waves of post-soviet migrants increasingly took their move as “planned” and “routine,” underscored pragmatic motives for emigration and did not voice nostalgic or tragic themes of losing spiritual anchor (the way earlier intellectual exiles such as Andrei Siniavsky or Joseph Brodsky did).

### **One-sixth of the Earth plus Germany**

The observers of contemporary ethnic diasporas have asserted that emigration and resettlement do not necessarily entail burning all bridges to the old country. Transnational migrants of today are driven by pragmatic cosmopolitanism rather than firm ideological commitments and can enjoy the best of both worlds – the sending and the receiving country (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992). Definitions of space, nationality and identity are becoming dynamic, liquid and increasingly flexible. The defined vision of national borders and fixed ethno-national identity is becoming a thing of the past also for Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany, ready to rip the fruits of transnational living. The broadening boundaries of livable world now encompass former Soviet countries, Europe, America and the “global village” as a whole, putting behind the mythology of chosen nations and the challenge of border-crossing (which becomes a routine act). Yet, the oppositional dyads such as “Europe-Russia,” “East-West” and more local ones such as “Berlin-Karaganda” [a city in Kazakhstan from which many *Aussiedler* came] are still relevant on a daily level and in a media discourse. In the following section, I will examine how these metaphors of space and borders come to the fore as identity markers in the construction of the opposition between “former homeland” and “current home” in the mirror of the Russian-language press in Germany.

Since the mid-1990s, over 70 Russian-language newspapers have emerged across Europe, paralleled by the increasing number of Internet sites and portals catering for the Russian-speaking diaspora. The phenomenon of Russian press abroad is certainly not new, as émigré newspapers existed in Europe ever since the White Emigration, but recently its scope, readership and political orientations have all changed. The market of the Russian press in Europe has diversified to include both familiar print media from Russia itself (including such blockbusters as *Argumenty i Fakty*,



*Komsomolka*, *Commersant*, often with special supplements targeting “Russians” in Germany) and the newspapers established by the immigrant communities for their internal use. Contemporary technical means of publishing allow producing Russian-based information networks at a low cost in terms of capital and labor. The observers pointed to a booming media market targeting Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany and other European countries (UK, France, Czech Republic) and playing a central role in creating and sustaining transnational identity drawing on dense ties with the former homeland.

Thus, today we are facing not the émigré press of the Cold War time marked by isolationist attitude and providing a stage for political opposition to the Soviet regime, but a completely new phenomenon. Low-circulation, almost *samizdat* émigré press during the Soviet era focused on the alternative coverage of political events in the USSR, disseminating dissidence there and not really interested in the realities of the countries they were physically located in (Eichwede, 2000). Today Russian-speaking immigrant buys the newspaper in order to get plugged in the global news stream that merges the news and commentaries from the FSU, the new country of residence and any number of other locales in the world, all of them covered from a standpoint of a local (German) citizen. Information coverage tries to keep neutral in terms of political sympathies and not to get involved too much with any one country, keeping a birds’ eye perspective beyond nations and borders.

### ***Russkii Berlin***

This cosmopolitan approach is very clear when we examine the permanent columns of the main Russian newspapers in Germany. Whether the newspaper is called *Russkii Berlin* (“Russian Berlin”), *Europe-Express* or *Evreiskaya Gazeta* (“The Jewish Newspaper”), its contents are organized by the transnational principle: the geopolitical map of news and events is not limited to the FSU and/or Germany, but also covers pivotal events in global politics, economic news and the local scene (e.g. Berlin). *Russkii Berlin*, published since 1996, operates according to this principle of balanced coverage of all the four components of the news space: former Soviet, German national, municipal, and global. Typically, the 1<sup>st</sup> page is given to the coverage of German national news and is titled *Nasha Strana* (“Our Country”), the following page is titled *1/6 chast sushi ili tam, gde byl Sovetskiy Soyuz* (*1/6 of the Earth or the Former Soviet Space*), and the last section is called *Berlin, Smotritel’ Goroda* (“Berlin, Municipal Watch”). At the same time, the headlines of *Russkii Berlin* and other immigrant papers reflect familiar cultural references and peculiar in-group humor, exemplified by the heading *Veзде gde možhno zhit, možhno zhit khorosho* (“Everywhere where one can live, one can live well”).

The international news coverage in Russian immigrant press is relatively smaller than in the German national press, but its emphasis is more neutral and cosmopolitan. As opposed to the Russian émigré press in Berlin of earlier times, the themes of “living on the island,” nostalgic feelings for the lost homeland and alienation from both sending and host societies are no longer present in contemporary immigrant media discourse. By way of paradox, it is even more global in its approach than the mainstream German press. German newspapers typically report on global political and economic developments through the prism of German interests and also arrange the news based on the view of Germany as the center and the rest of the world as periphery.

The most popular publications in Russian are the weeklies catering for the broadly defined Russian readership, regardless of specific ethnic or regional markers of their identity. One of the central columns of *Russkii Berlin-Russkaya Germania* (the weekly version) is titled *Nashe Otechestvo – Russkii Yazyk* (“Our homeland is the Russian Language” – a quote from Josef Brodsky). Thus the common homeland is presented not as republic, city or religion but rather as its universal means of communication and carrier of common cultural references – the Russian language. This reflects the role of Russian as the main common ground between various ethno-confessional groups of immigrants in the everyday discourse and in community building. The cosmopolitan definition of Russianness that is beyond ethnicity is highly relevant in the new geopolitical reality where the notions of “here” and “there,” “home” and “abroad” constantly trade places and turn into one another. At the same time all Russian-speaking communities share a value of keeping ties with the former places of origin, whether they are in Moscow, Kazakhstan or Baltic countries. They see no problem in double loyalty and involvement with both countries (many also keep double citizenship). Furthermore, the old internal oppositions of “us” as coming from the “East” (e.g. Central Asia and the Caucasus) and “them” from the West (Slavic and Baltic parts of the USSR) are becoming murky and irrelevant within a newly moulded former Soviet identity. If anything, the new juxtaposition is between “them,” German burghers and “us,” Russians or former Soviets.

## **Conclusion**

We have seen that, while taking root in Germany, most former Soviet immigrants do not intend to sever their social and cultural ties with the places of origin. In the new context, they tend to develop a supra-ethnic collective identity as “Russians,” reflecting their own self-image and the way they are seen by the mainstream society. Immigration and resettlement are no longer seen as dramatic and one-way event but rather as pragmatic lifestyle choice that entails enjoying the best of both worlds, old and new. All these attitudes are reflected in the new wave of Russian immigrant publications that no longer use traditional geopolitical markers of “home” and “abroad” and do not trade nostalgic narratives, but rather express transnational interests and orientations of both their producers and readers. Unfortunately, this contemporary and positive self-image reflected in the immigrant press does not always coincide with the images and stereotypes of Russians (men and lately also women) in the mirror of the national German media. The German public does not welcome double loyalties of recent migrants and describes them as too “Russian,” rather than “German” or “Jewish” – identities that had been expected from them at the outset of this migration wave. It can be argued that German hosts are more prone to the usage of fixed ethno-confessional labels than are former Soviet immigrants and are not yet ready to embrace cosmopolitan identities and interests of the newcomers.

*Edited translation from Russian by L. Remennick*

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