THE ADJUSTMENT OF SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE ALBANY (N.Y.) AREA

A RESEARCH REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1974, Albany like other communities in the United States has received Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. The Jewish Family Services (J.F.S.) has worked to help these new Americans integrate themselves in the new society in which they found themselves. This wave of immigration has had an ebb and flow, reaching a peak in the years 1978-80. It has now slowed down and resettlement programs in Albany and throughout the United States are being phased out.

This survey was undertaken to evaluate what has been done by the community and the immigrants themselves since 1974 so as to provide those who will continue resettlement work a record of what has gone before them and with some suggestions for future directions.

The report consists of three sections. The first part provides social and demographic information on the immigrants who have come to Albany since 1974. The second part reports the findings of a survey on the reactions of immigrants to different aspects of resettlement. The final section deals with the implications of the foregoing for courses of action available to the local Jewish community.

I. THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN ALBANY.

Most non-immigrants tend to speak of the new immigrants in a collective mode. We speak about "Soviet Jews", or "the Russians" and this manner of speaking makes us believe that they are a uniform group. It is easy to pass over into viewing the characteristics of one "Russian" as if he or she is typical. Those who have worked closely with this group of immigrants sometimes go from this manner of overgeneralizing to a mode of "nominalism". One begins to see the differences. There may still be stereotypes of Jews from Moscow or Leningrad or Kiev or Minsk. One may begin to think about "intelligensia" or just ordinary skilled workers without much education. But one sees the internal conflicts. For example, immigrants will indicate that they have little to do with other new immigrants. At the same time, professionals have the impression that there is a network of communication among the New Americans.

Like the six blind men in the Indian parable who sought to understand the essence of the elephant by touching different parts of his body, all of these impressions have an element of truth. Although many of the new immigrants come from parts of the Soviet Union other than Great Russia (the largest number are from the Ukraine), they do speak Russian as a language. The term "Soviet" always has a political connotation and euphemisms like "new Americans" apply to other immigrants as well. For better or worse, we are stuck with the labels at hand.

Like many immigrants, these Russian Jews have come from several different places in the USSR. They had differing degrees of education and high or low social status there. What is not as apparent is the fact that some were related to each other in the Soviet Union and/or had acquaintanceship there prior to emigration. Some of the immigration to a particular place was planned previously; some agencies like HIAS encouraged "family immigration". Obviously it was generally desirable for elderly people to be united with their children of working age.

Usually we think of the process of resettlement, we think in terms of a family arriving at Albany Airport and being resettled by the JFS. They will find jobs here and become participants in the Albany Jewish community. Many immigrants who were sponsored by the JFS have left, while immigrants sponsored by other agencies elsewhere have moved into the community. While the bulk of this study will be concerned with those sponsored by the local community and resettled here, there is a fairly large number of both those who have left and those who have moved in. In fact, we also have cases of individuals who moved into Albany to take a job. They have been followed by relatives who remain here, when the original settlers have moved elsewhere.

The following table will summarize the number of Russian immigrants who have come into the area, of whom the Jewish Family Service has a record, whether or not sponsored by it.

RUSSIAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS
TO/FROM ALBANY 1973-1982 (INDIVIDUALS)*

Still in Area	Left	Died	Total
114	96	2	212

*Source: JFS Files plus other individuals known to resettlement personnel.

RUSSIAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN ALBANY - 1982
(BY AGE)

Under 5	5-9	9-13	13-18	Total (children)	18-59	60+	Total
2	7	7	9	27*	73	14	114

*We have record of 2 children ages unknown.

The aggregate of Russians here included several family clusters from Kiev, Odessa and Moscow. Families of immigrants have also begun the process of regrouping. For instance, one family met another family in Rome, while preparing to come to the U.S. Family A moved to Albany while Family B was in New York City. After a year or so, Family B became dissatisfied with conditions in New York and resettled in Albany. One of the members of Family B actually replaced someone from Family A in a certain job. The two children of immigrants from different locales in the Soviet Union who met in Albany

and have recently gotten married. An expression of the old and new friendship circles formed have been such events as New Years Eve parties. There were several events organized by the Jewish Community Center, especially in 1979 and 1980, to help the Russians organize themselves, but some spontaneous coalescence is taking place now.

We have to see the new immigrant aggregate in Albany in terms of an open system. Immigrants come into the area and may or may not stay. Some are sponsored by the Jewish community, while others have come in and asked for services on their own. They may be linked to each other through kin ties, as in the case of the family clusters, or on the basis of former acquaintanceship in the Soviet Union. They have formed new friendships in Vienna, Rome, and Albany and have friends, relatives and acquaintances elsewhere in the United States, especially in New York City. They have acquired new friends through their volunteers, through the neighborhood in which they live, the schools to which they send their children. Some also have ties with the members of the Slavic languages and other departments of the State University as well as to the Jewish community.

The aggregate is small, consisting of about 100 people, fluid, and fairly new. The first immigrants sponsored by the agency arrived in 1974 and the high point was 1979/80. It includes many old and retired people. For all of these reasons, it is not an entity which could be termed an ethnic community and it may never set up the institutions (like a synagogue or community center) which would identify it as such. Still the coming of Soviet Jewry has added a new element to the mix of American Jewry as a whole and has mobilized the energies of the American Jewish community.

II. SURVEY OF NEW AMERICAN REACTIONS TO RESETTLEMENT.

In order to find out more about how Russian immigrants have felt about the problems of resettlement, we conducted a survey. We used an open-ended interview schedule to do this. We marked out several areas which were central to the process of immigration:

a) Reasons for emigration;
b) Reactions, including reactions to HIAS in Vienna and Rome, but particularly the JFS in Albany;
c) Job-finding;
d) Apartment and home finding;
e) School and problems of children in general;
f) Health and medicine;
g) Feelings about Jewishness and Judaism.

The questions which were listed in the interview schedule were suggestions for the interviewer and could be reformulated in order to fit the conversation. In each section, many questions took the form: what did you like best about y; what did you like least about y? Such a question could be asked about the Jewish Family Services, public schools in Albany, or American medicine. It is simple but open-ended. The latter, what did you like least, allows the interviewee the freedom to express negative, as well as positive, feelings.

The interviews were conducted between February and September of 1981, based on a list of 40 J.F.S. sponsored families in Albany as of January 1981. We interviewed adults from 21 of these households, sometimes interviewing couples and their children, sometimes only one member of the household. Fourteen of the interviews were conducted in English by Walter Zenner, while the remainder were conducted in Russian by Debra Hiller. Several of those interviewed subsequently moved out of the area. Some bias crept into the interviews, because of the differences between the interviewers. Zenner as middle-aged male, who while having been a volunteer, was not officially with the agency produced one set of reactions; while Hiller, as the official Resettlement Coordinator, speaking Russian, and being a younger female produced another set. Most interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees, while some were conducted at the J.F.S. offices. Despite these differences, the protocols of the interviews as summarized here provide us with a picture of what Russian immigrants wish to communicate to American Jews. In reporting our data, we will disguise individuals by changing personal attributes and background data so as to protect their anonymity.

Findings:

A. Reasons for emigration

Most of the immigrants who have come to Albany come from the pre-1940 Soviet Union (i.e. not the Baltic provinces or other areas annexed from the USSR's neighbors). They come mainly from the Ukraine, White Russia and Great Russia. Occupationally in the Soviet Union, they were skilled laborers or had white collar jobs, and there were a few professionals (by American definitions) among them. Since large parts of White Russia and the Ukraine were occupied by the Germans during the Second World War, many of the immigrants who came here survived either underground or were evacuated to Eastern parts of the Soviet Union and only returned home later. Several men of the older generation are veterans of the war and had veterans' privileges in the USSR.

We inquired as to the motivation for immigration. Out of the people from 21 households who were interviewed, all except three stressed discrimination against Jews and other forms of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic incidents involving children were reported as occurring in school or even in hospitals.

MOTIVATION FOR EMIGRATION:

Discrimination, anti-Semitism	18
No mention of discrimination	3
	21

Nine respondents stressed economic improvement, often this was combined with desire for betterment for children sometimes contrary to good conditions for parents. For instance, a woman said that when her son, then about 5, was in a hospital, the other children in the ward threw food on the floor and said, "eat Jew, like a dog."

On-the-job discrimination was also reported. When one applied for a job it might be denied because of one's Jewish nationality. Once one had a job, there was less of a problem of retaining it than of receiving a promotion. One couple in responding to the question regarding instances of discrimination, replied thus:

> Yes, when they ask Sasha (their son) what he is, he would say Russian. His surname is Russian. To my brother-in-law who looks like Jewish, they say "Move, you are Jewish." Z: Did you have any problems? Mikhail: Everybody who is Jewish feel (hostility). When he (the Russian Gentile) has a drink, he says things."
>
> Polina (his wife): Where I worked, there are 600 people, and 5 or 6 Jews working. Others come for work--they say no. They need them (the Jews) but say no... There (in USSR) I was secretary in restaurant, but I can't be director. I'm Jewish, can't be director. They need me, because directors change every two or three years..."

Discrimination against Jews was not a constant. Some Jews attained fairly high positions in earlier years and sometimes were in privileged jobs, like the parent of one immigrant who had been an engineer in another Communist country for several years. In recent time, however, the sense has grown that even the children of the ones who had attained higher positions would be closed out of universities and high-ranking jobs. Jews did, however, have some defenses against discrimination. In cities where there were large numbers of Jews, Jews might aid other Jews.

One immigrant stated the problem of discrimination in this way:

> I don't recall (any) really bad incidents. A couple of fights, especially in the army. (He had been a machinist.) A lot of Jews were working in trade. One got a job through someone who knew you. You keep a job forever, if no drinking ok. Jews help each other first.

The forms of discrimination which were perceived by the Jews were social, political and economic, especially threatening the younger generation. Discrimination was not against Judaism as a religion per se, since Soviet policy was against all religions. Several respondents affirmed this, when speaking about discrimination against those who attended synagogue. Since as we shall see most of the immigrants are only weakly interested in religion, this was taken for granted by these former Soviet citizens.

Was assimilation an alternative? Most who were asked this indicated that it was not. Several said that "Jewishness" was written on their faces. While one's name might not indicate Jewish identity, one's physiognomy and one's identity card did. While Ukrainians, let us say, in Siberia might assimilate into the Great Russian population, this was impossible for Jews. In addition, Jews and other non-Slavs, were considered inferior. While intermarriage might make some "passing" into the dominant Slavic nationality possible, it was a long-range prospect not always attainable.

Anti-Semitic sentiment and policy has evidently had ups and downs. There was a big scare during Stalin's last years in the late 1940's and early 1950's, when Yiddish writers were purged and Jewish physicians were accused poisoning high Soviet officials. It was then believed that Jews might be deported en masse to Siberia. But that abated. After the beginning of the emigration of Jews in the last 15 years, the government has increasingly viewed Jews as unreliable and has closed off university places and high positions to Jews. This has fueled popular anti-Semitism, so that many people will say to Jews that they should get out and emigrate.

If anti-Semitism was the immediate cause, other aspects played a role, too. Several, especially younger respondents, stated that they felt stifled by the Soviet system and wanted some advanture outside. One said he had always dreamed about America. It is noteworthy that none of these people had really wanted to go to Israel, although one man considered Israel as a possibility. One woman stated that if immigration to Israel has been the only alternative, she would not have emigrated. Another couple had debated between America and Australia. One respondent decided to emigrate after the low standard of living in the Soviet Union became graphic for him when he took a vacation in Poland and Czechoslovakia, both socialist countries but with significantly more affluence than the USSR.

B. Process of emigration

In reaching a decision about emigration, married couples had to reach a momentous decision involving their future. We asked which spouse had taken the initiative. In some cases, one had to convince the other, while in other cases concensus had been reached even before one or the other had taken the initiative. In the case of elderly couples, the decision to emigrate had really been taken by their children who emigrated at an earlier time. If they did not emigrate, they might be separated permanantly.

INITIATIVE FOR EMIGRATION

Husband	7
Wife	4
Both	2
Not clear*	7
Single individual	1
	21

*Includes several elderly couples whose children came first.

Respondents indicated that they had some information about where they wanted to go, even before they left the Soviet Union. Previous emigres in Israel wrote to relatives back home about conditions. The Voice of America provided information, as did local libraries in the USSR. One man had decided to move to the Capital District, because he had done research on the climate and he wanted one which resembled that of Moscow. Another wanted to go somewhere where there were jobs in the electronics field. In general, however, most did not choose the area of the U.S., but it was chosen for them.

After applying for exit visas, potential emigres were considered excluded from Soviet society. They lost their jobs and were forced to live off loans, friends, and the like. We all are familiar with the instances of "refuseniks" who have lived in a social and legal limbo in the Soviet Union for years. Most of our respondents were not in that position, but one had to wait for 8 months and another was denied a visa for over a year. Others, especially those emigrating in 1973-74 and in 1978-79, were often speeded along so that the government could get 'rid of more Jews'. When one got a visa, one had to leave immediately. In one case, a family had to leave even though one child had a high fever.

Once the emigres left the Soviet Union, they went to Vienna and then on to Rome. Most reported having no problems in either place. One however had some rather unpleasant experiences in both Vienna and Rome. Living conditions in both places were crowded. In Vienna, she had trouble finding the HIAS office and could not make herself understood, while in Rome they lived in a hotel where there were no other Russians, although they were helped by some of their Italian neighbors.

Most, however, do not report any major problems in Vienna or Rome, even with Israelis trying to persuade them to go to Israel. One woman who had had a relatively long waiting period before leaving the USSR reported viewing her time in Rome as a kind of vacation. An elderly couple remembered their voyage out of Russia to the U.S. as a joyous experience. One couple did have a problem in shipping some goods which should have gone to California, ending up in Albany.

C. Reception in Albany

The policy of the Jewish community in Albany has undergone change over the years. According to the earlier immigrants interviewed, the director of the J.F.S. in the early 1970's was reluctant to sponsor Soviet Jewish immigrants. One woman took the initiative in asking the Board to sponsor some immigrants and this resulted in a change in policy, although the director was still hesitant. The situation changed radically during the period of the large influx (1979-80), when the J.F.S. hired a Resettlement Coordinator and worked with a large coterie of volunteers. At one point, a job coordinator was on the J.F.S. staff and the various other agencies of the Jewish Community (the Center, the Federation, the Hebrew Academy, etc) coordinated resettlement policy. A federal Block Grant helped support these efforts. Since the Soviet Union closed its gates to emigration in 1980, the influx has become small and such efforts are being wound down. The immigrants have come to Albany out of a variety of reasons. Some families, after having done research, deliberately chose the Capital District. Others came because sponsorship was obtained for them here, although they personally might have preferred California or New York. Many came because other relatives had preceded them. There is the case of a woman who left the Soviet Union prior to 1960 because her husband was a Polish Jew who had been expatriated to Poland during the 1950's. Her son came to Albany and has been a major sponsor of immigrants related to his mother. In other cases, more recent immigrants were the sponsors of their own relations.

For the most part, the initial reception of the new immigrants is remembered favorably and there is gratitude by most immigrants for this initial contact. They remember being met at the airport by the Coordinator with flowers, and going to an apartment which is fully furnished. The several months of assistance provided by the agency is taken into account. As the tables indicate, nearly half of the immigrants had only good things to say in the interviews about the Jewish Family Service. Several of the others arrived during a period prior to the establishment of a New American program and their negative reactions reflect that. Some of these, incidentally, are now volunteers in their own right and recognize the problems faced both by the agency and by the New Americans.

While most remember the initial reception favorably, there are exceptions. First of all, the Jewish Family Services has altered its policies over the years. From an initial lack of recognition that it had a major role to play towards active resettlement efforts around 1979-80, the J.F.S. has changed. The early immigrants remember volunteers favorably but often had some serious disagreements with the agency over apartments, jobs, etc. One described help in that period as "formal help" but implied that little effort was made beyond that.

More recent immigrants also have qualified their praise. It should be remembered that in our questions, we sought honest evaluations and not panegyrics. So we asked them what did you like best about J.F.S.? and what did you like least? This was done deliberately in order to get honest evaluations. In any relationship, no matter how good, there are strains and stresses. That this should occur in the difficult relationship between a resettlement agency and immigrants in understandable. The immigrants are undergoing a variety of shocks at once. Having passed the trauma of leaving the Soviet Union and having been stripped of Soviet citizenship, cut off from the places of their nativity, they are thrown into dependency on a foreign agency. Culture shock is added to the grief and mourning which parting from one's home entails. A reverse shock is felt by the Americans who must deal with the new immigrants. In addition, the first group of agency officials and workers had not developed techniques to deal with the special problems of former Soviet citizens. One knowledgable observer once suggested that the Soviet Jews are the largest group of Soviet citizens born and raised under Communism to leave the Soviet Union.

The dissatisfaction remembered, however, was concentrated into a number of different areas, especially job-related, while two had complaints related to the first apartment into which they were placed. These will be dealt with below.

REACTIONS TO JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES ASSISTANCE

Generally positive	9
Strongly negative	12
1) Director	2
2) job-related	7
3) apartment-related	2
4) only formal help	1
N/A	1
TOTAL	21

The volunteers have been part of the resettlement effort from the start. In the beginning individuals began to help Russian immigrants in the community on their own. By 1978-79, the J.F.S. had regular meetings with volunteers. Some volunteers started initially working in an unofficial capacity and only later became involved in a more formal way. During the high point of resettlement activity (1979-80), most immigrant families were assigned volunteers. The activity and helpfulness of volunteers has varied from those who have actively gone out of their way to assist the immigrants in their adjustment and have become fast friends with them to those who did little for those to whom they were assigned. Some also had no volunteers directly assigned to them. This category of replies is one of perception. One woman who complained of not having had a volunteer actually got her job through the good offices of someone who was a volunteer and had dedicated himself towards helping individuals get jobs. Others who had no assigned volunteers were helped by individuals who were volunteers.

Of the twelve respondents who had had volunteers, eight had generally positive reactions. They remembered volunteers driving them to the doctor and dentist, helping with jobs, and various "acculturation" tasks. This includes both introductions to American and Jewish culture. Several reported going to the synagogue with their volunteers; another couple goes to their volunteer family's Seder, even after several years of being "independent". In such cases, the two families have maintained their friendship. Most of the negative impressions were that the volunteers simply did nothing for them. In one instance, the immigrant perceived that the volunteer was trying to exploit his plight by having free childcare from his wife. Four of our respondents are now volunteers themselves and have been invaluable in their advice and insight.

VOLUNTEERS:

Positive	8
Negative	4
No volunteer	4
N/A	5
	21

Competency in English is, of course, needed by most immigrants. Some had studied English in the USSR and needed little instruction here, while others find learning a new language as an adult extremely difficult. The main places where new immigrants were first sent to learn English were the Adult Learning Center (ALC) and the Jewish Community Center (JCC), which had a woman trained to teach English as a second language. There were many complaints about the level of instruction in both settings. Some immigrants have attended classes at Albany High School, the State University (SUNYA) and the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). Others have learned on the job. Individual differences play an important role in success in gaining competency in English.

English classes*

English in USSR	4
JCC - positive	1
negative	5
ALC - positive	7
negative	6
Albany H.S. - positive	2
negative	1
SUNYA (mixed reactions)	3
EOC	2

Total is more than 21 because some took classes in several places

D. Finding a job

A central concern for the immigrants and for the Jewish Family Services has been finding jobs for the immigrants. The reasons for this are manifold and, to some extent, obvious. With jobs, immigrants can become self-supporting. In addition, in both the Soviet Union and the United States, social status is defined as much by one's occupation as by any other single criterion. While these two aspects of a job can reinforce the necessity for finding one as quickly as possible, they can also contradict each other. For instance, the agency may have a position available for Mr. X which fits his qualifications, especially at this stage of his competency in English and American ways of doing business. Mr. X, however, would like either a position comparable to what he left behind in the Soviet Union or get a job which he sees as more prestigeful and befitting someone claiming the title of "engineer". He also perceives entry into the job market as becoming fixed in a certain position within a kind of bureaucracy, rather than as a stepping stone into a fluid market situation.

This kind of contradiction between the availability of certain jobs and the status aspirations of some immigrants has been a factor in some conflicts which have occurred between the agency and these immigrants. It also is clear that the failure to find a suitable job or dissatisfaction with jobs has been an important motivation for leaving Albany. Albany is not the best job market for many of the immigrants and it is only when the market fits the immigrants properly that adjustment is likely.

Of those who moved, from information which we have available, it appears that many went to New York City and have found work in establishments owned or oriented to the Russian-speaking community there. Often this offered a solution for those whose competency in English was slow in coming and provided them with opportunities to get to work sooner. Others who moved in and out were professionals with marketable skills.

The way in which the immigrants find jobs is an important indicator of how they begin to integrate into the Jewish and general American settings. The job history of one immigrant may illustrate the interplay of various factors.

> Vladimir Sverdlovsky had graduated from a trade institute in the Soviet Union. He had worked in a large store. When he came he said that he was willing to take any job, having had both mechanical and business experience. His volunteer went with him to be interviewed as a machinist. He was hired. About four months later, there was a slowdown and as the last one hired, he was laid off. He went to the Employment Office and answered several ads. The first job he applied for, he got. He is a machinist and now he is a senior foreman. As far as he knows, he is the only Jew among the 100 to 200 employees in the company.

Other respondents received their first jobs through either volunteers or the J.F.S. One man who had been a cook in the Soviet Union first was placed as a cleaner in a restaurant. He felt that this job was not his occupation and felt dissatisfied with it. He took another job more in keeping with his aspirations, which he got through an American friend. On this job, he acquired the skills necessary to work as a chef in America. Several men and women have gotten jobs with the State government in technical spheres. Some were hired through the intervention of volunteers. One had started doing research in the USSR on where he could get jobs in his field. Once he got to Albany he tried to make contact with various individuals. He succeeded by getting contact with an academic researcher who, in turn, had contacts with the state.

Elizabeth Ginsberg found work on her own. She felt that the J.F.S. gave her little help in finding a job. This is how she expressed it:

> Nobody help us find a job. They always say we have no opening. I found my job in October 1979. It was a waitress in a company cafeteria. I looked for jobs in places I could reach by bus...People at job services elsewhere would say to me, after I fill out application, we'll call you. So I wait by phone; I'm afraid to go out. I sit near phone. They never call me. Most jobs in USSR are specific. Here they want professionals. Very lazy here. People who come from Russia work very hard. Nobody wants to talk to Russians. I fill out 20 to 30 applications. Nobody calls me. I sit and wait and cry. Finally I go and walk to business district. I see building restaurant and talk to cook. I ask if he needs someone. He says, ok. If you want the job, call back. As soon as I get home, I call back...

Personal initiative includes going door to door or keeping one's eyes open for Help Wanted ads and signs. One woman answered such an advertisement which she saw in a fast-food restaurant in a shopping center and came with the J.F.S. job coordinator.

JOBS

Currently (at time of interview) Total Adults (in interviewed homes): 41

Unemployed	6
Retired	5
Working	27
Self-employed	3
	41

Unemployed	
Men	1
Women	5
Report of more than one job since arrival	10

It should be noted that out of 41 respondents and spouses, thirty are working, five are retired, and only six are unemployed. This picture is deceiving, for the job situation of many is still fluid. Most men and women have held more than one job. One has had as many as six jobs in three years. Some are holding temporary jobs which do not have long term prospects, like those who have been employed under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) which is being phased out. At least one woman who was unemployed had worked in a small factory which closed, as a result of a labor dispute. From both the interviews and our responses, it is apparent that women have a harder time obtaining employment than men, although this is not always the case. Personality factors, education, facility with the English language, and having a particularly desirable skill all play factors in this equation. It should, however, be considered if J.F.S. does not favor finding jobs for the husband. Those women who were not working (or who had had long periods of unemployment) reported feeling as depressed as men who were in that position.

In addition to those who are employed, there are also several self-employed Russians in the community, some of whom were interviewed. The self-employed have generally made use of skills which they had acquired in the Soviet Union and which were transferable, such as teaching gymnastics, shoe repair and housepainting. Others are in the process of gaining similar abilities to go into business for themselves, although whether they do so remains to be seen.

In examining the problem of how people get jobs, we wanted to look into the role of the Jewish community at large in absorbing immigrants. From the immigrants whom we interviewed 11 had had Jewish employers in their first jobs, although the remainder include respondents who did not have or did not provide information on the ethnicity of their first employers. Some others had Jewish employers in subsequent positions.

Through whom did respondent get job?

First job only	
Agency	13
Volunteer Jew	2
Other immigrant (Russian & E. European)	2
Non-Jewish	0
Impersonal	7
Through Friends (non-volunteer)	1
N/A	16
	41

Employer -Jewish/Non-Jewish (first job)	
Employer Jewish	11
Employer Non-Jewish	16
N/A	14

Four of these eleven worked directly for Jewish communal agencies, like the community center or the old age home. Included here also are individuals who worked for large concerns which have Jewish ownership, but where the person in charge of hiring may or may not be Jewish. Not included here are individuals who work for the state or for an academic institution, where the direct supervisor may be a Jew.

The fact that there do not appear to be more individuals who received their first employment in Jewish concerns reflects certain attributes of the Albany Jewish community. One fact is that many Jews in Albany, like many of their fellow citizens, are state employees rather than proprietors of private firms which hire large numbers. Another is that even many who are employed in the private sector are dependent on government oriented business and are professionals, such as lawyers and accountants. This reduces the ability of the Jewish community to hire new comers, resulting in disillusionment among many immigrants. One man, when asked about the role of Jews in helping find jobs, said that he had been very disappointed. He had spoken to a "multimillionaire" about a job for his wife, when the latter had asked him how things were going. The latter said it was no problem, but after that this wealthy man avoided him. He said that he was surprised that Jews did not help fellow Jews in getting jobs. His wife's first job was found through ads, although later she did get help from a Jewish bookkeeper in a store. It should be stressed that the Jewish community does provide important resources for obtaining jobs and connections, but it has its own constraints and it is not the only source of contacts.

E. Apartments and Housing

APARTMENT

Still in first apartment	6
Not in first apartment	11
No information	4
	21

Apartment dwellers and renters	15
Homeowners	6
	21

At one time in Livingston Village	6
Never in Livingston Village	11
No information	4
	21

As the tables indicate, 6 of the families interviewed were still in their first apartment, while eleven have moved. In general, those still in their first apartments are more recent arrivals, especially those who have had fairly rocky roads in adjustment. The homeowners are almost all old timers who are working. Since the interviews, one family which had been living in an apartment has purchased a home.

In general, the policy of renting an apartment and moving the family into a fully furnished apartment on arrival has been successful. The immigrants appreciate it and it removes one problem from the resettlement process. There has, however, been a major problem of strategy. Should the immigrants be found apartments, which are scarce, in the most accessible portion of Albany--namely the area between Central and New Scotland Avenues, or should we use an apartment complex in northeast Albany which offers standard low-cost housing, i.e. Livingston Village?

Livingston Village has certain advantages as well as serious disadvantages. It is a single apartment complex which simplifies the problem of dealing with landlords. It is reasonably well-kept. Having a succession of Russians means that if one moves out, another can be moved in. It thus simplifies the problem of "breaking a lease". Having Russian families together in a single apartment complex makes some unified delivery of services possible. In 1981, for instance, a group of immigrants in that complex started their own English class. Some have also suggested that it looks like the kind of apartment complex which Soviet urbanites are accustomed to.

Still the disadvantages are great. One woman who has worked as a volunteer stated why she felt Livingston Village was bad:

There are few buses. It is isolated and relatively expensive. Also the presence of the Black community.

The location of Livingston Village does make it more isolated. There is tension between the Blacks and new immigrants who have been settled in the various housing projects of northeastern Albany, including both Russians and Vietnamese. The tension is in part a reflection of the resentment which Blacks may feel towards new immigrants who appear to get services which are denied to them. In part, it is due to the ethnocentrism and prejudice of both the immigrants and the local population. Russians have heard about the status of Blacks in America, as well as racial violence. Racist anti-Black sentiment is also present in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, some families have remained in Livingston Village for several years and when several individuals moved, they moved to other housing developments in the same part of Albany.

The problem of the triangle between landlord, immigrant-tenant, and agency is not a simple one. A few years ago, when an immigrant family had complained about needing certain repairs which were not made. The situation became so bad that the family had to be moved out of their apartment and the lease was broken. There was also an example of a family feeling that a social worker was pressing them to change apartments, so that the family would assume the lease of another immigrant who was leaving the area.

The proximity of other immigrants also may be perceived as a disadvantage, as stated by Vera Feterman:

> Vera made a point of saying she did not believe that the Russians should all be resettled in one place. She felt that it was very gossipy. A lot of dirt passed around. They would compare everything: sofas, chairs, tables. They were very jealous of each other. When the baggage was delivered and opened on the street to be carried into the homes, everyone examined what everyone else was receiving. She said that it was a very bad experience there. She was very happy to move. Their new apartment was beautiful. There were no gossips or jealousy to deal with. She felt it was a great honor to move and to be able to afford such an apartment. The people were friendly. The apartment was bigger..."

As noted above, several of the immigrants have followed the American trend towards home ownership and suburban residence, albeit at a time when this has become increasingly difficult. One immigrant described how he came to buy his home:

> Saw it (this house) was for sale. Open house. Our acquaintance, Mrs. N (a volunteer) came and told us where to meet and took us to open house. We came, we saw, maybe you will buy. Asked my wife. We can try. $1,000. Informed real estate people, we intend to buy this house. Then for two months, the bank decide to act... Each week we ask bank and they searching and searching and the bank gave permission for us. And we borrow...and we pay mortgage...

The Yurovitches bought a house, partly because a colleague had explained to them the advantages of home ownership, since rent increases yearly. When a friend of an acquaintance moved to Florida, they bought this house in a suburban area. The Polotskys moved to the suburbs, because of the schools, while the Lvovskys moved to be nearer to the location of the husband's work. There are now Albany sponsored immigrants living in Schenectady and Saratoga counties and those sponsored by agencies in the neighboring counties who have moved into Albany county.

F. Children and Schools

We interviewed 16 families with dependent children, including those with college age dependents.

SCHOOL:

Have children	
families with children	16
no children	5
	21
Present enrollment of children	
HACD	4
Albany PS	8
Suburban	4
Pre-school	3
College (SUNYA, Community College, private)	5
	24

Most parents did not make many comments about their children's adjustment or simply dismissed these questions. In fact, the question of the children's adjustment was answered by "they adjusted well." In later family interviews which included children of high school age, the children were asked to respond as well. Some reported adjustment problems. One mother described fights which her children had in the apartment building where they had been living. They did not want her daughter to play in the street, because some neighbors' children had taken some toys from her. It was a difficult time for this five-year-old girl and she could not communicate with the other children. For several months she cried a lot. Another child had difficulty in starting school in the States, because his mother was not able to send him to school in Russia for over a year, on account of their "limbo" status. Another couple reported the following:

> Their daughter was 11 when they arrived. They knew no English and at the Public School where she first went, they didn't help at all. It was a good school with a strict principal. For the whole year, though, she didn't open her mouth. She was put into the 5th grade. The teachers said she was smart, but they don't know how the teachers knew since she never opened her mouth. Over the summer she went to a day camp and the director did a terrific job. His personal effort brought her through.

Later this girl went to other schools.

> A high school boy who arrived about two years ago said that when he first went to high school he had no friends. He missed his friends in Russia. He knew only 30-50 words of English when he started. On the other hand, another boy of about the same age said that he loved school here. He already knew some English from Russia.

The parents of very young pre-school children reported no problems in adjustment. In one case, the mother of a pre-school child started her son a bit early in kindergarten because of a need for child care.

The general reaction of parents to the American schools is that they are much easier than Russian schools and many of the children feel the same. Elizabeta Ginsberg's comments are typical:

> School here is play school...In Russia, they always have homework. Three times the homework they have here. Never just do one page with questions. They have to read the whole book. They would know presidents from Washington to Kennedy. Children know nothing--sex, makeup, drugs, pregnancy. Children here are lazy. In Russia, they study in head, never use calculator. Very stupid here. Should give some work at home, read books. Must do more than they do.

Another parent agreed:

> In Soviet Union, school kids are more busy. The program is very intense. Here easy life for kids about studying... All the subjects of the program are too easy...What is better is free lunch, television...

> A high school student said that he is taking world history now. It's easy. School in general is easy for him, but sometimes its harder because he lacks the English vocabulary. He didn't like geometry in Russia and he doesn't like it here. In geometry and physics, English is the problem. Another high school student said he likes school better here, because there is more freedom and choice than in Russia. He said students in 10th grade study what Russian students had studied in 6th grade. On the other hand, he had failed German and seemed to be in some remedial methematics program.

With regard to high school or even elementary school students in Albany, there maybe problems of not understanding the American system, especially with regard to tracking. If some of those students are in remedial programs and tracks other than those for college-bound, they may have programs which are easier than would be expected. This requires some further investigation.

One woman has become more sophisticated in her evaluation of American schools compared to those in the Soviet Union. She expressed it like this:

The Russian experience of education is completely different from the American experience. The level of mathematics and other subjects is higher than in America, at least in the lower grades. There is three to four hours of homework per night. A lot more memorizing. I did not really understand American education until my daughter came home one day reading John Steinbeck's The Pearl. I was surprised and shocked that a work like this (Steinbeck is an American author approved of in Soviet education and thought to be compatible with Socialism) was taught in American schools. But the next week they read Orwell's Animal Farm, which is banned in the USSR. I then began to realize that the American approach is how to think independently. Create your own opinion. Some of my daughter's classmates thought that Animal Farm was just about animals. In Russia, you are not supposed to question... memorize! In America, quite the opposite.

This woman said that by her daughter's last year in high school, she could no longer help her with her school work.

There is limited choice which parents with pre-school and elementary school have with regard to sending their children to schools. Pre-school children can go to various nursery schools, including Headstart. Since most new immigrants live in the city of Albany, the Albany Public Schools are one choice and the Hebrew Academy (HACD) is another, since new immigrants do receive scholarships there for a limited period of time. After that time is up, however, many feel that they do not want to pay the substantial fees to send their children there. Most of the complaints which parents have with regard to American education, discussed above, apply to both the HACD and to the Albany Public Schools, although we stressed the latter above. There are some problems specific to the HACD. Again, it should be realized that we are dealing with different situations for this institution over the last several years.

One girl had started school at the Hebrew Academy. When asked why she had not continued there, but had transferred to a public school, the parents answered that one reason was the tuition. The other was that the HACD is far away and she had to get up at 6 a.m. It was cold, and she had to wait a long time for the bus, which sometimes never came. Two children from another family had started at HACD but she felt that they were put into a very low grade there and that they put in too much time into the Hebrew studies. Another woman's complaints were different. She felt that the Russian children at the Hebrew Academy are like poor relations. Most children have rich parents and connections while the Russian children whose parents are trying to establish themselves cannot keep up and are not fully accepted.

On the other hand, there have been some Russian families who continue to have children at the HACD even after scholarships run out. One woman said that she was happy with the education that her son was receiving there. He was learning two languages; Hebrew and English. She felt that they showed great understanding. His second grade teacher was very firm, however, and the teacher could not accept him fully. It was if he was from another world. Now he has a different teacher who understands him better and he opens his heart to this teacher.

School presents a serious problem for Russian immigrants. It, however, is less acute than that of finding a job or going to a hospital, because the pain is not felt immediately. Serious problems of communication in this area exist, because the children who go to school do not always tell their parents what goes on and the parents, even if told, do not understand the setting. Often neither parents nor students understand the long-range significance of achievement tests or programs for the academically talented and thus do not know what are the advantages of a particular course of action.

G. Health and Medicine

Medical care bewilders Russian immigrants. The complicated mixed economy of American health care (i.e., Medicaid, Medicare, health insurance, Hill-Burton programs, and ultimately private payment), confuses new immigrants coming from a country where socialized medicine exists, albeit with some private medical care. A typical reaction to the questions about the best and worst of American medical care goes like this:

> "Doctors: Here emergency is like (American industry--good level, convenient, very fast. Not good--prices. I was surprised about emergencies. In USSR they take care right away. Here you wait in emergency room."
>
> With regard to the dentist, Mr. Yurevich said that there is very good dental equipment here; expensive. At first Jewish Family Services drove us to dentist. The first time they didn't pay. Once they had trouble with health insurance. Once Blue Cross didn't want to pay for emergency and they had to pay.
>
> Another replied: (In case of emergency) in Soviet Union, in 15 minutes, in 20 minutes, the emergency car will come. Here is different. Here is a question of money. If you have no insurance, better you not get sick...You see when we come we got no insurance, we got no Medicaid, we not bother Jewish Family Services. Later when I found job, I bought medical insurance. It is easier for us. We are not afraid to become sick."

MEDICINE:

Reaction to high cost

yes	13
no	3
n/c	5
	21

Insurance*

No insurance	3
Have insurance	11
Medicaid (elderly incl. rel.)	7
No information	2
	23

*Some households include Medicaid recipients.

Other comments*

Complaints about insurance	3
Complaints about service and care	5
Expression of Admiration for American medicine	8
Negative comment about American medicine	3

*Several respondents made more than one complaint.

Specific personal experiences have also colored respondents' view of American medicine. One may find dentists who attempt to save patients' teeth at all costs, while another may find that an American dentist whom she has chosen "loves to pull teeth." One may have an unpleasant experience due to a negative drug reaction or an unsuccessful operation, while another may have an operation which is successfully completed and he is back on his feet quickly. This experience would be especially favorable had a patient received comparatively poor medical attention in the Soviet Union.

Some respondents have indicated difficulty communicating with American physicians, surgeons, and dentists due to the language barrier or some professionals' lack of attention to communicating with patients. In general, Russian immigrants have often commended attention received in both private offices and in hospitals. They respect medical technology and the facilities' cordial atmosphere. Polite secretaries, nurses and medical technicians as well as pleasantly decorated surroundings have left very favorable impressions. Hospitalized patients have expressed surprise and pleasure at the attention received from nursing staffs. Special care, clean linens daily and regular staff rounds have enhanced the immigrants' impression of American hospital care. Apparently linen is changed weekly in Soviet hospitals and relatives often stay at patients' sides during a hospital stay to be sure his or her needs are met adequately.

It should be noted that these observations on Soviet hospitals also depend on respondents' personal experiences with Soviet hospitals, although it is generally an accepted view that the socialized medical care available to the regular Soviet man on the street does not compare to that available to those who have the contacts or the money to be treated by the better physicians in the better hospitals. Even though most immigrants recognize this, that does not lessen their shock at the exorbitant prices charged for medical care in the United States. Some American doctors have been "terrific" while others were called "just businessmen". There is a general impression that the high cost is not as much to pay for the benefits of modern medical technology as it is to pay doctors' incredibly high salaries.

Medical insurance, with its Blue Cross/Blue Shield distinctions in payment and reimbursement, and major medical coverage with its deductibles, is impossibly confusing to these immigrants. It is even more difficult for them to understand why some receive better coverage than others. People with no income, one respondent said, are actually better off as Medicaid

recipients than people who work and earn low wages, receiving either minimal or no medical coverage at their places of employment, and are ineligible for Medicaid.

H. Judaism and the Local Jewish Community

Since the issue of Judaism and Jewishness is sometimes a delicate one, we preferred to probe rather than ask specific questions. As the first section of this report indicates, the situation in the Soviet Union for Jews is very different from that of other Jews of the Diaspora. The practice of Judaism and all other religions is discouraged. Nationalities (i.e. ethnic origins), however, are still disclosed on each Soviet citizen's passport, which he is required to carry at all times. The Soviet educational system also promulgates a doctrine of atheism and materialism. When we consider that many American and Israeli Jews are weak as believers, and often are skeptics, it is no surprise that Soviet Jews are in the same situation, only more so. They have had much less experience with Jewish religious ritual, as indicated in the following table.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE:

Religious observance (including holidays) in USSR

Parents of respondents	
Yes	7
No	10
N/A	4
	21

Synagogue attendance in USSR

Yes	1
No	15
Not clear or no comment	5
	21

In this section, some reactions of Soviet immigrants to Judaism will be given, without attempting to tabulate or enumerate their responses:

Yevgeny Moskowitz was asked whether he believes in God. He replied, "Sometimes I think he lives." His wife responded, "When it's hot."

Vladimir Osofsky said that he did not really believe in God. Jewishness for him is "history inside". Lara Khomski asserted that she does not consider herself religious, but is proud of being Jewish. She added that if you say that you are Jewish in Russia, people discriminate against you. Here, you can say it. Gregory Bolshoi said that he is not religious now. He thinks of Judaism as a religion, but for him it has more meaning in terms of history. He is proud of it.

"Jewish history pleases us," he said. He has gone to all the synagogues in Albany, but they appear strange, (i.e., alien) to him. He said he is not accustomed to it, so he does not attend. This is a comment often repeated by other Soviet immigrants. When asked what has interested him in terms of Jewish history, he said that he had seen the films, "The Ten Commandments", "The Holocaust", and "Masada" on television.

Among the immigrants surveyed, some mark the Jewish holidays, often by going to synagogue with elderly relatives. A few celebrate Hanukkah. Those with children in the Hebrew Academy have learned to observe such holidays at home. Some celebrate no holidays, secular or religious, like Thanksgiving. Most have attended synagogue since their arrival to Albany. This has usually been on the High Holy Days, often for the first time with their volunteers. Certain synagogues were mentioned more often than others by immigrants as the ones they attended. The rabbis associated with those synagogues mentioned tended to take personal interest in the immigrants. It was this personal interest and not the intellectual rendition of Jewish tradition that Soviet immigrants find most attractive. One woman described a rabbi who had taken her daughter under his wing and helped her to find a place in her own age-group, as a "real rabbi". Another young woman had gone on a weekend trip to visit a Hassidic group in New York. Although she was not religious, and found it difficult to believe in God, she did not find Hassidic customs strange, and enjoyed her excursion.

In terms of personal ceremonies, there have been several circumcisions, Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, and at least one wedding. Russians have also been invited to attend Passover Seders, a few on a regular basis. The Chabad-Lubavitch Hassidic group regularly holds a Seder for immigrants together with other members of the community. This is particularly pleasing to elderly immigrants.

There are also examples of volunteers and others who have befriended Soviet immigrants and invited them to Seders.

As this indicates, some of the Soviet immigrants have developed friendships with individual Jews in Albany. Few, it seems have actually joined synagogues or are interested in doing so. Apparently, the American synagogue as an institution is strange to them, because of both its Jewish and American attributes. Joining a synagogue is expensive, especially when an immigrant is still paying off expenses incurred by HIAS for his initial passage into the country. One immigrant recalls going to a synagogue on the High Holy Days and being denied admission for lack of a ticket. While he probably could have received a special ticket, it never occurred to him to ask. Joining the Jewish Community Center and sending children to summer day camp also requires asking for special privileges, such as membership fee adjustments and scholarships. Automatic scholarships are allotted to new arrivals. After that, these scholarships are disbursed according to financial need. There has been a marked drop-off in Soviet children's camp attendance once a fee is required of the parents. This has caused a certain amount of bad feelings on both sides; Soviet immigrants find the camp fees outrageous, even when an adjustment is made

according to financial need, while community members think that the Soviet immigrants expect free services.

The Soviet immigrants feel that Americans, especially Jews, look on them as aliens. One suggested that they seem like animals in the zoo. They are also seen as "poor relations". They feel the effects of being both newcomers and strangers at once. At synagogue on High Holy Days, they observe many American Jews greet each other as old friends who also seem to know everyone else. As one put it, they do not know friends or other people, at the synagogue. Some who have joined synagogues or Jewish youth groups have said they experienced similar feelings of alienation. For instance, while American children leave home to attend private universities, the Soviet students stay at home because they can only afford a community college education.

It is also important to understand the motivations of different Soviet Jewish immigrants. Some are fervently interested in cultivating their Jewishness, if not in themselves, in their children. Others who leaned toward assimilation in Soviet society, try to assimilate themselves into the general American community. This does not mean that they reject or do not participate in the Jewish community, but it does mean that they do not have an ideological commitment to belonging to it.

As suggested earlier, Soviet immigrants in the Albany area have established social networks among themselves. They are linked to their old friends and relatives in the Soviet Union and Israel through correspondence, and there is regular visiting with immigrants in New York, Boston, and elsewhere. Locally, they have regular contact with each other. This seems to strengthen with time, as their situations improve and they become more relaxed. Sometimes one can find a "Russian corner" at the JCC swimming pool during the summer. They hold their own New Year's Eve bashes in the winter: it is the most festive holiday of the year in their former homeland.

Some immigrant children attend the Hebrew Academy beyond the first two years and see each other on a regular basis at school. In the public school, a few Soviet pupils have excelled as members of the soccer team or as musicians. Yury's School of Gymnastics regularly attracts immigrant children, not only during winter gymnastic classes, but during the summer camp session as well. All of these events provide foci for community attention.

Russians are aware of the importance of the community in their resettlement. This awareness ranges from a feeling of identification with fellow Jews to viewing it in commercial terms. For example, several small businesses established by immigrants advertise in the local newspaper, the Jewish World and synagogue bulletins. Advertising is one of the services offered for new immigrants.

One immigrant, when asked about his attitude toward the community, replied:

> "I feel very good (about the Jewish community in Albany). I feel not lost. I'm proud of these people...we are one. If you like to be a member of the community, you have to give a lot of money. If it's impossible, you feel uncomfortable."

It is this mixture of pride and discomfort which marks the attitude of the Russians toward Judaism, Jewishness, and the Jewish community. While this ambivalence is shared with Israelis, American Jews, and indeed all Jews, they carry their own special burdens as immigrants who are new to it.

III. COURSES OF ACTION

Many important decisions regarding the immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Albany and elsewhere are made in Moscow, Jerusalem, Vienna, and Washington. Permission to emigrate, permits of entry to destination points, and funding are all decisions made far from Albany. But whether or not there will continue to be a substantial immigration from the USSR, we can nonetheless evaluate the success of the Albany Resettlement Program by identifying services that have been or are now being offered those immigrants already resettled in the Capital District in order to maintain those services for future resettlement.

After a period of trial and error, the Albany community has developed several courses of action which have met with success. Greeting the immigrants with flowers upon arrival at the airport is a custom rooted in Russian culture which provides a warm, familiar welcome. A furnished apartment which is ready also leaves a positive impression. Relatives of the new arrivals usually prepare great amounts of food and drink for the weary travellers. A transitional period of financial support, subsidized by food-stamps and Medicaid, has usually been three months. This policy will be feasible only as long as the agency can afford to provide it. However, for most able-bodied immigrants, finding a suitable job as soon as possible is highly desirable. English seems to be learned just as well on the job as in class.

Job placement has been a central problem. While the agency cannot adopt a standard policy for job procurement due to the skill limitations of the immigrants and limited opportunities in the community, volunteers and influential members of Albany's Jewish community have made valient efforts to locate jobs. For one year, there was a half-time position, in addition to the program coordinator's, budgeted specifically for job placement of immigrants. After the great influx of immigration during 1979-80, this position was no longer budgeted, and job placement became again the responsibility of the coordinator and community volunteers. There has been some pre-selection of immigrants who have skills that are in demand in the Albany area. Since the recent trend in HIAS resettlement has been toward reunification of close family members only, it is doubtful this course of action could be used in the future. Even now, an immigrant can only be resettled in a location where a family member resides.

Acquisition of apartments has in the past depended on the rate of immigration, assistance of immigrants' family members already resettled, and cost. Livingstone Village has been used in the past because of the availability, the reasonable cost, and the leniency of the owners who require no deposit and monthly-renewable leases designed specifically for the use of the Resettlement Program. The problems with this complex's location have been indicated above. For that reason, most immigrants move out of Livingston Village within two years of their arrival. When the influx of immigration is low, efforts have been made to resettle immigrants in reasonably-priced apartments in middle-income neighborhoods. This policy has received the approval the immigrants already settled here.

Russian immigrants have often expressed dissatisfaction with American education. It appears that they are not well informed as to the nature of the American system. For example, rather than presenting one specific point of view in studying a topic, often several points of view are presented in a classroom. Coming from an educational system based on rote learning, and state censorship as well, this approach is often confusing to Russian immigrants. The use of testing to place pupils into academic tracks is also of great importance, especially to those who are college bound. It has often been the case that due to a language barrier, immigrant children are placed into lower academic tracks and are not encouraged to move to higher tracks, even when language is no longer an obstacle. In this way immigrant children often are not identified with those students who are motivated to go on to college study. Instead, their class schedules indicate that they are being directed only toward graduation from high school and are not receiving college preparation.

At the primary school level, education at the Hebrew Academy as opposed to the public school has some distinct advantages for immigrant children. They, of course, receive a Jewish education, which serves the purpose of integrating them more effectively into the American Jewish community and gives them a stronger Jewish identity. Apart from this, the children receive a great amount of individual attention both in and out of the classroom. They receive special tutoring based on their language needs and cooperation between teachers and families regarding issues at school and home, with special attention paid to the process of resettlement. It is the high cost of tuition at the Hebrew Academy that has its greatest drawbacks. Immigrant children receive their first year's tuition at the academy free of charge. After that families can apply for scholarship based on financial need.

In recent years there have been several sessions, or seminars, set up specifically for education of adult immigrants on issues germane to American acculturation. Some of these have been well attended, some have not. For example, during tax season, an evening seminar was presented by a local representative of the Internal Revenue Service. The orientation was practical. Sample tax forms were passed around followed step by step. A native speaker interpreted the finer distinctions of the presentation. These particular seminars have been well attended. On the other hand, seminars on methods of birth control in America (perhaps a more controversial subject for immigrants) and classes in Judaism have not been successful. In earlier years of Soviet resettlement, acculturation presentations were given regularly at the Jewish Community Center. At that time, these were also not viewed as successful. Participation was unpredictable. There was a general feeling that immigrants prefer to "experience" things rather than learn about them in a lecture. There is still, however, a great lack of knowledge on the part of immigrants in the areas of home buying, medical and life insurance, banking and credit.

Elderly Russian immigrants have special needs that should be met, even after the initial period of resettlement when their families have settled into a relatively stable life in the United States. Most of them are widows, who keep house for the family and spend their days alone. Although there are daily activities for senior citizens at the Jewish Community Center, and they have friends in the area who are in similar situations, there is a great hesitancy to go out of the house. Most do not speak English and are afraid they will get stranded somewhere in the city, unable to communicate. They are also afraid to use the city buses. Even though the JCC provides door to

door transportation to its activities, there is still little desire to participate in them. Possibly, activities for senior citizens simply seem alien to them.

Even though immigration from the Soviet Union seems to be declining, the needs of this group are still great and should not be neglected as resettlement programs are being dissolved in family service agencies. Elderly Russian immigrants are unable to keep even regular doctor appointments unless there is a social worker or friend who can take them and interpret during the medical exam. Since both adult members of a household are working during the day, they often are unavailable to provide this simple service. Responsibility for this needy segment of the Jewish community could be transferred from resettlement to senior adult programs with an outreach worker who is equipped either with Yiddish or Russian language.

While American acculturation takes place in all spheres of immigrants' lives, Jewish acculturation specifically has been an area of concern. Russians do, in fact, participate in the resettlement program and in this regard, they are active members of the community. When new immigrants arrive, immigrants already settled for awhile are ready to help. As time passes, more and more networks are visible among the immigrant community, although they are not as visible to the general Jewish community.

There does seem to have been an inhibition against participation in local Jewish communal life. The importance of financial barriers cannot be stressed too much since often this participation is predicated on the relative affluence of Jews. Even those immigrant families who are doing well are not yet affluent by American standards. If the goal is to integrate Russian immigrants in to the general community, special efforts must be made to take their special situation into account. In previous instance, a warm, personal approach on the part of a rabbi or member of the community has been well received, such as a Hebrew Academy teacher's concern over an immigrant child, or a rabbi encouraging a young immigrant's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Personal attention creates stronger identification with the Jewish community.

Even as the resettlement program is ended, we must take special care that continuing needs of New American families are met. The educational programs of immigrant children, the problems of the elderly, continuing acculturation, and the paradoxical quandries of a newly arrived group entering an established affluent community are among these. The various agencies of the Jewish community must be alerted to meet these challenges.

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