

Post-Soviet Jewry: Critical Issues

Introduction

To observe the Jewish population in the successor states to the Soviet Union is to be bewildered, so numerous and complex are the variables that define this large and remarkable segment of world Jewry. Fifteen separate and independent states have replaced the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Vast differences had marked the characteristics of Jews in, say, Soviet Latvia and Soviet Uzbekistan, but Moscow was a significant address in the fate of both Soviet Jewish populations, often more important than Riga in the former or Tashkent in the latter. Not only has the influence of Moscow ended outside Russia, it has eroded within Russia itself as central authority has waned and power has devolved to regions. A multi-regional approach must also be applied to Ukraine, to Uzbekistan, and to several other of the new post-Soviet states.

Further complicating the task of the observer is the high-profile presence in many post-Soviet Jewish population centers of multiple Jewish organizations, both indigenous and international. Some are religious in orientation, some focus on welfare or culture, and others traverse functional lines. Interaction between the various groups is complex and not always productive. For both participants and observers, local and foreign, post-Soviet Jewish life is a maelstrom not easily navigated.

Once governed by a rigid ideology that defined the boundaries of their lives, citizens in each of the post-Soviet successor states now reside in an ideological void. The old order has collapsed, but a new one has not yet risen to take its place. Generations will pass before a post-Soviet political culture stabilizes in any of the successor states.¹ Stalinism has been discredited in mainstream post-Soviet politics, but communism retains some appeal, finding constituencies among impoverished pensioners, collective farmers, displaced apparatchiks, nationalists, and those who yearn for restoration of empire. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation lost the 1996 Presidential election to Boris Yeltsin, but only after garnering enough votes to force a run-off poll.² In Ukraine and Moldova, elections in 1998 returned parliaments that are 25 and 40 percent Communist respectively.

For those who reject communism, nationalism also attracts support from the right. It offers its own ideology of populism and xenophobia. Its unambiguous antisemitism is readily apparent in the many rightwing newspapers and pamphlets sold openly throughout the successor states.

Despite improved economic conditions in some major cities prior to the ruble devaluation of August 1998, Russia remains decades behind the West and is not expected to close the gap in the foreseeable future. Conditions in

Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova are worse, and those in the Caucasus and Central Asian states even more miserable. The state infrastructure dating from the Soviet period is vastly overextended throughout the former USSR, unable to maintain municipal utility systems, uphold appropriate standards in public education, protect the health of its citizens, or extend reasonable pension benefits to its elderly. Official unemployment remains at a tolerable level mainly because many individuals are paid only periodically and others are on indefinite "extended leave" from their places of work. As much as three-quarters of the economy in Russia, Ukraine, and several other successor states is based on barter.³ Perhaps half of the population in European regions of the ex-USSR is impoverished. Many state monopolies of the past have become personal monopolies of the present, often controlled privately by those who managed them previously as Soviet apparatchiks. A significant amount of foreign currency flees the successor states almost as soon as it is acquired, its owners apprehensive about systemic stability and their own safety in societies where contract murder of the privileged is almost commonplace.⁴

Implementation of a democratic legal framework remains a distant goal. Decades of Soviet rule in which laws were observed mainly through coercion or threat of coercion have impeded perception of a legal system as beneficial in its own right. The state is regarded as capricious, its laws and regulations as tools of the powerful. Contracts and property rights are inconsistently honored.⁵ The collapse of the USSR produced a multitude of new political and economic opportunities, but the old justice system has not adapted to the new reality. Corruption and organized crime have filled the existing vacuum.

Corruption, graft, and organized crime are endemic. State assets, huge in volume but no longer protected by an intimidating and arbitrary police apparatus, have been plundered. One Russian estimate placed the size of the "shadow economy" in Russia at \$500 billion in mid-1996, i.e., 40 to 50 percent of the total gross domestic product.⁶ Beviies of insiders in each state or region control access (*dostoop* in Russian) to licenses, credits, quotas, and other forms of privilege. Commercial activity is rife with intrigues and fighting. Common civic values -- such as honesty, accountability, respect, and tolerance -- are yet to be established. Duplicity remains an accepted characteristic of post-Soviet behavior. Russian history and the destructive quality of communism have exacted a heavy price on the post-Soviet successor states and the people who dwell within their borders, including Jews.

I. Demography

No precise figures are available on Jewish demography in the post-Soviet successor states. Nonetheless, all experienced observers concur that post-

Soviet Jewry is in catastrophic demographic decline, with Jewish deaths exceeding Jewish births by at least 11:1 in Russia and 10:1 in Ukraine.⁷ Many believe the core Jewish population of the successor states to be between one and 1.5 million individuals, and expect that figure to diminish rapidly and decisively in the coming decade.⁸ The diminution of the Jewish population can be ascribed to four overlapping factors: aging and high mortality; low fertility; emigration; and assimilation.

The average age of Russian Jewry is 52.8,⁹ compared with an average age of about 37 for American Jews and 28 for Israeli Jews. The average age of Jews in most other post-Soviet states is several years higher. According to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the organization with the largest and most comprehensive Jewish welfare program in the former USSR, about 500,000 elderly Jews reside in the successor states,¹⁰ i.e., approximately 40 percent of the entire Jewish population. In most small Jewish population centers, two-thirds of the entire Jewish population is past retirement age, younger Jews having fled such locales in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

The emigration of younger Jewish age cohorts, whether on their own as young adults or as children departing with their parents, is one of the more striking characteristics of post-Soviet Jewry. The Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut), which closely monitors post-Soviet Jewish emigration, reports the following statistics regarding post-Soviet aliya from the beginning of 1989 through 1994: whereas six percent of the post-Soviet Jewish population was under 20 years of age, 28 percent of olim (immigrants in Israel) were under 20; whereas 14 percent of the post-Soviet Jewish population was between 20 and 39 percent years old, 30 percent of new immigrants were in that age cohort; whereas 35 percent of post-Soviet Jewry was between 40 and 59 years of age, only 23 percent of olim were that cohort; and whereas 45 percent of post-Soviet Jewry was 60 years old or older, 18 percent of olim were 60 or older.¹¹ It is likely that fewer than 120,000 Jewish children resided in the post-Soviet successor states in 1994.¹² An older population such as that constituting post-Soviet Jewry cannot achieve fertility rates necessary to replace itself, even if further emigration ceases.

Assimilation of the Jewish population into the larger Russian majority is another significant cause of Jewish demographic decline. Urbanization, already underway even during the last decades of the tsarist era, accelerated during the great Soviet industrialization drive of the 1920s and 1930s. Freed from the restrictions imposed by the notorious Pale of Settlement,¹³ Jews moved en masse to the cities that provided new opportunities for education and economic betterment. A second wave of Jewish migration to urban areas followed World War II. Numerous returning veterans from smaller towns destroyed in the war resettled in major cities as did many of the few small-town Holocaust survivors.

It is likely that more than 95 percent of post-Soviet Jewry now lives in large cities, a trend that has been accelerated both by current emigration, which is disproportionately from smaller urban areas in the periphery, and by internal migration from smaller municipalities to major cities. The largest Jewish population centers are Moscow (estimated Jewish population of 200,000 to 300,000), Kyiv (100,000), and St. Petersburg (90,000). Cities with middle-size Jewish populations are Dnipropetrovsk (45,000), Kharkiv and Odessa (each 40,000), Kishinev (25,000), Minsk (22,000) Tashkent (18,000), and Baku (16,500).¹⁴ As is the case in most large cities in industrialized countries, the birthrate of post-Soviet urban Jewry is low and the average age is high. Also, as noted, emigration occurs mainly among the young, further distorting the demographic structure.¹⁵

The Soviet goal of assimilation was advanced by the pursuit of secular education by Jews, an absence of Jewish neighborhoods, official and popular antisemitism, and state suppression of Jewish communal activity since the 1917 Revolutions. The few Jewish institutions that managed to remain open did so at the sufferance of Soviet authorities and were corrupted in the process, further deterring local Jews from association. A large number of Soviet Jews deliberately sought non-Jewish marriage partners and/or changed their names, hoping to escape antisemitism themselves and to shield their offspring from the anti-Jewish bigotry that they had endured as children and young adults. Fearful of betrayal by neighbors, even many endogamous Jewish families with a positive sense of Jewish identification ceased observance of Jewish ritual in their homes.

Whether spurred by specific intent to intermarry or simply finding no compelling reason to seek a Jewish spouse, Soviet and post-Soviet Jews in the European area of the (former) Soviet Union and Siberia have intermarried at a rate exceeding 70 percent, sometimes higher in the large cities of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus where the Jewish population has long been concentrated.¹⁶ The children of such intermarriages are almost always registered in the nationality of the non-Jewish parent. More than three generations of intermarriage have produced many individuals whose Jewishness can be defined only in fractions. Although their partial Jewish heritage may be helpful if they wish to emigrate, few retain a sense of Jewish identity in their new countries apart from application for entitlement benefits that their new governments and local Jewish organizations offer upon their arrival.

Russia

Occupying territory almost twice as great as the United States, Russia is the largest of the 15 post-Soviet successor states. Of a total population of about 150 million people, the core Jewish population is estimated at between 450,000 and 600,000. Because almost all Jews in the tsarist empire were confined to

residence in the Pale of Settlement, which excluded Russia, Jewish habitation in Russia proper is largely a twentieth-century development. Jews from Ukraine and Belarus flocked to the major Russian cities in the 1920s and 1930s, establishing Moscow and St. Petersburg (Leningrad) as two of the three largest Jewish population centers in the (post-) Soviet Union. Conspicuously absent from Russia are medium-size Jewish population centers of between 25,000 and 75,000 individuals; the next largest Jewish concentrations all number fewer than 20,000 people. Along the Volga River lie Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, and Saratov -- each with Jewish populations between 8,500 and 10,000. Perhaps 8,600 Jews remain in Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia. In the Ural Mountains area are Yekaterinburg (15,000), Chelyabinsk (7,000), and two cities with about 5,000 Jews, Perm and Ufa. Perhaps 10,000 Jews reside in the Siberian academic and scientific center of Novosibirsk, about 8,000 in Irkutsk, and 10,000 or fewer in the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk. About 5,000 Jews (of a total population of more than 220,000) remain in the notorious Jewish Autonomous Republic, more commonly known by the name of its capital city, Birobidzhan. Beginning in 1928, the Jewish Autonomous Republic was colonized by Soviet authorities in a remote Russian-Chinese border area in an attempt to lure Jews away from Zionism, attract international Jewish support for the young Soviet state, and populate a hostile frontier with Manchuria. The Jewish population reached its peak, about 30,000 people, in 1948, but even then Jews constituted only about one-quarter of the entire area population.¹⁷

Ukraine

Ukraine is approximately the same size as France, with a population of about 51 million. The Jewish population of between 350,000 and 400,000 is concentrated in four large cities: Kyiv (100,000), Dnipropetrovsk (45,000), and Kharkiv and Odessa (40,000 each).¹⁸ Two industrial centers in eastern Ukraine -- Krivoi Rog and Donetsk -- each have Jewish populations of 10,000 to 15,000, and smaller Jewish populations reside in other cities along the Dnipro River. In western Ukraine, Lviv and Chernivtsy have the largest Jewish populations, about 3,000 each. Prior to World War II, most of western Ukraine was within the territory of Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Romania; having come under Soviet control only during World War II, the surviving Jewish population in this area is generally less assimilated than its counterpart in eastern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Jewish population is decreasing by 30,000 to 50,000 individuals annually. The average age of Ukrainian Jewry is 56, and the ratio of Jewish deaths to Jewish births is ten to one.

Several characteristics differentiate Ukrainian Jewry from Russian Jewry. First, notwithstanding high levels of assimilation among Ukrainian urban Jewry, Ukrainian Jews are generally closer to their Jewish roots and thus more responsive to Jewish outreach than are Russian Jews. Second, Ukrainian

national Jewish institutions, especially the chief rabbinate and the Va'ad (a national coordinating and service group), are more effective than their Russian counterparts. Third, skilled rabbis are more numerous in Ukraine than in Russia. Fourth, aliyah has been greater in Ukraine than in Russia, reflecting the more severe economic crisis in Ukraine, fear of illness caused by the Chernobyl disaster, the stronger attachment of Ukrainian Jews to their Jewish heritage, the impact of skilled rabbis and effective Jewish institutions, and the "chain effect" of Jews wishing to reunite with family and friends who have already settled in Israel or other countries.

Belarus

Perhaps 65,000 to 75,000 Jews remain in Belarus, formerly known as Belorussia or White Russia. Located between Russia and Poland and to the north of Ukraine, Belarus has a total population of about 10.3 million. The largest single Jewish population concentration, about 22,000, is in the capital of Minsk; 8,000 to 9,000 Jews live in each of three east Belarusian cities -- Bobruisk, Gomel, and Mogilev. Jewish populations of 1,000 or more reside in Baranovich, Borisov, Brest, Grodno, Orsha, Pinsk, Polotsk, and Vitebsk.

From the fourteenth century onward, the territory of Belarus was long divided and dominated by neighboring Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. Under such circumstances, its population often identified more with the dominant neighbor than with any national Belarusian idea. The notion of "Belarusian Jewry" is an even more recent, post-Soviet phenomenon. Prior to the Soviet period, Jews in Belarus were considered part of Lithuanian Jewry. A rich Jewish culture prevailed, with Jews forming the majority in such cities as Minsk, Bobruisk, Gomel, Mogilev, and Pinsk. The eradication of private trade after the 1917 Revolutions led to massive economic dislocation among Belarusian Jewry, motivating many to migrate to Moscow and St. Petersburg during the Soviet industrialization drive of the 1920s and 1930s. The majority of those who remained in Belarus perished during the Shoah.

Highly russified during the postwar period, the current Jewish population of independent Belarus is emigrating in large numbers. Political and economic instability in the new state portend a difficult future for those who stay behind.

The Baltic States

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are the westernmost former republics of the USSR. Forcibly absorbed into the Soviet Union under the terms of the 1939 pact between Adolf Hitler and Yosif Stalin, the titular population groups of the three Baltic countries strongly resented the Soviet occupation of their land and Soviet control over their lives. More than any other former republics, they have re-oriented themselves toward the West.

Almost the entire Jewish population in the area on the eve of World War II was slaughtered during the Shoah. Those who survived, especially in Riga, were among the leaders of the Zionist movement in the Soviet Union of the 1960s and 1970s. They emigrated to Israel as soon as it became possible to do so. The remaining Jewish population in the three states is largely non-native, principally Red Army veterans (and their descendants) encouraged by Soviet authorities to settle in the newly-conquered Baltic states as a Russian-speaking colonizing force following World War II. Perceived as outsiders in the highly nationalistic Baltic countries, post-Soviet Baltic Jewry is tolerated but not really accepted.¹⁹

In all, Baltic Jewry in the three countries consists of about 20,000 people -- 11,000 in Latvia, 5,000 in Lithuania, and 2,500 in Estonia. In Latvia, as in the other Baltic countries, the largest single population concentration is in the capital city. Approximately 10,000 Jews live in Riga, which has a well-developed Jewish communal infrastructure. Prior to World War II, the Jewish population of Latvia was about 85,000. More than 90 percent of Latvian Jewry was killed during the Shoah; reflecting the departure of most survivors to Israel, the majority of current Latvian Jewry are post-war Russian-speaking migrants and their descendants.

The southernmost of the three Baltic states, Lithuania has a extraordinary Jewish history dating back to the fourteenth century. A center of both Jewish religious learning and Yiddish culture, more than 300,000 Jews lived in Lithuania on the eve of World War II.²⁰ Almost all -- 95 percent -- were killed in the Holocaust. The majority of Jews in Lithuania today reside in Vilnius²¹, and smaller concentrations live in Kaunas, Klaipeda, and Siaulai. Vilnius Jewry is well-served by various Jewish communal institutions, but it is clearly a "remnant population", a community whose youth are departing for Israel and other countries and whose adults live in the past.²²

The majority of the small Estonian Jewish population lives in the capital city of Tallinn. Small Jewish populations can be found in the university city of Tartu and in Narva, an ethnic Russian area on the Estonian-Russian border. As in the other Baltic capital cities of Vilnius and Riga, Tallinn has a Jewish day school enrolling a significant proportion of local Jewish youth; however, its general communal structure is less well developed. Estonian nationalism has spawned severe antisemitism, including Holocaust denial and various antisemitic publications. Estonian Jewry maintains productive ties with Finnish Jewry.

Moldova

Known in Jewish history as Bessarabia, Moldova has long been a subject of foreign conquest. It was under Russian authority from 1812 to 1917, Romanian rule from 1918 to 1940, Soviet control from 1940 until occupied by

Axis forces, and then Soviet control again after World War II until independence in 1991. By 1897, its Jewish population had reached 200,000. Major pogroms in 1903 (49 Jews killed) and 1905 (19 Jews killed) spurred emigration in the early decades of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, about 250,000 Jews remained in 1941 when German and Romanian Axis troops invaded the country. Almost all Jews were killed.

About 70,000 Jews lived in Moldova as recently as 1988, but more than half emigrated between 1989 and 1993, most of them in response to Russian-instigated hostilities between ethnic Russians and Moldovans in the contested region of Transdnistr (Moldova east of the Dnister River). A large number of Jews were evacuated from such cities as Bendery in rescue missions mounted by international Jewish organizations. About 30,000 Jews remain in Moldova today, 25,000 of them in the capital city of Kishinev. Moldovan Jewry is relatively well organized, both in Kishinev and on a national level. However, unfavorable economic conditions are generating significant emigration, particularly among younger segments of the population.

The Caucasus Mountain area

The Caucasus Mountain area is usually understood to include the states of Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, and Armenia as well as the Caucasus Mountain region of southern Russia, which lies directly north of Georgia and Azerbaidzhan. In the current early post-Soviet period, the Caucasus Mountain area has been racked by fierce ethnic combat in southern Russia and in all three independent states.²³

The major group of Jews in the predominantly Moslem Caucasus Mountain region of southern Russia are Mountain or Tat Jews, a segment of eastern Jewry believed to have migrated to the region from northern Iran.²⁴ On the eve of the first post-World War II Jewish emigration from the USSR in the 1970s, the number of Tat Jews was estimated to be between 50,000 and 70,000.²⁵ Even during the most oppressive Soviet years, most Mountain Jews remained strongly attached to their Jewish heritage. About half of them lived in Derbent (Daghestan) with other concentrations in Makhachkala (also in Daghestan), Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkar region), Grozny (Chechnya), and in Azerbaidzhan. Approximately 10,000 Mountain Jews remain in Daghestan, 6,000 in Nalchik, about 4,000 each in Pyatigorsk and Stavropol, and 1,500 in Vladikavkaz.

Almost all Mountain Jews have departed from Chechnya and other volatile areas, some during ongoing local ethnic hostilities in dramatic rescue operations organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel or the Joint Distribution Committee. The majority have settled in Israel, but perhaps 10,000 to 12,000 Mountain Jews have migrated northward, resettling in the larger cities of

European Russia, especially Moscow. Many of the latter have become market traders in the Russian capital, exploiting talents and skills that persisted during the many decades of Soviet rule. Some have become victims of ethnic crime as Russians target the darker-skinned migrants from the Caucasus area, particularly those who are petty merchants, for various forms of abuse.

About 20,000 Jews live in the predominantly Moslem state of Azerbaidzhan, 17,000 of them in the capital city of Baku. Of the latter, approximately 85 percent are Mountain Jews, five percent are Georgian Jews, and the remainder are Ashkenazi (European) Jews. About 2,500 Mountain Jews live in the village of Kuba. A Jewish communal infrastructure is well developed in Baku with various educational, cultural, and welfare activities, almost all of them funded by foreign organizations. Three synagogues or congregational groups (Mountain, Georgian, Ashkenazi) are active, although none has a rabbi. Small synagogues exist in several of the Mountain Jewish villages.

Azerbaidzhan has been in armed conflict in recent years with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaidzhan. Although Azeri Jews are not politically involved in the dispute, they have supported Azerbaidzhan. The hostilities have encouraged Jewish emigration as local Jews have sought to avoid entrapment in the conflict as well as military conscription of draft-age males.

Georgian Jews constitute one of the oldest diaspora Jewish communities in the world, probably migrating into Georgia from Assyria more than 2,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence has affirmed a Jewish presence on the territory of Georgia (Gruzia) dating back to at least the second century BCE. Georgian Jews have always been well integrated into the larger Georgian society while maintaining Jewish traditions. At the end of the 1960s, prior to the first post-World War II wave of Soviet Jewish emigration, about 65,000 Jews lived in Georgia. A minority were Russian-speaking Ashkenazis. More than 40 synagogues remained open in Georgia throughout the Soviet period.

Committed to Jewish tradition, Georgian Jews have been ardent Zionists as well. Many observers consider a letter by leaders of 18 Georgian Jewish families to then Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in 1969 to have been the catalyst for the international Soviet Jewry support movement. Most Georgian Jews have since emigrated to Israel, a Zionist movement reinforced immediately after Georgia gained independence in 1991 by episodes of ethnic hostility in the regions of Abkhazia, Ossetia, and Adzharia. As in the Caucasus area of southern Russia, the Jewish Agency mounted special rescue operations to airlift Jews from these areas to Israel.

Approximately 8,000 Jews remain in Georgia today, evenly divided between Georgian and Ashkenazi. About 5,000 reside in the capital of Tbilisi, and about 1,000 live in Kutaisi and in Gori. Both Ashkenazi and Georgian Jews

maintain a number of communal institutions in Tbilisi, although the two groups have been unable to agree upon a single overall institution that would encompass the entire Jewish population. Emigration continues, reflecting ongoing political and economic instability in the country.

The native Jewish population of Armenia, the smallest of the former Soviet republics, may have migrated north into Armenia after the destruction of the First Temple. However, this population dwindled over time and was never replaced, leaving Armenia the only Soviet republic without a substantial Jewish population after coming under Soviet control in 1921. During the decades of Soviet rule, a small Ashkenazi population settled in the country. Today, fewer than 300 Jews remain, overwhelmingly elderly and almost all residing in the capital city of Yerevan.

Central Asia

Central Asia comprises five states situated to the east of the Caspian Sea and to the north of Iran, Afghanistan, and China. Kazakhstan, the largest of the five, is directly south of Russia. To the south of Kazakhstan are Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, and Kirghizia. With the exception of Tadjik natives, who speak a dialect of Persian (Farsi), the indigenous peoples of Central Asia speak distinct but mutually intelligible Turkic languages. The dominant religion is Sunni Islam.

Soviet authorities developed and enforced a colonial pattern of governance during their seven decades of rule from Moscow. Borders between the five republics were drawn arbitrarily, often dividing ethnic groups. Europeans (i.e., Russians, Ukrainian, Belarusians) directed the economy, in most areas heavily dependent on cotton. Severe ecological damage was inflicted upon the desert and mountain environment of the region.

Prior to emigration of the post-war era, 156,000 to 170,000 Jews resided in the five Central Asian states.²⁶ Approximately one-third were Bukharan Jews, so called by others because they resided within the Bukharan Emirate before the Russian conquest of Central Asia in the late nineteenth century.²⁷ Bukharan Jews originated in Persia and speak a dialect of Tadjik, itself a west Persian language. The largest Bukharan Jewish population, approximately 15,000 people, lived in Samarkand (Uzbekistan). Other Bukharan concentrations lived in Tashkent, Bukhara, and the Fergana Valley cities of Andizhan, Namangan, Kokand, and Margelan (all in Uzbekistan) and in Dushanbe (Tadjikistan). Bukharan Jews retained a strong sense of Jewish communal identity even under Soviet conditions. Judaism and Jewish culture were transmitted from generation to generation, and intermarriage with other ethnic groups was rare. In common with the Mountain Jews of the Caucasus area, Bukharan Jews generally attached lesser importance to secular education than has been the practice

among Ashkenazi Jews, thus impeding their later absorption in Israel and other countries of immigration.

The larger Ashkenazi population consists of migrants and their descendants from Slavic areas of the former USSR, most of them individual refugees from the Nazi-occupied European republics during World War II, workers evacuated eastward with their institutions of employment during World War II, or people sent into political exile in Central Asia during the Stalin era. Among Ashkenazi Jews in strongly russified Kazakhstan are descendants of tsarist-era Jewish conscripts who were sent to the region from the Pale of Settlement. Whatever their particular histories, most Ashkenazi Jews in Central Asia speak only Russian and are strongly acculturated into local Russian populations.

The two Jewish population groups had little contact during the Soviet period. Distance prevails in the post-Soviet era, occasionally erupting into conflict as each attempts to represent local Jewry in deliberations with local governments, Israeli officials, and international Jewish groups.

Reacting to ongoing political instability, resurgent Islam, and local exclusionary nationalisms that actively discriminate against Russian-speakers and non-titular ethnic groups in general, Jews have emigrated from Central Asia in large numbers during the post-Soviet era. More than one-third of area Jews have departed, and many younger Jews who remain are likely to emigrate as local populations continue to struggle in defining their character.

Kazakhstan is the largest of the Central Asian states, approximating the state of California in size. Its population of more than 16 million people is ethnically mixed, with a large minority of Russians. About 16,000 Jews live in Kazakhstan, 80 to 90 percent of whom are of European origin. Perhaps 7,000 reside in the capital city of Almaty, 2,000 to 3,000 remain in Karaganda and in Chimkent, and fewer than 1,000 are in each of more than a dozen other cities. Jewish communal life is moderately well organized. Emigration to Israel has been substantial since the collapse of the Soviet Union, reflecting Jewish discomfort with government policies favoring native Kazakhs in employment and a change in the cultural environment due to the departure of many Russian-speakers fleeing increased Kazakh nationalism.

Perhaps 1,500 Jews, most of European background, remain in Turkmenistan, one of the more impoverished of the generally poor Central Asian states. About 1,000 live in the capital city of Ashgabat, and smaller populations of several hundred each live in Bairam-Ali, Mary, and Chardzhou. General instability, repressive human rights conditions, and a strong trend toward Islamization of society have discouraged the formation of indigenous Jewish institutions, such as educational or welfare programs. Without an institutional framework, Turkmen Jewry has been isolated from other Jewish populations.

Approximately 30,000 Jews remain in Uzbekistan, a country whose Jewish population has decreased by more than one-third in recent years. The largest concentration (about 18,000) resides in the capital city of Tashkent, more than three-quarters of them Ashkenazi. Fewer than 5,000, mostly Bukharan, live in Samarkand, and about 4,000 remain in Bukhara. The Fergana Valley Jewish communities in Andizhan, Namangan, Kokand, and Margelan have diminished radically, their populations fleeing as clan and tribal warfare tore through the region in the early 1990s.

The Jewish population of Tadjikistan, centered in the capital city of Dushanbe, has fallen from about 15,000 to fewer than 1,000 individuals since 1991. The massive departure reflects the political and economic disintegration of the larger state under conditions of ethnic and clan rivalries, Islamic radicalization, and widespread corruption.

Fewer than 4,000 Jews remain in Kirghyza, most in the capital city of Bishkek (Frunze). Although Kirghyza has been less subject to ethnic violence than Tadjikistan or Uzbekistan, increasing local nationalism has adversely affected Jewish life.

II. Jewish Identity and Antisemitism

The emergence of *glasnost* as policy in the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union afforded Ashkenazi or European Jews in the late-stage USSR and its successor states the opportunity to reconstruct their Jewish identities. For the first time since the 1917 Revolutions, no government penalties have awaited those Jews who have sought to determine the role of their Jewish heritage in defining their existence among others, the role of Judaism in shaping their perspectives on life, the concept of peoplehood among those sharing Jewish ethnicity, and the role of the State of Israel in building their futures.

Few among the entire Jewish people could be so ill-prepared to contemplate these critical motifs of contemporary Jewish identity. Especially for Jews residing in Russian and Ukrainian large cities, deprived for more than 70 years of access even to the symbols and rituals of the Jewish people, such issues have proved difficult to comprehend. So estranged from their heritage are many of those who remain in the Slavic successor states that they are unable to approach fundamental questions stemming from their Jewish roots.

Even before the Soviet period, many Russian Jews identified themselves as part of a secular ethnic or national group, comparable to Latvians, Ukrainians,

or Armenians, rather than a religious group. Soviet policy promoted continuation of such a self-view, devoid of any religious implication.²⁸ Western Jewish identity concepts such as religious belief and practice, affiliation with Jewish institutions, and interest in other diaspora Jewish populations and the State of Israel were irrelevant. Mandated Soviet atheism invalidated any theological belief system, expressions of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union were often distorted for political purposes, no independent Jewish institutions existed with which one could affiliate, and world Jewry and Israel were forbidden subjects, proscribed because of Soviet policies on Jewish identification, Zionism, and various foreign policy issues.

Only a minority of Jews in the USSR entered the post-Soviet era with any positive sense of Jewish identity. For most, Jewish ethnicity was an impediment generating crude popular bigotry as well as various obstacles to higher education, employment, and career advancement. Jewish heritage was noted on the nationality line (fifth paragraph) of each citizen's internal passport or identity card, giving rise to the quip among Jews that they were afflicted with a "handicap of the fifth paragraph". Among Jews in the large urban areas of the Slavic republics, intermarriage had been the norm for several decades, often pursued deliberately in an effort to dilute Jewish identity and the stigma attached to it. Only among Jews in western and southern borderlands, who retained much of their Jewish heritage, was there a positive sense of Jewish identification.

Although some Soviet Jews avidly read the Russian-language translations of Jewish-interest books that were smuggled into the country or circulated in *samizdat* during the Soviet period, they were a small minority of all Jews residing in the USSR. The majority were too assimilated or too fearful to pursue such ventures.

Notwithstanding the degradation of Jewish identity among Soviet Jews over more than seven decades of totalitarian rule, recent research has shown some receptivity to cultural and intellectual expressions of Jewish identity among contemporary Russian Jewry. For example, a study of Jews in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg showed that two-thirds of the youngest age cohorts attended a Jewish theater performance in 1993, 40 percent of all adult Jews believed it desirable to learn more about Jewish history, and 53 percent believed it desirable to learn more about important figures in Jewish art, literature, and music.²⁹ Jewish studies in an academic context appeal to some Jewish intellectuals not otherwise engaged in Jewish activities, and informal Jewish history or other special-interest clubs have attracted some among the general Jewish public who are most comfortable with an intellectual approach to their Jewish identity. However, it is widely believed that only ten to 20 percent of all post-Soviet Jews in large urban areas, where the majority of Jews reside, participate in any Jewish activity -- and many of these individuals are elderly people whose participation is determined by their need for welfare services from

Jewish communal organizations. (In smaller cities, the proportion of post-Soviet Jews who are active in Jewish communal life appears to be larger, perhaps as high as 40 percent in some locations.)

Religion is the weakest aspect of post-Soviet Jewish identity. Having been raised in a milieu of official state atheism, many post-Soviet Jewish adults are alienated from religious thinking. Worship and prayer are beyond their vision. The lack of a credible indigenous rabbinate is also a deterrent. Although several of the foreign rabbis now serving in the successor states have been imaginative and persistent in their outreach efforts, a gulf between native-born post-Soviet Jews and foreign rabbis who have arrived in the successor states only as adults is almost inevitable. Some suggest that another barrier to Jewish religious observance in the post-Soviet states is the lack of an alternative to the Orthodox -- and mainly hasidic -- form of Judaism practiced and supported by the foreign rabbis who have dominated Jewish religious life in the successor states. Any religious expression of Judaism that gains broad acceptance in major Russian-speaking urban areas must be intellectually coherent, sophisticated, and fully cognizant of the strong sense of spirituality (*dukhovnost'*) that is deeply rooted in Russian philosophy and culture.

Among many Jews of middle age or older in large cities, a significant and positive Jewish identification may be beyond reach. Cosmopolitan in outlook, it is likely that most will elect to remain in the post-Soviet states, continuing their work in professional and intellectual fields. They will attempt, with varying degrees of success, to blend into the Russian-speaking majority in post-Soviet urban life. Many who seek to emigrate will shun Israel and go only to the United States, Germany, or another country.

However, some Jews in Russia, particularly those in the *intelligentsia*, share with ethnic Russians a strong sense of spirituality. Thoroughly acculturated into Russian life, adoption of Russian Orthodox Christianity as a belief system may seem a rational option. In several large cities, Russian Orthodox priests can be found who promote a highly intellectual form of Russian Orthodox Christianity attractive to the well-educated intelligentsia. Although many converts may be sincere, it is likely that others perceive membership in the indigenous church as expedient in an increasingly nationalistic society.

Christian missionaries, including several groups of the "messianic Jewish" type,³⁰ are active in the transition states, usually proselytizing to lower- and middle-class Jews. Confusion is widespread among Jews about the difference between nationality and religion; because the Soviet regime considered Jewish ancestry to connote Jewish *nationality*, some people believe that one can be Jewish by nationality and Christian by religion. Typically, such organizations as Hear O Israel Ministries will rent a large stadium or other arena for the staging of a free concert on a Jewish theme. Small gifts and Russian-language missionary literature may be given to attendees in exchange for their names and addresses.

Several missionary groups offer substantive welfare assistance directly to needy Jews or to Jewish communal organizations. No reliable figures exist regarding either the extent of the missionary activities or the number of Jews who have converted under their auspices. Rabbis in a few post-Soviet cities have been able to obtain injunctions against messianic groups on the grounds that their activities are deceitful, i.e., that they misrepresent themselves as Jews or that they are cults rather than religions. Some Jews who convert to Christianity are bewildered when Israel rejects their attempts to immigrate under the Law of Return.

For the minority who are interested in active Jewish identification, education in Jewish secular fields as well as Jewish welfare and cultural institution-building are likely to be their priorities. One of the troubling legacies of the Soviet period is that, even among Jewish activists in the successor states, assimilation of Jews into the ethnic Russian majority may be perceived as a positive phenomenon. In the view of many Jews, assimilation is valued because it is believed to reduce antisemitism. Thus, emerging Jewish leaders may encourage intermarriage, and Jewish donors may support Jewish-sponsored welfare activity but reject appeals for funds to support Jewish religious programs or Jewish education.

Antisemitism is an abiding force in the successor states to the Soviet Union. Political instability, prolonged economic distress, social tensions, ethnic conflict, and widespread cynicism and despair all contribute to resurgent anti-Jewish bigotry on former Soviet territory. Nonetheless, few post-Soviet Jews perceive antisemitism as a personal threat in the short term; it is, rather, an enduring undercurrent, its presence affirmed by easily accessible antisemitic newspapers and other publications,³¹ street or popular antisemitism, and, in Russia and some other areas, occasional appearances by groups of uniformed Black Hundreds forces or similar nationalist extremists. That all Jews in Russia (and other successor states of the USSR) are insecure is a judgment widely held among Russian (and other formerly Soviet) Jews themselves as well as foreign observers.³²

As in the Soviet period, Jews are frequent targets of antisemitic epithets on the street. Jewish leaders often receive abusive and threatening telephone calls, and the homes of some have been defaced with antisemitic slogans or vandalized. Many of the more prestigious institutions of higher education maintain *de facto* anti-Jewish entrance quotas, and local nationalisms often lead to discriminatory employment practices. Jewish communal institutions -- synagogues, communal centers, cemeteries -- have become targets of antisemitic vandalism, including arson. The number of such incidents appears to have increased substantially following the August 1998 devaluation of the Russian ruble and ensuing economic hardships affecting a broad segment of the general population.

Perhaps as many as 80 "national patriotic" associations operate in Russia alone. The common themes of all are: (1) Russian nationalism; (2) an underlying right-wing dogma, such as neo-fascism, neo-Naziism, neo-Stalinism, monarchism, or even Russian paganism; (2) antisemitism, expressed most frequently by ascribing Russian calamities -- e.g., the Bolshevik revolution, the murder of the last tsar and his family, Stalinist purges, the devaluation of the ruble in August 1998 and subsequent economic adversity -- to Jews; and (3) charges of a Zionist/Jewish/Western conspiracy against Russia and the Russian people.³³ Some of these organizations are structured along paramilitary lines, their members attired in military-type uniforms adorned with Nazi-like regalia. Many such groups are fractious, riven by personal animosities and narrow doctrinal disputes.

Another post-Soviet phenomenon is the emergence of the so-called "New Russians", the often haughty *nouveaux riches* of nascent Russian capitalism. Among them are a disproportionately large number of Jews. Stereotypically, many are engaged in banking, media, and politics, thus sustaining and fomenting anew several of the classic canards of antisemitism.³⁴ Although mainstream media have been restrained in their reporting of the Jewish New Russians, other publications have exploited such circumstances in hackneyed antisemitic images.³⁵

In a June 1998 report of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the following was noted:

A . . . source of social dissatisfaction is expressed in the search for a new definition of Russian identity and culture. While this need affects mainly a particular segment of the intelligentsia, the broad public, that is, the older and more provincial section, is sensitive to Russia's weaker international status, to the loss of prestige and the infiltration of foreign culture and cultural norms. These are people who feel the loss of security and stability most strongly, and they are also less able to enjoy the advantage of the presence of foreign goods, foreign culture, and foreign initiatives. Their most salient feeling, faced with these new influences, is one of confusion and degradation, instead of the sense of national pride that in earlier times took the place of economic comfort. Among the intelligentsia this "confusion of identity" is at the present time a source for a lot of antisemitism, with Jews being blamed for leading a [post-] Soviet culture that is destroying the Russian language and the cultural tradition.³⁶

The most high-profile antisemitic voices are those of several Russian Communist public figures, such as Nikolai Kondratenko, the governor of Krasnodar *krai* (region) in southern Russia; Albert Makashov, a retired general and current Communist member of the Russian Duma (Parliament); and Viktor Ilyukhin, another Communist member of the Duma, who is chairman of the Duma committee on security. The former first secretary of the Krasnodar

Communist party, Kondratenko has blamed the Kremlin, which he claims is controlled by Jews and Zionists, for the demise of the Communist party, the Chechen-Russia conflict, the emergence of homosexuality in Russia, and attacks on the Russian Orthodox Church. He has formed an alliance with local Cossacks and is said to believe that an international Jewish conspiracy rules the world.³⁷

Mr. Makashov has used the podium afforded him by his parliamentary position to denounce Jews in flamboyant rhetoric, blaming Jews for Russia's economic problems. Mr. Ilyukhin has accused Jews of "genocide against the Russian people", asserting that Jewish advisors to President Boris Yeltsin are responsible for the high Russian mortality rate since 1991, the year that Mr. Yeltsin gained power.

Perhaps most troublesome to observers has been the failure of responsible parties to condemn such statements. Pressed by officials of the Embassy of the United States in Moscow to condemn Mr. Kondratenko's frequent ethnic diatribes, Russian government officials claim that the designation of Krasnodar region as a *krai*, i.e., a territorial unit that usually is an integrated economic region specializing in production of a particular commodity, affords the Krasnodar government a certain level of autonomy. Russia, according to this explanation, enjoys only limited influence in Krasnodar and cannot induce any changes in Mr. Kondratenko's rhetoric or policies.³⁸

In November 1998, the Duma considered and rejected a measure to denounce Mr. Makashov.³⁹ In late December 1998, Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov, under pressure to publicly censure the bigoted statements of his comrades, did indeed denounce antisemitism (without referring to his fellow Communists), but at the same time labeled Zionism "a blood relative of fascism". Mr. Zyuganov wrote in an open letter to two Russian officials that the "spread of Zionism in the state government in Russia is one of the reasons for the current catastrophic condition of the country, the mass impoverishment and the process of extinction of its people". Mr. Zyuganov's attempts to draw a distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism echo Soviet propaganda from the late 1940s to the late 1980s when Soviet authorities attempted, with little success, to conceal official state antisemitism under a mask of "anti-Zionism".⁴⁰

The perception among many post-Soviet Jews of antisemitism as an enduring undercurrent rather than a threat to personal safety is explained by several factors. First, most antisemitism appears to be popular or street bigotry, lacking active government support. Pragmatic governments in most of the successor states recognize that relations with aid-giving Western countries are unlikely to be enhanced by state-supported expressions of ethnic intolerance. Second, many post-Soviet Jews consider anti-Jewish graffiti, name-calling, and vandalism to be examples of "hooliganism", rather than incidents of antisemitism. According to this line of thought, such offenses are antisemitic

only when perpetrated or endorsed by official institutions, such as government entities, workplaces, or university admissions authorities.

Third, new “villains” seem to have replaced Jews as primary targets of prejudicial opprobrium. Chechens, other natives of the Caucasus Mountain area, and Romany appear to be more vulnerable to popular Slavic bigotry than are Jews. Fourth, with the notable exception of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the zealous national-patriotic groups are often small and fragmented, apparently unable to attract large numbers of followers.

The major potential problem facing Jews in the successor states regarding antisemitism lies not within the wrathful extremes, but in the fundamental social, political, and economic instability of new nations. Post-Soviet chaos and poverty breed resentment; imposed upon the general intolerance and antisemitism that have long festered in the authoritarian traditions of Russia and other successor states, such bitterness portends continuing antisemitic difficulties for local Jews.

III. Jewish Communal Infrastructure

The Jewish Religious Presence

Approximately 50 rabbis hold positions as community rabbis in the successor states.⁴¹ About 20 are in Ukraine, and perhaps 18 rabbis are posted in various cities in Russia, including several serving specific groups in Moscow. Two rabbis hold community posts in Uzbekistan (Tashkent and Samarkand), two in Moldova (both in Kishinev), two in Belarus (both in Minsk), and one community rabbi each can be found in Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia (*Gruzia*), Armenia, and Kazakhstan.

Although most of these rabbis are associated with specific synagogues, their role differs from that of a congregational leader in the Western sense. Rabbis in the transition states are community organizers, mobilizing and representing local Jews in various endeavors. Those who are successful are skilled politicians. They have established and nurtured communal institutions, such as day schools and welfare services, the latter often in cooperation with the Joint Distribution Committee. They interact productively with government authorities and with representatives of other Jewish institutions, both local and international. Many are talented fundraisers, working with foreign support groups

and, increasingly, with local benefactors. They mediate conflicts and turf battles among local Jews, eschewing confrontation whenever possible but prepared to use the authority of their positions when mediation is no longer effective. The role of spiritual leader, so significant a function of congregational rabbis in the West, sometimes seems almost incidental to the role of political leader.

Three large-city rabbis are particularly outstanding as community rabbis: Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, Chief Rabbi of Moscow; Rabbi Yaakov Bleich, Chief Rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine; and Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki, Chief Rabbi of Dnipropetrovsk. All of these men have been in their posts since 1990 or 1991, developing and nurturing relationships that elude emissaries of secular organizations who typically serve terms of one to three years.⁴² Their long tenure, their political skills, their institutional achievements, and the respect accorded rabbis have conferred upon these "super rabbis" great credibility.

Among the more prominent rabbis in smaller Jewish population centers are the following in Ukraine: Rabbi Pinchas Vishetzky in Donetsk; Rabbi Avrum Wolf, until recently in Kherson; Rabbi Shalom Gotlib in Nikolayev; and Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm in Zhitomir. In Russia, which has far fewer rabbis in smaller Jewish population centers, Rabbi Elyashiv Kaplun of Rostov-on-Don and Rabbi Shlomo Deitch of Samara are considered especially capable.⁴³ The tenure of rabbis in smaller Jewish population centers has been of shorter duration, but many are considered individuals of great authority among both local Jews and non-Jewish local officials. In most instances, they are the only foreign Jews in their respective communities and they may be the only Jews with leadership skills in a large region.⁴⁴

Rabbis in the transition states execute their responsibilities in an environment of political and economic instability, widespread corruption, burgeoning crime, and immature government institutions.⁴⁵ Husbands and fathers of young children, many are overburdened with unsustainable workloads.⁴⁶ They require competent business and property managers as community institutions develop and flourish. Administrative assistants and other staff associates are vital to their effectiveness, yet difficult to engage. Few local personnel possess the acumen and skills necessary for effective employment in such positions, and compensation for qualified foreign staff often exceeds budgetary provisions.

Chabad remains the most assertive force, placing rabbis and supporting their efforts through Or Avner, a Moscow-based operation headed by Rabbi Dovid Mondshine. Or Avner was founded in 1993 by Levi Levayev, a Tashkent-born diamond merchant and Israeli businessman who owns residences in Jerusalem, Antwerp, and Moscow. Named in memory of Mr. Levayev's father, Or Avner is an unofficial and independent successor to Lishkat Ezrat Achim, the Chabad international assistance organization that weakened significantly during the final illness of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.⁴⁷

Or Avner currently provides financial support to community rabbis in 25 different cities throughout the successor states and to several itinerant rabbis who serve smaller population centers in specific regions. It also provides partial funding to 15 day schools and to a number of Chabad Sunday schools, preschools, youth clubs, and summer camps.⁴⁸ It assists several yeshivas and adult education programs. Its publishing ventures include a high-quality illustrated monthly journal, *Lekhaim*, that is distributed throughout the transition countries.

Recognizing that few post-Soviet Jews are comfortable in traditional religious settings, Or Avner is organizing Jewish community centers to attract the largely secular post-Soviet Jewish population into Jewish communal activity. A large purpose-built facility currently under construction in Moscow will feature a 1000-seat assembly hall for holiday observances and concerts, computer center, senior citizen center, gymnasium, weight room, and various other activity areas. In other cities, choral synagogues that are returned to Jewish communities after decades of appropriation by government authorities are being converted into community centers designed to attract a broad spectrum of the local Jewish population. The Joint Distribution Committee subsidizes some programs in these centers.

Or Avner operates a rabbinic placement service, attracting rabbis from Israel and various diaspora countries. It is beginning to place indigenous rabbis and "para-rabbis" trained in Russian yeshivot in some smaller Jewish population centers.

The Or Avner annual budget is approximately \$13.5 million, consisting of three major components. The core segment is a \$6 million general operating fund, most of which is contributed by Levi Levayev. Individual Chabad rabbis in the successor states raise another \$6 million, both in their own communities and from foreign supporters. The final \$1.5 million is contributed by a diaspora family, mainly for the purpose of synagogue renovation and facilities construction.

Several other Chabad-related programs operate in the transition states independently of Or Avner. Chamah was founded as an underground organization in Russia during the 1950s. Now centered in Moscow, it sponsors a large welfare program and an elementary school in the Russian capital. Tsirei Chabad, an Israeli-based group, directs Chabad operations in Kyiv, including the well-known Brodsky synagogue and a day school. Shamir, also based in Israel, operates an extensive Russian-language publishing enterprise and many programs in Israel for Russian-speaking olim. It has also sponsored day schools in Riga and St. Petersburg, but the latter has devolved to Or Avner.

Karliner-Stoliner hasidim are active in central and western Ukraine as well as Belarus, areas associated with their history. Rabbi Yaakov Bleich, Chief Rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine, is the most prominent Karliner-Stoliner rabbi in the successor states. Highly respected in his work on both the municipal and national levels, Rabbi Bleich oversees comprehensive education and welfare programs and represents the Kyiv and Ukrainian Jewish populations in several international forums. Yad Yisroel, the Brooklyn-based Karliner-Stoliner support organization, operates an extensive outreach effort in smaller Jewish population centers throughout western and central Ukraine, including day schools in Kyiv and Lviv, a residential school in Kyiv, and a large summer camp. The Karliner-Stoliner movement also sponsors boarding schools in Israel geared to the needs of Russian-speaking adolescents, especially those who come to Israel without their families.⁴⁹

Jerusalem-based Ohr Somayach International⁵⁰ established a presence in Odessa in late 1993. Under the leadership of Rabbi Shlomo Baksht, an Israeli, its operations have grown rapidly to include a large day school, homes for disadvantaged children, a summer camp, adult education classes, and recovery of the Odessa Central Synagogue. Several additional rabbis teach in the school, which is modern/centrist Orthodox and Zionist in its orientation.

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (OU), based in New York, and Yeshivat Sha'alvim of Israel sponsor a high school, youth center, and summer camp in Kharkiv, an industrial and university city in eastern Ukraine. Modern Orthodox rabbis from Israel supervise religious aspects of these programs. Although traditional Shabbat services and holiday observances are held at the youth center, the OU agenda in Kharkiv is youth-focused and does not assume inclusion of a conventional community synagogue. The OU program is strongly Israel-oriented.

Additional religious organizations, such as Aish HaTorah and YUSSR (Yeshiva and University Students for the Spiritual Renewal of Soviet Jewry), also sponsor Orthodox-directed programs in the post-Soviet transition states. Both programs focus on local young people and both are led by young people. Most Aish HaTorah leaders are Israelis, and most YUSSR leaders are American students and recent graduates associated with Yeshiva University and Columbia University in New York. Some in both groups are rabbinical students.

The history of Progressive (Reform) and Masorti (Conservative) Judaism in the post-Soviet transition states is largely a history of missed opportunities. Unwilling to commit financial resources and unable to generate major corps of expatriate rabbis willing to live and work in the transition states for extended periods of time, the more liberal streams of Judaism lack widespread rabbinic leadership and professionally-managed institutions on the ground.

Rabbis associated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism are working only in Moscow, Minsk, and Kyiv.⁵¹ About 55 nascent Progressive congregational groups exist in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, a disproportionately large number of which are in small Jewish population centers. The World Union provides funding for the Institute for Modern Jewish Studies, a Kyiv-based institution that prepares indigenous Jews for paraprofessional leadership roles in the post-Soviet states. It also sponsors various workshops for congregational leaders, 12 Sunday schools, four pre-schools, three short-term summer camps for adolescents (one each in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine), and a summer camp for university students in Belarus. It publishes Russian-language materials, including prayer books and holiday information.

Masorti Judaism has focused its efforts on academic Judaica and on smaller Jewish population centers in Ukraine. In cooperation with YIVO, the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York) sponsors Project Judaica, a Judaic studies and archival research program at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow. Its efforts in Ukraine include a Tali day school in Chernovtsy and Sunday schools in even smaller Jewish population centers in Berdichev and the Carpathian Mountain region. Masorti sponsors several Ramah summer camp sessions and conducts occasional seminars. It lacks a rabbinic presence and has made little effort to develop popular institutions in large cities where the Jewish population is concentrated.

Rabbis in both Russia and Ukraine have established national umbrella organizations for the promotion of religious observance. KEROR (Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations) was established in 1997 as an umbrella and resource organization for religious-based organizations in Russia. Many of its services are designed to support small religious communities that do not have rabbis. It sponsors seminars for lay leaders and issues a number of publications. From its inception, it has included both Orthodox and more liberal Jewish religious congregations.⁵² The Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine represents synagogues and rabbis throughout Ukraine in religious and communal matters. Initially focusing on synagogue organizations with rabbinic leadership, its capacity as a resource for smaller communities without rabbis is being strengthened.

The Beginnings of a Jewish Communal Infrastructure

The reconstruction of Jewish communal life began in 1988, a by-product of the *perestroika* policy of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. Throughout the Soviet Union, in large cities and smaller population centers, local Jews began to establish Jewish organizations. Often among the first to appear was a Jewish culture association or Jewish history club that attempted to explore Jewish identity through intellectual discourse, a context comfortable to well-educated

Soviet Jews. In areas where local Jews had been slaughtered during the Holocaust, groups gathered to restore and commemorate massacre sites, to interview survivors, and to write histories. Jewish musicians began to perform Jewish music that had long been suppressed. Russian-language Jewish newspapers appeared, a sharp break with the Soviet past when authorities permitted only a few Yiddish publications, thus ensuring that readership would be limited. Jewish war veterans formed their own clubs, initially for purposes of camaraderie and later, in some areas, to engage in volunteer activities.

Parents and educators developed Sunday schools for local Jewish children. Bereft of Jewish knowledge themselves and lacking any Russian-language learning materials, the organizers nonetheless forged ahead, their enthusiasm overcoming their inexperience. Similarly, some professional medical personnel as well as untrained volunteers began to look after lonely and impoverished elderly, their good intentions often exceeding their access to material resources.

The intensity of structured Jewish communal activity was determined less by the size of the local Jewish population than by the energy and organizing skills of those who stepped forward as leaders and by the good will of local officials who held the authority to return Jewish communal property confiscated during the Soviet era or to provide alternative gathering places. Local administrators could also choose to harass or not harass nascent Jewish groups, e.g., connect electricity lines to reclaimed property, observe reasonable zoning requirements, or cooperate in memorializing sites of historic importance to the Jewish community.

In 1989, concurrent with the emergence of local Jewish organizations, a small group of individuals in Moscow formed an association known as the Va'ad, which claimed to represent all of Soviet Jewry. Many Jewish groups in localities throughout the USSR affiliated with it, perceiving it as a resource center for operational assistance, government access, and financial support. The Va'ad contacted various foreign and multinational Jewish agencies, expressing an eagerness to participate in international forums on behalf of Jews in the Soviet Union. In response, the Va'ad was invited to send delegates to a number of foreign conferences.

The sweeping ambitions of the Va'ad were never realized. Its leadership has been paralyzed by internal disputes and factionalism, lack of organizing skills, limited fundraising capacity, and financial mismanagement. It provides few services. Almost from its inception, it ignored and offended rabbinic leadership.⁵³ Over time, it has lost credibility.

The Va'ad and local organizations alike originated within an institutional void created by seven decades of Soviet rule, a political system that generated a pattern of dependence on the state even as the state oppressed and degraded

its citizens. With no experience in self-governance, few groups have flourished. As scholar George Schöpflin has noted about post-Communist societies, “[The] tradition of autonomous action, the core definition of a civil society, is still very weak.”⁵⁴

Autonomous action requires individual initiative and individual responsibility, two characteristics ill promoted by decades of Soviet rule. Duplicity remains an abiding characteristic of many individuals reared in Soviet society. The pervasiveness of *agitprop* (agitation and propaganda) in the USSR has discouraged habits of moderation in speech. Tolerance and accountability were similarly devalued in the Soviet Union. Effective independent leadership has been slow to emerge among post-Soviet Jewry.

The skills of consensus-building, planning, and priority-setting were repressed in broad segments of Soviet society; instead, consensus often was claimed when none existed, and comprehensive planning and priority-setting were within the province of small Communist party and government elites. Procedural tensions generate conflict and disaffection. Many organizations have been unable to develop a leadership style independent of the extremes defined by the authoritarian approach deriving from the Soviet period and extravagant democracy in which every action requires a vote.

With little previous exposure to Judaism, Jewish communal life, or any independent organization, few post-Soviet would-be Jewish leaders have been able to develop a value system to guide their actions. Similarly, few have any vision of the Jewish community they wish to construct.

For some leaders, such vision is imposed by a foreign organization that has appointed them as local representatives. Training seminars can be effective in transmitting values and knowledge, but they cannot guarantee acceptance by the indigenous community of foreign-selected local leaders. In several instances, local representatives have become corrupted by the power accorded them and have encumbered the work of their sponsoring agencies.

Further constraints on indigenous organizational growth and leadership development are widespread vice, graft, and theft. Some philanthropic activity in the successor states has been used as a front for corrupt commercial practice, thus generating suspicion and mistrust of all philanthropic endeavor. The absence of a legal culture in post-Soviet societies affects even those charitable operations established for noble purposes. No tradition of democracy informs the conduct of activists. Systematic transfers of power are rarely accomplished; chairmen and presidents maintain authority without limits on tenure, a term of office ending only when its holder loses interest, is forced by age to retire, or emigrates.

The concept of professional communal leadership is also slow to develop, in part because of financial constraints, but also because an organizational vision accommodating distinct lay and professional responsibilities has no precedent in (post-) Soviet culture. An Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers developed by the Joint Distribution Committee in St. Petersburg (with branches in several other cities) has had a notable and positive impact on direct-service personnel employed by Jewish communal organizations throughout the successor states; however, management concepts and skills in communal service, as well as in other spheres of society and industry, remain elusive.

Financial constraints also plague most Jewish organizations. Few post-Soviet Jews identify with the concept of *tzedekah*. The very act of contributing funds is difficult in a practical sense. Individual checking accounts do not exist, few people have credit cards -- and the acceptance of credit card payments by charitable organizations is unknown. Bank transfers can be very cumbersome. No tax benefits accrue from philanthropic support; on the contrary, some governmental authorities are so starved for revenues that taxes are *imposed* on charitable gifts. A dearth of financial management skills plagues all of post-Soviet society. Even basic financial reporting mechanisms are crudely developed. Banking systems in the successor states lack sophistication, investment is extraordinarily risky, and many individuals in finance-related businesses are associated with corruption and organized crime. So severe has been inflation in Ukraine and several other successor states that budgets are often rendered meaningless within six months of enactment.

The Russian Jewish Congress

In response to the very visible leadership vacuum in Russia, a group of leading Russian Jewish businessmen and religious leaders established the Russian Jewish Congress in January 1996. Led by Vladimir Gusinsky, then president of the Most Bank group and owner of both print and television media outlets, REK⁵⁵ stated that it intended to develop Jewish education, religious, and social welfare programs based on local resources.⁵⁶ In addition to emphasizing their intention to be financially self-reliant, REK spokesmen also underscored their difference from the Va'ad in two other respects: (1) a major goal would be bridging the gap between secular and religious organizations, and (2) whereas the Va'ad had concentrated on developing a national role for itself, REK would focus on establishing local service delivery systems as well as a national service capacity. REK leadership has taken the position that Russian Jewry is a "normal" Jewish population with a need to establish a "normal" Jewish communal infrastructure. Although some of its leaders have personal ties to Israel, REK is non-Zionist in outlook and has shown limited interest in developing ties with multinational Jewish organizations.

The Moscow-based central governing body of REK includes; Gusinsky, who pledged one million dollars annually to REK, as president; three vice-presidents, each of whom pledged \$500,000;⁵⁷ Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the Chief Rabbi of Moscow; Rabbi Adolf Shayevich, Chief Rabbi of Russia; and Rabbi Berl Lazar, the director of Chabad operations in Russia. A professional staff is led by Alexander Osovtsov, the executive vice-president.

Although its initial work has been strongly focused on Moscow, REK is active throughout Russia. A St. Petersburg branch opened in late 1996 with Mikhail Milashvili, a prominent local businessman, as its first president, and additional affiliates have been established in more than 40 other Russian cities.

REK activities can be defined by its major committees: religious programs; culture; primary and secondary education; higher secular education; higher religious education; and social welfare. In 1997, its second year of operations, REK distributed more than \$15.6 million in grants to various Russian Jewish communal projects. More than half of this amount, \$8,502,591, financed the construction of the Memorial Synagogue at Poklonnaya Gora.⁵⁸ Other major allocations were:

\$ 1,047,584	religious programs
784,645	culture
464,963	primary and secondary Jewish education
430,000	social welfare
369,586	research and higher secular Jewish education
200,460	higher religious Jewish education
2,377,470	projects determined by regional branches ⁵⁹

The donor base of REK consists of about 70 major contributors across Russia, each of whom gives between \$50,000 and several million dollars annually, plus a larger number of additional individuals who make significantly smaller gifts. In the wake of the 1998 economic crisis, most observers anticipate a major reduction in the amount of funds collected, but an increase in the number of donors contributing gifts of lesser amounts.⁶⁰ REK has not yet developed a significant base of midlevel donors.⁶¹ The organization must also strengthen its infrastructure, building an institution that is more substantial than a few prominent personalities.

Ukrainian Jewish Organizations

In Ukraine, the successor state with the second largest Jewish population, two national Jewish organizations were established soon after Ukraine declared independence in 1991. The Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine, also known as the Ukrainian Va'ad, is associated with Yosif Zissels and Rabbi Yaakov D. Bleich, the Chief Rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine.

Unlike its Russian counterpart with a similar name, the Ukrainian Va'ad provides various services in welfare and Jewish education. Nominally competitive with the Va'ad is the Ukrainian Jewish Council, which pursues a more circumscribed agenda featuring Holocaust documentation and a limited number of additional services. It was associated with Ilya Levitas and Arkady Monastirsky.⁶² The Ukrainian Jewish Council has always been tainted by the association of Mr. Levitas and other activists with the former Ukrainian communist apparatus.

In mid-1997, a third national Jewish organization emerged in Ukraine. Vadim Rabinovich founded the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, designating himself as President. A wealthy businessman with a dubious reputation, Mr. Rabinovich has attracted a number of additional Jewish businesspeople to his association. Rabinovich and Dnipropetrovsk banker Viktor Pinchuk have each pledged \$500,000 annually to the organization and other Ukrainian Jewish participants are contributing \$50,000 each. However, Mr. Pinchuk's continued participation is questionable, the group has yet to commence serious planning, and its future may be limited by Mr. Rabinovich's past and current business operations in its efforts to earn the respect of those with whom it wishes to work.⁶³

In September of 1997, the All-Ukraine Jewish Congress and three other Ukrainian national Jewish organizations -- the Va'ad, the Ukrainian Jewish Council, and the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine -- agreed to form a Coordinating Council to reconcile their various activities and avoid duplication and conflict. The coordinating effort has been only partially successful. Further, Mr. Rabinovich remains a pariah among many influential Jews in Ukraine.

Jewish Organizations in the Border States

Jewish organizational efforts have been more effective and less conflict-prone in Latvia and in Moldova, where indigenous Jews had been under Soviet control only since World War II. Older adults recalled Jewish communal life in pre-Soviet years and nearly all local Jews shared memories, real and historic, of the Holocaust. The proximity in time and place to the *Katastrofa*, as it is known in the Russian language, has encouraged a fidelity to communal endeavor.

Jewish communal organization has been less successful in the Caucasus Mountain and Central Asian borderlands. Although controlled by the USSR since the 1920s, these territories were never fully penetrated by the Soviets. Oriental Jews managed to maintain Jewish tradition and some sense of community. Nonetheless, a dearth of organizing skills, local political chaos, turf battles between Oriental and Ashkenazi populations, and heavy Jewish emigration combined to deter establishment of effective Jewish institutions during the Gorbachev and early post-Soviet years.

IV. Welfare Needs of the Post-Soviet Jewish Population

So overwhelming are the needs of Jewish elderly in the post-Soviet successor states that nascent efforts to organize a Jewish communal social service delivery system have focused almost entirely on older Jews. As noted, approximately 500,000 post-Soviet Jews are elderly, i.e., more than one-third of the entire core Jewish population. Of these, the Joint Distribution Committee estimates that about 300,000 require some welfare aid, but only about 100,000 actually receive assistance.⁶⁴

The inability of post-Communist governments in the successor states to implement effective tax systems has led to the erosion of pension funds, thus impoverishing hundreds of thousands of retired persons. Until August 1998, monthly pension payments ranged from about nine dollars in the Caucasus area and Central Asian states to about \$55 in Russia. Devaluation of the ruble and subsequent inflation have reduced the value of pensions by at least 50 percent. Distribution of pension payments is often several months late. A significant minority of elderly receive no pension at all because their documents were never filed or have been misplaced, a casualty of twentieth century political upheaval.⁶⁵

The rising cost of food, clothing, and basic medications far exceeds the means of many elderly Jews.⁶⁶ It has become a cliché in the successor states that seniors can afford either food or medicine, but not both; however, even that aphorism may be dated as many retirees can afford to buy neither. Numerous elderly have ceased paying rent to government agencies that still own much of the housing stock in post-Soviet countries, a practice that appears to be tolerated in most cases. Few electricity authorities or telephone companies are so magnanimous, and a significant number of older Jews in particularly impoverished areas have disconnected their refrigerators and other basic appliances in an effort to stretch resources. Many seniors cannot afford to replace worn clothing, shoes, or bedding.

Another casualty of post-Soviet society has been medical care. Although rarely sophisticated during the Soviet period, a basic system of largely free or inexpensive medical services reached most sectors of the population. Hospitals and clinics in almost every city have closed major departments since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many of the more skilled physicians have emigrated. The pharmaceutical industry was never a priority during the Soviet era as both simple and sophisticated medications were imported at discounted prices from more advanced eastern bloc countries, such as Czechoslovakia and East Germany. With such supplies now available only at market prices, post-Soviet consumers are dependent upon relatively cheap and often low-quality

medicines manufactured locally or in developing countries. Better pharmaceutical goods from the West are also available, but usually at prices far beyond the budgets of all but the most wealthy. Children, too, suffer under such circumstances as fewer quality vaccinations are available. Diphtheria and polio, now rare in Western countries, are not uncommon in the successor states.⁶⁷

Admission to hospitals often is dependent upon the ability of a patient to supply all necessary medications. Many physicians and attendants demand extortionate fees. Surgery that is routine and usually practiced on an outpatient basis in the United States, such as cataract removals, is generally unavailable except to the very wealthy. Patients requiring hospitalization often must provide their own food and bedding, as well as compensation to nurses and other hospital staff for routine services.

Wheelchairs and other basic medical equipment are almost unobtainable in the successor states. Walkers were unknown until introduced by JDC in the mid-1990s. JDC now operates its own medical equipment production center in St. Petersburg and distributes its output to its various elderly care centers (*hasadim*) throughout the transition states. Hearing aids and accurate prescription eyeglasses are also unavailable to the impoverished senior population.

Many urban seniors are effectively imprisoned in their upper-floor apartments in buildings without elevators. Some live in communal apartments, occupying a single room and sharing kitchen and bathroom facilities with other individuals and families.

In hundreds of small towns, elderly Jews live in ramshackle bungalows, often without plumbing and dependent upon outdoor pumps, outhouses, and public bathhouses. Central heating is rare; primitive heating and cooking facilities in such domiciles require coal or wood for fuel, both of which are expensive to obtain and difficult to carry. Pensions generally are lower in small towns than in cities, food and medicines even scarcer.

The trauma of history in the successor states has extracted a severe psychological toll on numerous older Jews. Collectivization and forced closure of small businesses drove many Jewish families into poverty in the 1920s and 1930s. World War II erupted with a particular ferocity in territories heavily populated by Jews, sending those who were fortunate to evacuation in the Ural Mountains, Siberia, and Central Asia. Perhaps two million Jews living in areas occupied by Germany were slaughtered in quarries, ravines, or forests during the *Katastrofa*.⁶⁸ Survivors returned alone to their villages, only to find that their homes had been occupied by hostile townspeople, sometimes the local collaborators who had assisted Nazi forces in exterminating family members who had stayed behind. Many Jews fled to larger, anonymous cities where postwar Stalinist antisemitism generated hostility and barriers to education and career

advancement. Anti-Jewish bias remained a potent force throughout the Soviet post-war era, often erupting into virulent attacks in state-sponsored popular media. Government-directed antisemitism has largely disappeared since the collapse of the USSR, but popular prejudice remains an abiding reality.

Many Jewish elderly live alone, their families destroyed during World War II and the *Katastrofa* or separated by emigration. Younger people flee small towns in search of career opportunities, leaving older family members behind to fend for themselves and be consumed by memories. Similarly, younger individuals are preponderant among those Jews who emigrate. Unlike non-Jewish elderly, few Jewish seniors in cities can expect to receive food items from relatives who live on farms or reside in rural areas where gardening is possible.

Institutional facilities for elderly are limited to a small number of nursing homes, most of which provide a very low standard of care. Few individuals enter such institutions voluntarily. Assisted-living housing is non-existent.

The primary organization addressing Jewish welfare issues in the successor states is the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, an organization known as "Joint" ("*Dzhoint*" in Russian) or JDC. JDC returned to the then Soviet Union in 1988 at the specific request of the Soviet government after an absence of 50 years. It had begun assisting Soviet Jews in the early post-revolutionary period, establishing a network of childcare programs, medical stations, loan cooperatives, vocational schools, and agricultural colonies. In 1938, it was expelled.

JDC social service programs in the post-Soviet successor states focus on building a Jewish communal infrastructure through provision of various community services, most of them delivered through *heseds* (welfare centers) and community centers.⁶⁹ JDC operated more than 60 *hasadim* facilities in 1998.⁷⁰

Hesed programs in large cities may be based in detached buildings, such as former schools or health clinics. In smaller Jewish population centers, *hasadim* may be located in two- or three-room apartments or small houses. The principal program in all *hasadim* is coordination of community services to the disproportionately large number of elderly among the Jewish population. Such services include: food packages of various staples intended to supplement the basic bread-and-potatoes diet of many elderly; meals-on-wheels to bedridden or otherwise homebound seniors; social clubs, which usually include nutrition programs; canteen meals in *hasadim*, day schools, and private restaurants with which JDC has contracts; a "warm home" (*bayit cham*) program, quasi-day centers based in private apartments in which participants are provided regular nutritious meals and socializing opportunities; "hot lines" to seniors living alone; Jewish holiday celebrations; home heating assistance, in which seniors are provided firewood or coal for heating and/or gas balloons for ovens and stoves;

provision of warm clothing and blankets for winter; replacement of worn clothing and linens; loan of medical equipment, such as walkers and wheelchairs; homecare for the homebound, such as cleaning and cooking; and, in some areas, services to the visually and hearing impaired. JDC also subsidizes and/or manages welfare programs that have been established by other Jewish groups, both local and international.

A medical consultation service engages local volunteer physicians, many of them recently retired, to provide care to *hesed* clients. Foreign physicians are brought into the successor states to conduct seminars in conditions afflicting Jewish elderly, such as hypertension and diabetes. JDC is also working with pharmaceutical supply companies and medical assistance organizations to obtain basic medications at low cost for distribution to needy Jewish seniors.

Criteria have been developed to guide provision of services to those who are in greatest need of assistance. In general, individuals receiving aid must be indigent, elderly or handicapped, and isolated, i.e., without relatives to help care for them. As noted, JDC estimates that is reaching only about one-third of the elderly who need its service.

The community-building aspect of such *hasadim* is that each is governed by a local board of directors that establishes policies and program priorities and does some local fundraising. In most cities, the process for nominating new board members is effectively controlled by the expatriate JDC professional staff assigned to the community, often in collaboration with the local rabbi, who also is an expatriate.⁷¹ Notwithstanding such attentiveness to the selection of board members, few such councils would be able to fulfill the various responsibilities commonly charged to non-profit boards in the West. Indigenous members of local boards simply lack the experience and manner of thinking necessary to do so. Most major issues are proposed by JDC and endorsed by local boards, a process that is hardly surprising as it is JDC (and certain other organizations with which JDC has contractual agreements) that provides the preponderance of funding for the *hasadim* and their programs.

JDC offices in major cities often are responsible for services to smaller Jewish population centers in their regions. The area director employs local individuals for various professional and para-professional positions according to plans and budgets developed by JDC in Jerusalem. Many such local people participate in training seminars at the St. Petersburg-based JDC Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers, branches of the St. Petersburg institute in other cities, or in Israel. Different training programs exist for individuals in different specialties and at different stages in careers.

JDC serves as agent for several independent organizations that provide significant supplemental funding to the JDC core welfare budget (\$5,337,700 in 1999).⁷² Most important among them is the Conference on Jewish Material

Claims Against Germany, Inc., popularly known as the Claims Conference. Following the reunification of Germany, the Claims Conference received Jewish communal and heirless property located in the former East Germany. Proceeds of this property are used to benefit Jewish elderly in areas with large numbers of Holocaust survivors. Accordingly, the Claims Conference agreed to transfer \$21 million to JDC in 1997 for welfare work in eight post-Soviet cities.⁷³ However, due to difficult negotiations regarding purchase and renovation of *hesed* buildings, JDC expended only \$12.3 million in Claims Conference funds in 1997 and again in 1998, and expects to expend \$16.5 million in 1999.⁷⁴ No timetable exists for the duration of Claims Conference funding, an issue of considerable concern as JDC continues to develop an infrastructure that will require ongoing external support.⁷⁵

Additional JDC welfare funding is provided by: The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation (Baltimore), \$2 million annually for welfare programs in areas not supported by Claims Conference allocations; a special Hunger Relief Fund from North American Jewish federations, \$10 million between mid-1997 and mid-1999; JDC Endowment Fund, \$1.5 million in 1997 and \$4.5 million in 1998; and local Jews in the successor states, \$300,000 in 1997 and again in 1998. Additionally, the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief provided approximately \$1.6 million for welfare programs in western Ukraine in 1998 and is expected to provide a comparable amount in 1999; many of these services are operated by JDC on behalf of World Jewish Relief.

The Jewish Braille Institute of New York works with JDC *hasadim* in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv, and Lviv to provide talking books and cassette players as well as other aids to visually impaired elderly. Project Vision, a program of the American Physicians Fellowship for Medicine in Israel, is working with JDC to establish an ambulatory eye clinic in Dnipropetrovsk. The primary purpose of the eye clinic in its initial years is cataract extraction; a future goal of the program is the training of local ophthalmologists to perform all surgical procedures and the training of other local individuals to manage the clinic.⁷⁶

Several Western governments offer surplus food commodities for school and elderly nutrition programs, including those under Jewish auspices. Through Rabbi Yaakov Bleich, Chief Rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing \$300,000 to the Kiev Jewish community for partial renovation of a building to be used for senior citizen sheltered housing.⁷⁷ Such aid often is available only for projects directed by citizens of the aid-giving country and, in a practical sense, may be further limited to those individuals with support organizations in the donor country to identify available resources and satisfy processing requirements. The British government is contributing about \$600,000 in medical supplies to Jewish-sponsored projects in Ukraine in 1999.⁷⁸

Several rabbis in the successor states have been successful in mobilizing support groups abroad that periodically send in containers of food, medicine, and other items, such as clothing and blankets, that can be distributed to needy elderly and others. Many rabbis initiate soup kitchens and other assistance programs, some of which later attract an ongoing subsidy from JDC. Several rabbis have also organized discount pharmacies and other services that support the most disadvantaged Jews in their communities.

Additional foreign support is arranged through sister-city relationships, in which a Western Jewish community "adopts" a post-Soviet Jewish population center and provides various kinds of aid, including food, medical assistance, and equipment for Jewish schools. Among the more active of these relationships are those between St. Louis and Riga, Baltimore and Odessa, and Boston and Dnipropetrovsk. The Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey has supported the establishment of a *hesed* in Cherkassy, Ukraine. Jews in the Scandinavian countries have formed communal links with Jews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Individual synagogues in Western countries have also developed supportive ties with smaller Jewish communities in the successor states. Once established, many of these partnerships work closely with JDC.

The Russian Jewish Congress and its local affiliates, as well as local Jewish organizations in other areas, are attempting to develop and support an indigenous welfare structure that addresses the needs of local Jews in Russia. In its first two years of fundraising in 1996 and 1997, the Russian Jewish Congress distributed \$275,000 and \$430,000 respectively for welfare purposes. The Ukrainian Va'ad, with assistance from the Nathan Cummings Foundation of New York, established *Magen Avot* in 1992 to coordinate and assist welfare services to elderly Jews in 49 small Jewish population centers across Ukraine. JDC currently provides about 50 percent of its funding and much of its training, but a substantial portion of its management and field work is accomplished by local Jews.

In most communities, JDC and local Jewish institutions are able to coordinate welfare activity so as to maximize use of resources and avoid conflicts. For example, the kosher kitchens of Jewish day schools in some cities also serve a JDC-supported lunch to seniors who gather after children have concluded their meal, thus obviating the need for JDC to operate separate dining facilities; additionally, day school kitchens prepare JDC-funded meals-on-wheels for delivery to homebound seniors. JDC has made similar arrangements with synagogue-based soup kitchens to prepare and distribute meals to homebound clients.

Administration of aid to elderly in smaller towns presents enormous logistic complexities as little infrastructure exists for service to small population concentrations of as few as 20 people, almost all of them elderly. Often even more impoverished than seniors in metropolitan areas, elderly in such towns

require frequent distributions of food, medicine, clothing, and fuel. Over 200 small concentrations of Jewish elderly exist in western Ukraine alone.

The overwhelming needs of Jewish elderly often deflect interest away from a smaller, yet often equally deprived Jewish population segment -- Jewish children. The severe economic distress afflicting the post-Soviet successor states has also adversely affected Jewish families and children.

Perhaps the first to notice the large number of impoverished Jewish children in the successor states were rabbis operating day schools and summer camps. Although rabbis might have preferred to believe that most of the children who flocked to their institutions were in search of the Jewish education of which they and their parents had been deprived during the Soviet period, interaction with children and their families disclosed otherwise. Among the most important attractions of Jewish schools, especially in Ukraine, is that nearly all serve hot nutritious lunches at a time when government authorities have withdrawn meal subsidies from public secular schools. Recognizing that many families are unable to afford healthy meals of any kind, some Jewish schools began to add breakfast and a substantial afternoon snack to their daily programs. Free clothing and other items are available to pupils at some schools. Some Jewish day schools also serve as pediatric medical clinics, providing vaccinations and other free or low-cost medical services no longer available to the general public in some areas of the successor states.

Bus transportation to and from school, extended day programs, computer laboratories, and outstanding general studies curricula are other major enticements. Such features may be available in the new private schools emerging in many major cities, but these tuition-charging institutions are clearly beyond the means of many Jewish families. Many parents appear to value Hebrew-language study and Judaic programs only if emigration to Israel in the near future is under consideration.

Some families seek exemptions from the token fees charged by Jewish summer camps, both those under rabbinic supervision and those operated by the Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut). Numerous children arrive at three- and four-week residential camps with all of their camp clothing and other items in one small plastic bag.⁷⁹

A contributing factor to the economic distress of many households, Jewish and non-Jewish, in the successor states is the prevalence of single-parent families. Even among the well-educated, marriage often occurs very early, at age 18 or 19, followed in a few years by divorce. Divorce is easy and inexpensive, and alimony and child-support provisions are rarely enforced. Further, many children are born to never-married women. Perhaps stemming from the immediate post-World War II period when enormous battlefield and civilian losses resulted in a severely imbalanced population with many more

women of child-bearing age than men, Soviet and post-Soviet society have not attached the stigma to unwed motherhood that is common in most Western countries. However, even in the relative stability of the Soviet era, it was difficult to support a child on one salary. In the social and economic turbulence of post-Soviet society, the challenges are far greater.

According to estimates of the United Nations, about 40 percent of all children in Russia live in poverty.⁸⁰ (In Ukraine, where economic conditions are worse, the proportion of impoverished children may be even greater.) Some of these children, including Jewish children, are living with one or more unstable adults or are have been abandoned and are living on the streets. In Ukraine, such children are often called *deti na ulitse*, Russian for "children [who live] on the street" or "street children". In Russia itself, they are more often referred to as *besprizorniki* or waifs, homeless children. The latter term, originally used in the 1920s to describe the multitudes of orphans who wandered Russia's streets and roads during the post-Civil War turmoil of the 1920s, has been revived to refer to contemporary street children.⁸¹ Among them are an unknown number of Jewish children.

Many such children take shelter in derelict buildings or cellars. Some congregate in cavernous and nightmarish urban railroad stations, the refuge place in many cities for those whom post-Soviet society casts out -- the physically handicapped, homeless, mentally ill, alcoholics, drug runners and drug addicts, prostitutes, and the like. Jewish communal workers tell of Jewish children peddling pornographic literature outside a railroad terminal to support a drug addict mother and siblings inside, or of a Jewish prostitute trying to earn enough money to support her several children, each of whom has a different father.

Street children who are picked up in occasional police raids usually are dispatched to state- or municipally-operated orphanages, many of which are dilapidated, massively overcrowded, and violent. Overworked and poorly paid staff steal food from children. Educational opportunities are limited. In a few Moscow and St. Petersburg shelters with foreign philanthropic support, conditions may be substantially better; however, the majority of children's homes are "storage bins for children."⁸²

Not all abandoned Jewish children can be found in railroad stations or dingy children's shelters. Individual rabbis in the successor states tell of children being left on their doorsteps by grandparents who can no longer cope with their young charges, of other youngsters deposited in synagogues, or of panicky telephone calls from Jews in nearby smaller towns relating news of a local Jewish family crisis that has left children without adult care.

In response, a few rabbis have arranged informal networks of foster homes in their cities. Others rent apartments in which up to a half dozen

youngsters reside under the supervision of houseparents. In the mid-1990s, rabbis in Odessa and Dnipropetrovsk opened children's homes, each accommodating about 80 Jewish children. In Odessa, Rabbi Shlomo Bakhst, who is associated with Ohr Somayach Institutions in Jerusalem, was approached by local Jews aware of deplorable conditions encountered by Jewish children in local orphanages. Rabbi Baksht opened facilities under Ohr Somayach auspices, effected transfers of Jewish children from government institutions to the Ohr Somayach homes, and continues to search for Jewish children in distress.

In Dnipropetrovsk, Chabad Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki has established remarkable contacts with Jews locally and throughout the region since his arrival in 1990. He often hears about children in need through the day school that he operates, the largest in the successor states, or through his many contacts throughout the area. Initially, he placed needy children in supervised apartments. In mid-1997, Rabbi Kaminezki received sufficient support from a foreign donor to open purpose-built homes for boys and girls. Both Rabbi Kaminezki and his colleague in Odessa, Rabbi Baksht, offer special classes to prepare children for entrance into their respective day schools.

In late 1997, Rabbi Yaakov Bleich and his Karliner-Stoliner associate, Rabbi Moshe Fima, opened a "learning community" in Kiev that includes boarding facilities and a school that accommodates about 40 boys from troubled Jewish homes in Kiev and elsewhere in Ukraine. No comparable institution exists for girls. A residential facility for about 20 Jewish children is located in Korosten, a town in the Zhitomir region west of Kyiv.

None of the Ukrainian facilities accepts children under six years of age. Together, they accommodate about 220 children. Some rabbis and other observers in Ukraine believe that more than 300 Ukrainian Jewish youngsters require such placements. No residential program for Jewish children in distress operates in Russia, although two Moscow rabbis are each planning to initiate such projects in the near future. Among other inadequately served Jewish children in the successor states are *invalid children*, a Soviet-era classification that, perhaps, explains the lingering attitude in the successor states toward children with disabilities of various types, including learning disorders, visual or hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, physical handicaps, and other limitations. A JDC newsletter explains the status of disabled children in the successor states:

Disabled children are the most neglected segment of the population . . . throughout the FSU. They receive no rehabilitation therapy, and those disabled from childhood must overcome an impenetrable bureaucracy every year to remain eligible for a tiny government allocation. New, expensive medications and treatments at sanatoriums remain beyond their families means.⁸³

Such children usually are isolated in their homes, living with a parent forced to forego employment in order to care for their children.⁸⁴ Programs under Jewish auspices for these children and their families are very limited. Two Jewish day schools, one in Moscow (the Beit Yehudith school) and one in Dnipropetrovsk (the Chabad school), each maintain a single classroom for a small number of young children with learning problems and/or physical handicaps. Several JDC-sponsored *hasadim* and community centers are introducing programs for handicapped youngsters, but many such facilities lack appropriate space and nearly all lack trained personnel to work with disabled children. A Chabad-sponsored *michlala* (college or seminary for women) in Dnipropetrovsk initiated a special education concentration in its teacher-training courses during the 1998-99 academic year, the only program of its kind in the successor states under Jewish sponsorship.

Funding for services to children remains a major hurdle. Individuals and smaller institutions in Israel and the West have been the major donors. JDC, so significant in care of the elderly, provides only modest assistance. The Claims Conference, a major source of support for Jewish elderly, focuses on Holocaust survivors and other victims of World War II, thus excluding children.

V. Jewish Education

Jewish education in the post-Soviet successor states encompasses many institutions similar in form to Jewish education programs in other diaspora countries. Jewish preschools, day schools, Sunday schools, academic courses of study, yeshivot, and a range of informal education activities can be found in all major Jewish population centers. All such programs in the transition states are necessarily young, their origins a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some are outgrowths of grassroots initiatives, others required the energy, organizing skills, and financial investment of foreigners.

More than 20,000 Jewish children and adolescents are enrolled in the 35 Jewish pre-schools (serving 1,000 children), 45 Jewish day schools (10,000 pupils), and approximately 200 Jewish Sunday schools (10,000 pupils) that have been established throughout the post-Soviet transition states. Other formal programs in Jewish education include about eight yeshivot, several secular university departments or equivalent institutions in academic Jewish studies, and individual courses in Jewish history, Jewish literature, Hebrew, and other Jewish subjects in almost 100 different universities.

Bridging the gap between formal and informal Jewish education for adults are seven "people's universities" of Jewish studies, as well as educational programs offered by day schools for parents of their pupils. Jewish newspapers and television programs, as well as Jewish libraries, provide opportunities for less structured adult education. Informal Jewish education for children, adolescents, and students occurs in Jewish summer camps and winter seminars, Jewish youth groups, and Hillel programs serving university students.

Jewish Day Schools

The first Jewish day schools in the Soviet Union appeared in several cities between 1989 and 1991, a product of five separate developments. First, the *glasnost* policy of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev encouraged revival of various Jewish communal endeavors after seven decades of Soviet repression. Second, grassroots efforts by local Jews in Moscow and St. Petersburg led to the development of several such schools. Third, Orthodox rabbis from abroad, for whom establishment of day schools is a priority, arrived in the larger Soviet cities during this period. Fourth, economic distress and the deterioration of many conventional public schools following the collapse of the Soviet Union led many secular Jewish families to consider Jewish schools a desirable alternative for their children.

Fifth, the Israeli government decided to sponsor development of "national" schools, i.e., Israeli-oriented secular Jewish day schools, in Soviet/post-Soviet cities as an approach to building Jewish/Zionist consciousness and stimulating aliyah. The day school program, initially known as Ma'avar and later as Tsofia, was pursued vigorously by representatives of the Lishkat Hakesher (later known as Nativ), a unit of the Office of the Prime Minister charged with developing and managing Israeli government policy concerning Jewish population of the Soviet Union.⁸⁵ At times, through mid-1996, the Lishka sought to displace day schools under rabbinic supervision, often by disparaging their religious orientation in discussions with local or regional education authorities. When religious parties gained new influence in the Israeli government following the 1996 elections that brought victory to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Nativ campaign against religious day schools ceased. Religious day schools with Israeli-based sponsors were invited to join the Tsofia network on terms acceptable to their rabbis. The major benefit of the program is that the Ministry of Education in Israel pays salaries and other expenses for two Judaic studies (e.g., Hebrew language, Jewish tradition, Jewish history) teachers from Israel for each participating school. Schools may select their own teachers, who must be approved by the Ministry regarding professional certification and health status. Almost all Tsofia instructors are native speakers of Russian. The Ministry of Education also provides some learning materials and consultation services.⁸⁶

In general, indigenous authorities in most cities offered little opposition to the development of Jewish educational programs during the last years of the Soviet period or in subsequent years of post-Soviet independence. International Jewry was perceived as wealthy, powerful, and potentially helpful to the local government if local Jews were treated well. In successor states outside Russia, authorities often welcomed efforts to enhance the Jewish identity of local Jews for an additional reason: strengthening ties with world Jewry was far preferable to strengthening Jewish ties with Russia, perceived as a colonial power with irredentist claims on the former republics of the Soviet Union.⁸⁷

It is unlikely that local authorities anticipated the reality that many Jewish day school pupils would emigrate from the successor states. For some families with a prior interest in Israel, day school enrollment of their children is viewed as preparation for eventual aliyah. For others, the curriculum and Zionist milieu of many Jewish schools may stimulate a new identification with Israel.⁸⁸

In a practical sense, falling birth rates in most post-Soviet states had generated available school buildings, and foreign sponsors provided welcome hard currency for rental of classroom space. However, new private schools and other institutions were searching for similar facilities, and some Jewish organizations have been unable to obtain optimal structures in terms of size, physical condition, or location. Competition between various Jewish organizations for the same building has been a complicating factor in some cities.

As is the case in many European countries, a combination of national and municipal government education authorities provide significant financial support for day schools sponsored by religious movements or ethnic groups. In most of the new states, governments pay the salaries of teachers of secular subjects and some school administrators, and furnish secular textbooks and some school equipment. Day school sponsors must compensate teachers of religious subjects and provide learning materials for Hebrew language and religious subjects. As noted earlier, almost all Jewish day schools in the post-Soviet states also provide pupils with several meals each day, as well as various forms of welfare assistance, including clothing and medical services, to children from needy families. A significant expense for most day schools in Ukraine is bus transportation of both students and teachers between home and school. Several of these schools own or lease small fleets of buses.⁸⁹ Renovation of school buildings, often a very costly endeavor, is also a responsibility of individual day schools.

Vladimir Shapiro, a noted sociologist in Moscow, has observed that a significant appeal of Jewish day schools to parents in the transition states is that such schools, whether secular or religious, have attracted the best teachers of secular subjects in their respective cities.⁹⁰ Unlike regular public schools, Jewish day schools pay teachers on time (often with a bonus) and provide a safe and

pleasant teaching environment. Classes are small, pupils are well-behaved, and Jewish schools usually have computer facilities and other modern equipment. To both teachers and parents, Jewish day schools provide a welcome alternative to the general public schools, a large number of which have deteriorated under post-Soviet financial constraints, general corruption, and declining standards of pupil comportment. Tuition fees at private schools, many of which offer advantages similar to those at day schools, are too expensive for many Jewish families.

Jewish day schools in the post-Soviet transition states are not without problems. First, most were established in the early 1990s when expenses were stable and low. As inflation mounted in the mid-1990s, the cost of operating day schools has soared to previously unimagined levels, parallel to increased family economic distress and consequent need for subsidized school meals and various school-based welfare services.

Most day schools are designated as public schools and cannot charge tuition fees. The few that are private schools charge only minimum fees and do not require payment from families who find such charges burdensome. Indigenous Jewish organizations tend to support specific and very limited programs in schools, rather than general operating costs. The Or Avner organization chaired by Israeli businessman Levi Levayev covers about 50 percent of the costs incurred by associated Chabad schools, and Yad Yisroel, a Karliner-Stoliner support group in New York, raises money for the Karliner-Stoliner schools in Kyiv and Lviv. The Orthodox Union supports its high school in Kharkiv, and Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem provides funds for its school in Odessa.

A small number of post-Soviet day schools have been the beneficiaries of significant funding from the controversial Israel-based Association for Hebrew Education in the Diaspora, colloquially known as the Wolfson Fund in deference to the individual who has controlled its allocations, Zev Wolfson. This organization has not supported Chabad schools.⁹¹

Training of Jewish studies teachers is done by the Jewish Agency for Israel (at Machon Gold in Jerusalem, in selected pedagogical institutes in the successor states, and in JAFI seminars), the Israeli Ministry of Education, Bar-Ilan University Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, and the Melton Program at Hebrew University.⁹² The Joint Distribution Committee offers teacher training for early childhood Jewish education programs.

The Jewish Agency also provides textbooks for Hebrew-language instruction and teaching aids for certain Jewish holidays. Similarly, the Joint Distribution Committee has provided occasional teaching kits, basic book collections for school libraries, and a limited number of textbooks. JDC has also given copying machines and certain other types of equipment to various schools.

Rabbis associated with day schools engage in some fundraising activities and several have enlisted the support of foreign sponsors. However, the financial base of most schools is precarious.

Second, planning is difficult as enrollment stability is affected by emigration; some schools lose as many as 30 percent of their pupils during the course of a single academic year. New pupils are accepted during the school year by most schools in all but the last few grade levels, thus creating a demand for expensive individual tutoring in Judaic subjects.

Third, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers of Judaic subjects is extraordinarily costly because, especially at the secondary level in religious schools, such individuals with appropriate training and experience are unavailable locally. Independent employment of foreign teachers often requires payment of premium salaries and housing allowances, provision of generous vacation and insurance benefits, and employment opportunities for spouses. As helpful as the Israeli Ministry of Education Tsofia program and various teacher training programs may be, they barely address the pedagogical requirements of the large Orthodox day schools in Ukraine, four of which enroll 400 or more pupils.⁹³ Whereas ulpan and academic programs in the successor states may produce some capable instructors of Hebrew language, nascent indigenous yeshivot and Jewish pedagogical institutions have not yet graduated qualified teachers of Talmud and other subjects taught at the high school level.⁹⁴ Further, training courses for Jewish studies teachers, as well as subsequent actual teaching experience, often embrace an element of Zionism, which may lead qualified teachers to make aliyah after only a few years of teaching.

Fourth, the effectiveness of the Tsofia program is circumscribed by the inexperience of the Israeli Ministry of Education in working with Jewish education in the diaspora. Jewish educational needs of Israeli and diaspora Jewish youth can differ significantly. For example, teachers and administrators in a number of post-Soviet Jewish day schools are troubled by the insistence of the Ministry on using a method of teaching Hebrew that, claim many, is more appropriate for Israel where youngsters are surrounded by Hebrew in the larger society. Outside Israel, a daily class in Hebrew instruction may be a child's only exposure to Hebrew, especially in the younger grades.⁹⁵

Fifth, development of Russian-language Judaic textbooks and other learning materials geared to the sensitivities of youngsters in a post-Soviet milieu has been stymied by financial constraints and by disagreement among stakeholders about the philosophy of such texts. The absence of suitable learning materials, accompanied by the inadequate number of qualified teachers, creates severe obstacles to the teaching of various Jewish subjects.

A related issue is the failure, for economic reasons, to exploit maximally the use of computer technology for Jewish education. Although the Russian Jewish Congress has equipped Russian Jewish day schools with up-to-date computer technology, several day schools in Ukraine lack even basic equipment. Only in late 1998 was a pilot program in Jewish education via the Internet offered to two day schools in Russia and three day schools in Ukraine.⁹⁶ Very few Jewish educational software programs have been developed for the Russian-language market, and only a limited number of teachers in Jewish day schools are skilled in use of computer technology in Jewish education.

Sixth, with the exception of aliyah-conscious families who want their children to learn Hebrew, support from parents for intensive Jewish education is lukewarm at best. On the contrary, many parents in the transition states value Jewish day schools primarily for their strong general studies programs, attention to individual pupils, and other characteristics that bear only indirect relationship to Jewish identity. Heavy emphasis on a Jewish curriculum is perceived as endangering instruction in secular subjects necessary for admission to prestigious post-secondary educational institutions. Lack of parental commitment to Jewish education and observance creates dissonance and potential conflict between parents and children. Parental disinterest, lack of qualified teachers, and various logistical issues all contribute to an inability of schools to organize parallel courses of adult Jewish education for parents.

Approximately half of the 45 Jewish day schools in the transition states are supervised by Orthodox rabbis and include religious instruction in their curricula. However, only a small number offer rigorous education in both secular and religious studies. These include: Etz Chaim in Moscow (under the supervision of Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt); School #299 in Kyiv (Chief Rabbi Yaakov Bleich); Ohr Somayach in Odessa; the Chabad yeshiva schools in Dnipropetrovsk (separate from the regular Chabad school in the same city); Lycee Shaalavim in Kharkiv (Orthodox Union in New York); and Torat Emet - Yeshiva of Kishinev (Aguda). The 15 Chabad day schools sponsored by Or Avner offer a more general Judaic studies program that includes only five to eight hours of instruction each week, usually 50 percent in Hebrew language instruction and 50 percent in tradition.⁹⁷ The Masorti movement (Conservative) sponsors one day school, in Chernovtsy, that is modeled on the Tali schools in Israel.

As a rule, Orthodox schools accept only those youngsters who are halakhically Jewish.⁹⁸ The larger schools operate separate classes for boys and girls, although the separate classes may be held in the same building. Some schools place great emphasis on Hebrew-language proficiency and are strongly Zionist in their orientation. For example, the Orthodox Union school in Kharkiv, the Chabad school in Kherson, and the Ohr Somayach school in Odessa encourage many youngsters in their upper grades to finish high school at yeshiva high schools in Israel.

The non-religious Jewish day schools offer three to four hours weekly in Hebrew language and another three to five hours in Jewish history, Jewish tradition from a secular perspective, and Jewish music and dance. They teach *about* Judaism, rather than Judaism itself. Study of Jewish texts is rarely part of the curriculum. About 15 of these schools have been established by the Israeli government under its Maavar/Tsofia program.⁹⁹ Enrollment in most of these schools is predominantly Jewish according to standards established by the Israeli Law of Return. No Tsofia school requires that the Jewish ancestry of its pupils conform with halakha (Jewish religious law).

World ORT Union, the Jewish-sponsored training organization established in St. Petersburg in 1880, sponsors three day schools in the successor states. The ORT schools generally are well-equipped with up-to-date computers and related equipment; they offer intensive programs in computer technology, including multimedia applications and basic robotics. However, the three schools differ in their histories and in the age range and Jewish backgrounds of their pupils.¹⁰⁰ Instruction in Jewish-content courses in ORT schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg is modest, including about three hours weekly in Hebrew and two in Jewish history or tradition, whereas the Odessa school requires a more extensive program in secular Jewish studies and is more Zionist in orientation.

Moscow sociologist Vladimir Shapiro notes that serious problems may accompany the high enrollment of non-Jewish and partially Jewish pupils in secular Jewish day schools in the transition states. The presence of such youngsters, he says, creates tensions regarding the Jewish culture and ethos of the school and the transmission of values concerning Jewish identity and Zionism.¹⁰¹

Supplemental and Informal Jewish Education

More than 200 Jewish supplemental schools exist throughout the post-Soviet transition states, almost all operating as weekly Sunday schools. Most are sponsored by the Israeli government through its Ministry of Education in a program known as *Mechina*, i.e., preparatory class, and teach basic modern Hebrew and other Israel-oriented subjects. These programs have proved popular with families preparing their children for aliyah, but their very emphasis on Israel and aliyah has led to substantial instability in their enrollment as families emigrate. The majority of Mechina schools are strongly secular in orientation, but some have developed partnerships with Chabad, the Masorti movement, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, or other religious groups. Chabad and other religious organizations sponsor their own Sunday schools, as do local organizations, in several cities. The Jewish Agency for Israel also operates a few Sunday schools. Almost all Sunday schools are staffed by local personnel, some of whom are self-trained. The Israeli government, local Jewish

educational institutions, and other organizations offer seminars and workshops for teachers. Israeli agencies also provide operating subsidies and some learning materials for such schools.

The most widespread model of informal Jewish education for children and adolescents is summer camping experiences made available at dozens of camps across the successor states.¹⁰² As is the case with day schools, some camps are operated under religious auspices and others are secular. Although no institution maintains statistical information about the total number of campers and camper days in residential settings, the quantity of both seems to have decreased since the mid-1990s, reflecting both a diminishing pool of potential campers (due to substantial emigration in some regions and aging of the Jewish population) and escalating camp costs in an inflationary environment. All camps in the successor states are heavily subsidized. The families of campers are asked to pay fees, which generally do not exceed the real cost of one or two days of camp, but many families are unable to provide even that level of support. No Jewish camp turns away children for inability to pay camp fees.

The largest single camp operation is that of the Jewish Agency for Israel, which, in 1998, hosted approximately 11,000 adolescents at 92 12-day camp sessions throughout the post-Soviet successor states during the months of June, July, and August. Counseling staff included approximately 310 Israeli counselors and 570 local Jewish young people, all of whom participated in training programs prior to camp sessions. An additional 2,600 university students participated in JAFI student summer camps, and 280 adolescents were enrolled in JAFI summer programs in Israel.

JAFI camps are coeducational and are strongly focused on Zionism and the promotion of aliyah. Most are operated by JAFI alone, but some are managed in cooperation with Israeli-based youth movements such as Bnei Akiva, Ezra, Netzer, Habonim Dror, Beitar, and Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed. The majority of campers are between the ages of 14 and 16 as this age group is perceived to be considering options for further education and careers.¹⁰³ Follow-up activity during the winter months encourages youngsters to apply for Na'aleh or other appropriate programs in Israel. Reflecting the high rate of intermarriage among Soviet and post-Soviet Jews, many campers are halakhically non-Jewish; however, all are Jewish according to the Israeli Law of Return and each is considered by the Jewish Agency to be a candidate for aliyah.

JAFI campers participate in daily conversational Hebrew sessions and in various other activities designed to build Jewish identity and encourage affinity to the State of Israel. Drama, arts and crafts, and music are used as vehicles for Israeli-oriented activities. Parents of campers are included in the activities of some camps, usually on visiting days. Some Israeli counselors are themselves fairly recent immigrants from the successor states; generally, they are able to

develop an easy rapport with local youngsters and inform them of educational opportunities in Israel, Israeli military service obligations, and other issues of importance to adolescents.¹⁰⁴

Most summer camps under the supervision of Orthodox rabbis organize separate sessions for boys and girls, usually three to four weeks each. Registration in most of these camps is limited to youngsters who are halakhically Jewish. Typically, camp programs include many standard camp activities plus two or three sessions of informal Jewish education daily. The education component may include one daily class in Hebrew and several in tradition as well as artistic expression of Jewish content through music and art. Most religious camps celebrate out-of-season holidays, such as Chanukah and Pesach, so as to familiarize campers with the Jewish calendar in a hands-on manner. Great attention is devoted to the observance of Shabbat. Some religious camps are strongly Zionist in orientation.

Many religious camps enroll youngsters across a broad age range, from age seven or eight through high school. Although rabbis register campers from their own day schools, many also endeavor to recruit youngsters with no day school background in an effort to provide a positive Jewish experience for boys and girls with no previous exposure to Jewish tradition. Some camps offer older participants an option for an intensive Jewish study program during the camp session.

Counselors in religious camps are recruited in Israel and other countries from seminaries, yeshivot, and Orthodox student groups in universities. Although few speak fluent Russian, many manage to communicate effectively with youngsters through interpreters, vigorous use of informal sign language and gestures, and the pidgin English and/or day school Hebrew of campers.

Other residential summer camping opportunities are provided by: several day schools; the World Union for Progressive Judaism, which operates camp sessions in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine; the Masorti movement, which has operated two- or three-week Ramah camps near Moscow and in Ukraine; and by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, which operates a summer camp as a component of the Orthodox Union youth program in Kharkiv, Ukraine.¹⁰⁵ The Joint Distribution Committee sends small contingents of youngsters to the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation summer camp in Hungary and also sponsors family camps in the successor states. A modest number of summer day camps, most of which are organized by rabbis, also operate in the successor states.

Winter camps, often based in university dormitories vacated by students during winter vacation periods, are organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel and by individual rabbis. The Jewish Agency winter camps usually target older adolescents and students.

The accessibility of Jewish youth groups varies from city to city, but may include organizations sponsored by the Jewish Agency, Nativ, JDC, Jewish religious movements, Israeli youth movements, and individual rabbis. Most Jewish community centers under development in the successor states also generate additional activity for Jewish youth.

The international Hillel student organization established its first post-Soviet affiliate in 1994, in Moscow, and has since expanded its operations to a total of 18 cities and about 6,000 participants. Unlike the United States, where most Hillel operations are campus-based, a Hillel organization in the successor states may draw students from a dozen or more local universities and other educational institutions in a major municipal area. The age range of participants in Hillel activities varies, including only university-age students in some cities, but embracing a broad age range, from high school pupils to adults in their thirties, in other areas.¹⁰⁶

University and Post-Secondary Jewish Education

Academic Judaica programs in universities and other post-secondary institutions in the post-Soviet transition states grew rapidly in the early to mid-1990s, but their development has slowed since then as financial reality has overtaken ambition. Academic programs include study and research in Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish sociology, Jewish languages and literature, Jewish art and music, Zionism, modern Israel, the Holocaust (especially its impact on Soviet territory), and related topics.¹⁰⁷ Their development was spurred by several factors. First, many local Jewish and some non-Jewish scholars had developed an interest in the Jewish dimensions of their core disciplines, but had been unable to pursue such concerns under the Soviet regime. *Glasnost* appeared to open new and attractive opportunities for many well-trained and accomplished academics. Second, many of these scholars and other members of the Jewish *intelligentsia* are interested in their Jewish heritage, but are far more comfortable with an intellectual approach to Judaism than with a religious orientation. Third, long-closed archives became available for scholarly use, thus providing new opportunities for research. Finally, some Western organizations have encouraged the development of multiple programs in academic Judaica in cities across the transition states, perceiving such endeavors as critical elements in the growth of a comprehensive Jewish education and community infrastructure.

The two largest programs in Jewish studies are Jewish universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg, each of which was founded by a group of local academics desiring to explore the Jewish domain of their professional expertise, such as history. In 1998, the Jewish University of Moscow became the Center for Jewish Studies and Jewish Civilization within the Department of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University (MGU). An agreement between the Center/MGU and Hebrew University in Jerusalem specifies that Hebrew

University will provide Russian-speaking professors of subjects in which the Center/MGU is weak, encourage academic cooperation between the two institutions, and raise funds for the Center.¹⁰⁸ A third major program is Project Judaica, a joint effort of Russian State University for the Humanities with the Jewish Theological Seminary and YIVO Institute. Based in Moscow, Project Judaica prepares specialists in Jewish languages and Jewish archival work. Also located in Moscow is Maimonides Academy, which specializes in training Hebrew language teachers and translators. Touro College, associated with the New York institution of the same name, emphasizes religious studies at its Moscow center. Other formal educational frameworks include departments and programs of Jewish studies within various state and private universities as well as several specialized research institutes.

The primary organization engaged in promoting Jewish studies is the Center for Scientific Workers and Instructors of Judaica in Institutions of Higher Education, established in 1994 with the active support of the Joint Distribution Committee. Usually referred to as *Sefer*, the Moscow-based Center is associated with the International Center for the University Teaching of Jewish Civilization in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹ Enjoying official status in the Russian Academy of Sciences, *Sefer* promotes Jewish studies at university and post-graduate levels and represents faculty, students, and institutions engaged in Jewish studies throughout the post-Soviet transition states. Its 1998 membership included about 300 scholars and about 100 institutions.

Almost all such Judaic studies programs are fragile, lacking resources of various kinds, including qualified faculty, appropriate Russian-language textbooks, library materials, educational technology, physical premises, and funding for research, visiting lecturers, and academic publishing. The quality of teaching and scholarship differs significantly among institutions. *Sefer* is attempting to address some of these issues through national and regional Jewish studies conferences, seminars, workshops, and tutorial sessions, as well as visits of foreign scholars and operation of a small academic publishing venture.

Although the new Center for Jewish Studies and Jewish Civilization at Moscow State University may become a model for other institutions in different cities, the future of academic Judaica in the transition states faces many obstacles. Many of the brightest post-Soviet Judaica students go abroad for advanced training and are likely to remain abroad as career opportunities in the transition states are limited. Other students enter different professional and business fields upon completion of degree programs. Even some of the most highly regarded Jewish studies institutions report declining numbers of entering students, apparently because potential entrants lack confidence in career prospects.

Some controversy attends the notion of financial assistance by Jewish philanthropic agencies to post-Soviet academic Judaica, i.e., to programs

serving a small, elite segment of the Jewish population when far greater numbers of post-Soviet Jews endure conditions of poverty and degradation. Further, post-Soviet higher education in general remains in chaos, its character mirroring the turmoil of social and economic change engendered by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the 1998 devaluation of the Russian ruble. Moscow State University, the flagship university in all of Russia, is bankrupt, as are many other Russian academic institutions. In conditions of such uncertainty, it is difficult to formulate reasonable goals and envision the academic environment in which advanced Judaica programs might thrive. Even in the best of circumstances, note observers, post-Soviet Jewish academics lack the skills and comprehensive Jewish knowledge base that is necessary for the development of Judaic studies as an instrumentality for forging positive Jewish identification and a sense of Jewish peoplehood.¹¹⁰ The Russian Jewish Congress and the Joint Distribution Committee, which are the major international funders of academic Judaica programs in the successor states, aver that potential benefits of university-level Jewish studies will be: diminished antisemitism (especially since non-Jews enroll in such courses); creation of a Jewishly educated cadre of Jewish communal professionals; development of Jewishly literate lay leaders; and a gateway through which Jewish intellectuals can identify with their Jewish heritage.¹¹¹

In addition to university programs in Jewish studies, a number of specialized training institutions have been established to fulfill specific needs. For example, the Jewish Pedagogical Center of Ukraine, located in Kyiv, trains Judaic studies teachers through seminars and workshops for employment in Jewish day schools in Ukraine.¹¹² Beit Chana, a Chabad-affiliated institution in Dnipropetrovsk, prepares young women for careers as Jewish studies teachers in the lower grades of day schools. Two Jewish day schools in Moscow (Beit Yehudith and Etz Chaim) have sponsored their own teacher-training programs to prepare Jewish studies teachers for their pupils. The World Union for Progressive Judaism operates the Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Kyiv to prepare teachers, congregational leaders, and other paraprofessionals for its programs. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee manages the Institute for Communal and Social Service Workers in St. Petersburg (with branches in other cities) to train paraprofessional social workers for its numerous welfare activities.¹¹³ JDC also sponsors a number of post-Soviet Jewish communal and educational leaders in its Buncher Leadership Program in Jerusalem, which is designed to sharpen understanding of Jewish communal issues, impart Jewish knowledge and values, and enhance leadership skills of participants. The Jewish Agency, Nativ, and other institutions organize seminars and workshops to train teachers and youth leaders for various programs.

As is the case in many other diaspora countries, the promotion of Yiddish language studies in the post-Soviet transition states often carries anti-Zionist political baggage. Its revival has been sought most vigorously in Vilnius, where

one faction in the remaining Jewish population is promoting re-establishment of the Lithuanian capital as a major center of (secular and non-Zionist) Jewish studies. Similar appeals for increased Yiddish activity have been issued by older Jews remaining in the Jewish Autonomous Republic (Birobidzhan).¹¹⁴

Project Judaica, the Moscow-based Jewish studies program sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary teaches Yiddish for research purposes as do several other academic institutions. A few small-circulation Yiddish publications struggle to stay alive in the successor states, but their prognosis is questionable. It is unlikely that Yiddish can be a vehicle for the furtherance of Jewish education in the post-Soviet transition states (or elsewhere).

About eight yeshivot (religious seminaries for men) operate in the transition states. Almost all of them require candidates for the rabbinate to study several years at more established yeshivot in Israel or other countries. Although the Chabad movement is sending several graduates of local yeshivot to small Jewish communities, indigenous yeshivot have not yet had a significant impact on post-Soviet Jewish life.

Adult Education

About 13,500 adults studied in 270 Jewish Agency Hebrew-language ulpan at any given time during 1997.¹¹⁵ Although these programs are intended to facilitate aliyah, nearly 5,000 students over the years have become Hebrew-language teachers themselves and, after additional training, work in local schools and ulpan for some time before emigrating to Israel.

Popular universities of Jewish studies provide non-academic frameworks for adult Jewish education in seven cities: Minsk and Vitebsk in Belarus; Samara and Yekaterinburg in Russia; Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa in Ukraine; and Kishinev in Moldova. Israel's Open University programs also are available in a number of post-Soviet cities.

Other institutions of adult Jewish education in the successor states include Jewish public libraries, Jewish newspapers, and Jewish television programs. About 150 Russian-language Judaica libraries, each with a large core collection provided by JDC, have been established in about 80 post-Soviet cities. Such libraries may be located in day schools, synagogues, or Jewish welfare centers, and some are the core components of Jewish community centers. Additionally, JDC has sponsored Jewish book festivals in multiple communities throughout the successor states since 1997. These festivals included Jewish dance and theater performances, Jewish films, lectures, children's activities, and other cultural programs. Although it appears that Yiddish-language theater

enjoys only limited appeal, Jewish-theme drama and musical productions in the Russian language often draw large audiences of local Jews.

Several dozen local Russian-language Jewish newspapers are published in the successor states, most on a monthly basis. Many receive subsidies from JDC, the Jewish Agency, and/or Nativ (Lishkat Hakesher). Weekly television programs of Jewish interest have been arranged in many urban areas; these may include an explanation of a forthcoming holiday by a rabbi, interviews with local prominent Jews and visiting Jewish dignitaries, Jewish musical selections, presentations by the Jewish Agency or other organizations, and a newscast featuring items of Jewish interest.

VI. The International Presence in Post-Soviet Jewish Life

Beginning in the *glasnost* period of the late 1980s, international Jewish organizations entered the Soviet Union openly but tentatively, most of them uncertain about the scope of permitted activity after seven decades of Soviet repression. Some had mounted occasional irregular operations in the USSR during the Soviet era, but only an embassy of the State of Israel had functioned in a conventional manner, opening in 1948 shortly after the founding of the Jewish state. Relations were uneasy from the start and were terminated entirely by the Soviets in February 1953, just one month before the death of dictator Josef Stalin. In July 1953, diplomatic ties were restored, only to be broken again by the Soviet authorities on June 10, 1967, when the extent of the Israeli victory over Soviet-supported invading Arab armies in the Six-Day War could no longer be denied.

Soviet hostility toward Israel was unremitting during the next two decades. It was expressed in support of anti-Israel positions at the United Nations and in other international forums, supply of weapons to Arab confrontation states, training of Arab military forces and anti-Israel terrorist groups, and state-sponsored anti-Zionist campaigns at home. Many such campaigns were crudely antisemitic as well. Although some Jewish emigration was permitted during this period, Soviet policy on numbers of departures appeared arbitrary and capricious at best. A large number of Jews who applied to leave the USSR for residence in Israel were denied exit visas and spent years as 'refuseniks', i.e., those who were refused permission to leave. Some were falsely charged with various offenses, arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for long periods. Contact with, or interest in, a foreign country (usually Israel) almost always was cited as a cause for detention.

Concerned citizens of various Western countries, most (but not all) of whom were Jewish, mounted and maintained extensive efforts in support of

beleaguered Soviet Jewry. Thousands of foreigners visited the USSR to provide support to refuseniks, and foreign governments were importuned to intervene with Soviet authorities on behalf of individual refuseniks and in support of Soviet Jewry in general. Even today, the American government assigns human rights officers to its post-Soviet embassies whose responsibilities include monitoring of local conditions affecting the Jewish population; they intervene when deemed appropriate, such as encouraging the return of confiscated Jewish communal property to the Jewish community.

In July of 1988, a small Israeli diplomatic mission was permitted to return to Moscow to work under the auspices of the Embassy of the Netherlands.¹¹⁶ The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee also resumed its work in the Soviet Union in 1988, 50 years after it had been expelled. In 1989, the Jewish Agency sent its first two emissaries to the USSR, one to Vilnius and the other to Tbilisi.¹¹⁷

Contemporary Israeli representation in the post-Soviet successor states is complex, existing at several different levels. On one level, it is managed officially and professionally by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is visible in Israeli embassies in the capital cities of larger successor states and in consular missions in some smaller newly independent countries.

On another level, the Jerusalem-based Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI, Sochnut), variously characterized as quasi-state and quasi-independent, pursues a vigorous Zionist agenda of aliyah (immigration to Israel) promotion in multiple post-Soviet Jewish population centers, both large and small. Descriptions of its mixed provenance reflect the reality of its private funding by diaspora Jewry (through the UJA/Federation system in the United States and comparable structures in other countries) and its strong historic and contemporary ties to the State of Israel. Its work in the successor states is defined in collaboration with Israeli government authorities.

A third Israeli government presence in the transition states is that of Nativ or the Lishkat Hakesher (known in English as the Liaison Bureau), a semi-clandestine entity established in 1952 by the Office of the Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Its initial purpose was to develop and manage Israeli government policy concerning the large Jewish population of the then Stalinist Soviet Union. Nativ continues to operate in the post-Soviet era, although its mission is unclear since the demise of the USSR. Many of its self-designated tasks seem better suited to other organizations with existing infrastructures and defined standards of accountability. Its methods of operation have been criticized harshly in periodic reports of the Israeli State Comptroller.

A fourth major international organization, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (Joint, JDC), is incorporated in the state of New York, but manages a broad range of welfare and community-building programs in the

post-Soviet successor states from its offices in Jerusalem and requires that its field personnel working in the transition states be Israeli citizens. The Israeli linkages are deliberate, intended to emphasize the connection between Jews in the post-Soviet Union and Israel. Its basic funding derives from the same UJA/Federation system that supports the Jewish Agency, but its welfare services for Jewish elderly have expanded significantly in the last several years with the addition of major new allocations from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and from supplemental contributions by North American Jewish federations. Its most direct relationship with the Israeli government is its continuing financial support of Nativ, which is known in JDC as *Azriel* or the "Relief-in-Transit" program.

The Jewish Agency for Israel

The overarching priority of the Jewish Agency for Israel is the encouragement of aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel). A second priority in the post-Soviet successor states -- the promotion of Jewish and Zionist identification -- reinforces the first. JAFI operations are tolerated in the transition states for diplomatic reasons; however, aliyah promotion is offensive to many local inhabitants and indigenous governments because it advocates departure of a well-educated segment of the population, thus suggesting some unacceptable flaw in the native culture and generating "brain drain".

In all, the Jewish Agency will spend about \$45 million on programs in the post-Soviet successor states in 1998, about \$26.4 million in processing and transporting post-Soviet Jews to Israel, and about \$108 million on immigration-related programs in Israel.¹¹⁸ It operates 26 offices in the successor states that are headed by Israeli emissaries (*shlichim*),¹¹⁹ and approximately 400 local activists work as aliyah coordinators in 150 smaller Jewish population centers.¹²⁰ JAFI arranges departure flights to Israel through 24 different exit stations in the successor states.

JAFI programs in the successor states include: annual instruction of approximately 13,500 adults in Hebrew at 270 ulpanim throughout the transition states; seminars for training Hebrew teachers; educational preparation for adolescents wishing to enter Israeli high school programs; summer camps attracting 11,000 youth and students annually; winter camps and seminars for 3,300 youth and students annually; student clubs; more than 100 youth clubs; seminars for training camp counselors and youth leaders; and seminars for professional groups about career opportunities in Israel, for single adults, and for parents with children in various Israeli programs. JAFI holiday programs may attract more than 60,000 participants on a given occasion throughout the successor states.

The JAFI agenda in Israel include a number of absorption programs tailored to specific post-Soviet groups. For example, Na'aleh is a high school-in-Israel endeavor, in which adolescents complete the last three years of secondary school in an approved Israeli institution; graduates then either return to their families in the post-Soviet successor states or move on to the Israeli army, post-secondary education in Israel, and eventual employment in Israel.¹²¹ Sela is a year-long program that prepares recent high school graduates for Israeli universities. Chalom appeals to young people between the ages of 17 and 20 who lack the desire or qualifications to enter university; it includes a five-month ulpan and 12-month training course in electronics, auto mechanics, air conditioning, the hotel industry or another area in which employment opportunities in Israel are plentiful. ROM is a pre-university program for individuals who have completed a basic ulpan course. Yachad attracts young adults in groups formed in the successor states; they immigrate together, attend Israeli ulpan together, and are mutually supportive as they move through progressive stages of absorption. Aliyah 2000 recruits individuals for specific employment positions, often through job fairs in the transition states, and helps newcomers find appropriate housing in Israel. First Home in the Homeland enrolls families in which parents are between 30 and 45 years old; families settle on a kibbutz for one year, attend kibbutz ulpan, and at least one parent works in a kibbutz industry.

The Jewish Agency also operates traditional ulpan, absorption centers, and various services for immigrant youth and students. It provides aid to former refusenik prisoners and operates a limited number of housing programs. Some post-Soviet Jewish youth attend summer courses in Israel, and many youth leaders and teachers participate in Israeli training seminars.

Nativ - Lishkat Hakesher

Nativ, formerly known as the Lishkat Hakesher, operates Israeli cultural centers in most large post-Soviet Jewish population concentrations, issues visas to olim, and subsidizes the operation of 32 Jewish day schools and more than 200 Jewish Sunday schools throughout the successor states. The cultural centers offer Hebrew ulpan, Zionist-oriented children's activities and youth groups, business clubs concentrating on the operation of small businesses in Israel, and, in some of the more modern centers, computer training classes for individuals who are also enrolled in Hebrew ulpan.¹²² Israeli cultural centers also sponsor large holiday commemorations and festivals.

Sponsorship of community-wide holiday celebrations is often shared with local Jewish Agency offices, but the various aliyah-related activities of Nativ are conducted independently of JAFI and sometimes in competition with JAFI. Although directors of some Israeli cultural centers now have modest diplomatic training, the centers operate outside the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. On behalf of Nativ, the Israeli Ministry of Education offers Jewish education services in the successor states already available through the Jewish Agency Department of Jewish Zionist Education.

The State Comptroller of Israel has issued several reports sharply critical of Nativ.¹²³ Various Israeli review commissions have studied its operations and recommended its dissolution. Although the operations of Nativ have been reduced in scale, it continues its programs, in part due to pressure from several prominent Soviet-born Israeli political figures who find it a useful instrument for exerting influence in the aliyah arena. It may be assumed that the Office of the Prime Minister, regardless of its occupant at any given time, also considers Nativ a convenient agent for operations in the successor states outside the professional review of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A complicating factor in the Nativ issue and in relations between the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency is the annual transfer of funds (\$3.1 million in 1998) from JDC to Nativ.¹²⁴ At least in public, JDC defends its "Azriel" or "Relief-in-Transit" allocation as an "insurance policy against political reversals" in the post-Soviet successor states, i.e., against a situation in which other agencies (such as the Jewish Agency) might be unable to continue operations in the successor states.

The Joint Distribution Committee

JDC allocates over \$13 million to its programs in the post-Soviet successor states, i.e., between 35 and 40 percent of its worldwide budget. About \$5.8 million of the total is assigned to planning, implementation, and development, an umbrella classification that includes salaries, travel, office costs, etc. The JDC "Former Soviet Union Department" employs about 24 Israelis and 350 indigenous personnel in 13 offices in the successor states as well as a staff of 40 in Jerusalem.¹²⁵ Its work is labor intensive and its travel expenditures are necessarily very substantial. JDC allocates \$2.44 million of its own annual budget to welfare programs, an amount dwarfed by the \$23 million for welfare that it receives from other sources and manages on their behalf. These funds include \$3 million from Jewish federations and from JDC's own endowment monies for a special hunger relief program, over \$16 million from the Claims Conference, more than \$4 million from private foundations and overseas partners, and \$300,000 from the Russian Jewish Congress. JDC welfare operations have been described earlier in this article.

Other major JDC budgetary allocations related to community building in the post-Soviet successor states include about \$5 million for Jewish renewal programs,¹²⁶ \$3.1 million to the Lishkat Hakesher or Nativ program of the Israeli government, as noted, and about \$350,000 to reclamation of Jewish property that had been seized by the Soviets.¹²⁷ The largest single expenditure in the

Jewish community-building sector, about \$1.85 million, is designated for expansion of local Jewish community centers, a new JDC priority in encouraging Jewish renewal in the successor states. Additional funding for this program is being sought from private foundations. About \$1 million is allocated to targeted local programs, i.e., projects and events that are appropriate to specific communities. These may include holiday celebrations, Jewish cultural endeavors, local Jewish publications, etc.

JDC budgeted \$560,000 in 1998 and again in 1999 for the development and production of Russian-language educational materials, including holiday kits, haggadot, pedagogical materials, children's books, posters, video cassettes, and other items.¹²⁸ These are distributed to Jewish schools, camps, community centers, libraries, and other programs.

Over \$325,000 is expended in training programs intended to develop communal leadership skills for indigenous personnel in supervisory positions, social service management, library administration, community center direction, etc. Seminars are held in the successor states and in Israel. Follow-up programs in advanced training and placement are also implemented.

A number of JDC efforts in Jewish education have been noted in an earlier section of this report. These range from training teachers in Jewish early childhood education programs to support for academic Judaica in post-Soviet universities and other institutions of higher education.

Although JDC repeatedly asserts its support for aliyah from the post-Soviet successor states as a "primary goal on the global Jewish agenda",¹²⁹ it also bemoans the reality that "newly-emerging leaders often emigrate".¹³⁰ Its programs for adolescents and young adults emphasize leadership development for local needs, ignoring aliyah as an option even in regions of economic distress and political instability.

Other Programs

As noted earlier, the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief supports various welfare services to Jews in western Ukraine, often contracting with JDC to provide those services on its behalf. Unlike JDC, WJR concentrates on welfare programs and bypasses programs in education, culture, and other non-welfare areas.

Established in 1880 by wealthy Jews in St. Petersburg, ORT operated a large network of schools, workshops, and other programs throughout Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states for the training of Jews in skilled trades and agriculture.¹³¹ It sponsored numerous factories, cooperatives, and agricultural settlements until its expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1938.

Glasnost permitted the return of World ORT¹³² in 1990, when it embarked upon an ambitious agenda of institution-building in contemporary technical education across broad regions of its former operating territory. Limited financial resources and an after-the-fact awareness that several of its costly programs were serving institutions with few Jewish students¹³³ have led to a sharply curtailed agenda as ORT nears the end of its first decade in the post-Soviet successor states.

It currently co-sponsors three Jewish day schools (in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Odessa), each in cooperation with the local municipality and the Israeli government Tsofia program. ORT publicizes support of a *Twelve Tribes Project*, a computer education venture involving 22 Jewish day schools throughout the successor states. Participating schools anticipated ORT provision of sophisticated computer laboratories and the development of distance-learning programs, but neither has been forthcoming.

Its operations outside the Jewish community include the development of resource centers in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Odessa, Riga, Minsk, and several other cities that offer instruction to local non-governmental agencies in word processing, spreadsheets, computer graphics, multimedia, desktop publishing, and other computer applications. Most of these projects are conducted in cooperation with Western aid organizations.

The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture was established in 1966 with funding provided by the Federal Republic of Germany as "symbolic restitution" for Jewish culture destroyed during the Holocaust. The Memorial Foundation uses the interest from the cumulative German grant of \$35 million to support cultural programs of struggling Jewish communities, Jewish scholarship, and documentation, commemoration, and teaching of the Holocaust. It sponsors a significant publishing venture, including Holocaust-related material as well as literature on contemporary Jewish life and practice. It provides scholarships for rabbis, Judaic educators, and social workers. The Memorial Foundation is non-ideological, transdenominational, and operational in Jewish population centers throughout the world.

Among its programs in the post-Soviet successor states is the translation into Russian and publication of about 600 Jewish-content books. It sponsors an Association of Jewish Schools and Principals, which includes 37 day schools in the successor states; day school faculty meet for periodic professional conferences and some principals have visited Jewish day schools in other countries. The Memorial Foundation also has initiated development of a modest series of Russian-language educational software programs in Jewish history and tradition and a post-Soviet Jewish day school project in Jewish family education.

The Jewish Community Development Fund was established in 1993 to promote Jewish renewal projects and general human rights activity in Russia and

Ukraine. It is supported by several Jewish foundations and individual donors, and is managed by American Jewish World Service. The Fund provides grants of up to \$15,000 to programs in Jewish education, Jewish community organization and communications, Jewish cultural life, and general human rights. It assists projects both in large cities (such as the Jewish Community Center in St. Petersburg and a Jewish theater group in Kharkiv) and smaller Jewish population centers (such as Jewish cultural endeavors in the Ukrainian town of Korsun-Shevchenko). It also provides grants to specific activities of other organizations in Russia and Ukraine, such as JDC, the Hillel student groups, the Association for Progressive Judaism in Ukraine, and the Association of Regional Jewish Communities [in Ukraine].¹³⁴

Project Keshet, a Chicago-based women's organization, was established in 1989.¹³⁵ Its principal activities focus on the empowerment of post-Soviet Jewish women, promotion of strong local Jewish communities, exploration of Jewish heritage, and activism in women's health issues. It sponsors seminars and workshops, mother-daughter retreats, and exchanges in the successor states between post-Soviet Jewish women and Jewish women from several Western countries. Project Keshet focuses on the European region of the former USSR and is especially active in smaller Jewish population centers, such as Cherkassy and Chernigov in Ukraine. It is funded by various Jewish foundations and individual contributors.

As noted earlier, the largest international Jewish religious organization operating in the successor states is that of Chabad Lubavitch, a hasidic group with a long history in the region. As soon as political conditions permitted, the last Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, encouraged selected young rabbis to establish Chabad centers in major cities, particularly in those areas in which Chabad had been active before the 1917 revolutions. Today, Chabad rabbis are employed at a fulltime level in 25 different cities throughout the successor states, and several smaller Jewish population centers receive regular visits from Chabad rabbis at scheduled intervals.¹³⁶ Many other religious Jewish organizations operate educational and other programs on a more limited basis.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry remains the designated monitoring and advocacy organization of the organized American Jewish community. It is charged with: information gathering and analysis; information dissemination; and advocacy concerning post-Soviet antisemitism, emigration rights, community building and service delivery, and establishment of kehilla projects (sister-city relationships) between American and post-Soviet Jewish community groups. NCSJ maintains a part-time representative in Moscow. The 35s -- Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry is a grassroots monitoring and advocacy organization in London that has been effective over several decades. In addition to its activity in England, the 35s support One-to-One, an Israel-based

association that provides various forms of assistance to new immigrants from the successor states.

Continuing Problems

For many foreign Jews, the post-Soviet Jewish milieu is little understood. The clarity of the Soviet period has given way to the fragmentation of the seemingly monolithic Soviet colossus into 15 separate countries with numerous regional differences. The phenomenon of Jewish community-building co-exists side-by-side with aliyah promotion. International organizations with their own agendas dominate post-Soviet Jewish life as post-Soviet Jews seek to define their own priorities without quite knowing how to do so. Few diaspora Jewish activists are sufficiently well-informed to deal with these complexities. Although several dozen individuals in the United States and other diaspora countries command a multitude of facts about post-Soviet Jews, only a small minority possess the contextual background in which to develop a coherent approach to Jewish life in the post-Soviet successor states.¹³⁷

Organized Jewish travel to the successor states is often managed by one or another interest group that fashions an itinerary to fit its own vision while ignoring or deprecating the programs of others. Trips coordinated by the United Jewish Appeal may be more encompassing in intent because they are designed to direct attention to all UJA beneficiaries, but many appear to be geared more to emotion than to comprehension of issues concerning post-Soviet Jewry.¹³⁸ None of the major funding organizations operates a systematic program to prepare lay people for leadership responsibility in committees focusing on the successor states.¹³⁹

Professional staff sometimes seem equally unprepared. Whereas several of the major agencies active in the post-Soviet successor states assigned experienced Jewish communal service professionals to develop policy options for their post-Soviet operations, few have entered into substantive consultations with Soviet-area specialists for the provision of context and advice.¹⁴⁰ As a result, several organizations developed unrealistic policies and impractical programs that have proved costly and ineffective. Examples include: division of Soviet/post-Soviet territory into administrative and programmatic regions that lack correspondence with political and economic conditions on the ground; concentration of services in areas with relatively few Jews and/or rapidly declining Jewish populations; and aloofness from Orthodox rabbis whose schools and other operations in the successor states are testimony to their political sophistication and the respect in which they are held by local authorities.

Recruitment of competent resident professional staff to manage agency programs in the successor states is another serious problem. Few qualified Israelis are eager to work in environments of political and economic instability,

ethnic turmoil, pervasive corruption, violent crime, ecological degradation, and separation from loved ones.¹⁴¹ Many of those willing to work in such capacities lack the English-language skills and ease with donors that are increasingly necessary as Western contributors visit the successor states in large numbers.

In ongoing efforts to develop proficient local staff, several international organizations have developed programs to train local Jews as paraprofessional communal workers. The JDC St. Petersburg-based Institute for Communal and Social Service Workers and its branches in other cities train individuals to provide community services with some degree of professionalism. Jewish Agency seminars for local employees have the same intent. However, the emergence of a truly professional corps of indigenous Jewish communal service workers will require decades of preparation and experience.

Interaction between Jewish community lay leaders in foreign countries and emerging post-Soviet Jewish lay leaders has been minimal, reflecting language barriers and deep social and culture differences. However, JDC and several rabbis in the successor states have escorted post-Soviet lay leaders on tours of Western diaspora Jewish communities in which visits to Jewish communal institutions and some contact with Western Jewish leaders have been arranged. Some post-Soviet Jewish communal service personnel have also visited Jewish community institutions in the West and in Israel, but vast cultural and professional differences deter ongoing contact with professional Jewish communal service workers in Western countries.

The cost of maintaining operations in the successor states is still high and continues to grow. Although the 400 percent inflation that seized most of the successor states in the early and mid-1990s has abated significantly, the 1998 collapse of the Russian ruble generated a new round of price hikes. Security expenses are substantial and growing in the wake of increased antisemitism in the late 1990s. Desperate for revenue and unwilling to consider the social benefits of philanthropy, governments apply taxes to the operation of charitable organizations. Housing and office expenses often approximate those in Western countries, although far fewer amenities are provided.

VII. Emigration

More than one million Jews have emigrated from the Soviet Union and its successor states since 1968. Approximately 800,000 have settled in Israel, 300,000 in the United States, perhaps 60,000 to 90,000 in Germany, and smaller numbers in Canada, Australia, and other countries.

Emigration of Jews from the USSR was controlled closely by Soviet authorities and, in several years during the mid-1980s, failed to reach even 1,000 souls. Both domestic and foreign policy factors governed Soviet decision-making related to departures. More liberal conditions in the last years before the Soviet collapse led to an exodus of more than 70,000 in 1989 and an all-time high of more than 200,000 in 1990. Departures of Jews from the successor states have lessened significantly since then, but the decrease reflects apparent pre-1998 stabilizing trends in Russia, as well as the diminution of the emigration pool, rather than post-Soviet restrictions on emigration. The highest rate of aliyah during this period has been from Central Asia and the Caucasus area (seven to eleven percent of the Jewish population each year). Five to six percent of the Jewish population departs for Israel each year from Ukraine, as does four to six percent of the Jewish population from Moldova, Belarus, and the Baltic States. The departure rate from Russia is three per cent annually.¹⁴²

Zionism is rarely an important factor in current emigration. Most of the "heroic Zionists", those who suffered in Soviet labor camps and/or in long periods of refusal and official harassment, departed the Soviet Union and settled in Israel before the close of the 1980s. The primary reasons for current emigration of Jews from the post-Soviet successor states is rooted in their concerns about: (1) their economic well-being; (2) their children's futures; and (3) family reunification.¹⁴³ Even before the upheavals of 1998, many families in peripheral cities lived in conditions of economic distress. Economic reforms had progressed slowly, and few people outside Moscow were optimistic about the future.¹⁴⁴ For those with children, the impetus to move to a society with more favorable economic conditions is especially strong.¹⁴⁵

Family ties and friendships between those who have left the successor states and those who remain often stimulate departure of the latter to join the former. Research of the Jewish Agency shows that more than 70 percent of Jews in Russia and more than 80 percent of Jews in Ukraine have relatives or friends in Israel. According to Moscow sociologist Vladimir Shapiro, 27 percent of Jews in Russia have first-degree relatives, 49 percent have second degree relatives, and 55 percent have friends in the United States, Canada, or Germany.¹⁴⁶ The experiences of relatives and friends in absorption into the new society often are critical in the decision of post-Soviet Jews to emigrate. Although letters remain the primary means of transmitting such information, many Jews in the successor states now visit their friends and relatives, especially those in Israel, prior to emigration.

Antisemitism is rarely cited as a primary reason for emigration.¹⁴⁷ However, the embrace of an exclusionary nationalist outlook by local ethnic groups does encourage Jewish departures. Jews have left various Central Asian republics, the Caucasus region, and Moldova in response to preferential measures favoring others that are adopted as law or practice by nationalist governments following the collapse of the USSR.

The primary deterrent to departures is development of economic opportunities in the post-Soviet city of habitation. The low rate of emigration from Moscow reflects the reality that 80 percent of all Russian financial activity occurs in that city and that many of its well-educated Jewish residents considered the Russian capital a place of almost unlimited possibilities until the devaluation of the ruble in August 1998. In Russia, as well as in Ukraine, a disproportionately large share of emigration is from peripheral cities suffering severe economic distress.

Political stabilization in the successor states also limits the appeal of migration. The realization of a working consensus between the government and the governed, accompanied by the absence of significant radical groups, imparts a sense of security.

For many Jews who consider themselves members of the Russian *intelligentsia*, i.e., intellectuals who form the educated and cultural elite of society, emigration almost always leads to loss of status. Aware that they are unlikely to be comfortable in a new language and never will replicate their perceived current status in a new society, many middle-age Jews prefer to remain in the successor states where, at least in their own eyes, they remain respected engineers, academics, or other professionals in local elite institutions.¹⁴⁸

A strong affinity for Russian culture also lessens the appeal of emigration to another country. Even in Israel, where a large Russian-speaking population sustains various Russian-language media, many native Russian speakers yearn for the more encompassing Russian culture that only Russia and several of the other successor states can provide. Most educated Jews in large urban areas are far more comfortable with Russian and European culture than with Jewish tradition and culture. Many Jewish intellectuals disdain tiny and vulnerable Israel for its perceived parochialism, levantine character, and lack of sophistication.

The large number of intermarried families in the successor states is another constraint on emigration, particularly to Israel. Many Russians are reluctant to separate from family and friends. Israel, as a Jewish homeland, holds little appeal for them.¹⁴⁹

Difficulty in selling apartments, particularly in depressed areas where few potential buyers can be found, is another deterrent to emigration. Potential emigrants may remain in the successor states for several years after reaching a decision to emigrate, trying to attract a purchaser and income to be applied to building a new life elsewhere. Transfer of funds abroad is an additional problem. Most of the successor states have imposed severe regulations on the amount of hard currency that can be sent abroad by legal bank transfer or carried out on one's person. Various private sources have come forward as

intermediaries for other types of transfer, but some have proved to be swindlers and others are incompetent. Many emigrants have lost large sums of money in such ventures. A related fear is that of outright robbery and, in some areas, kidnapping; individuals who sell apartments and/or other personal property prior to emigration may be tracked by criminal elements and robbed of their assets. Many victims are reluctant to complain, fearing that their protests might generate additional harassment and/or delay departure.

Demographic trends among the Jewish population in the successor states also discourage emigration. The aging of post-Soviet Jewry, a product in part of prior and ongoing emigration, foreordains that fewer Jews will emigrate in the future because older people are less likely to risk a new life in a different society.¹⁵⁰ Further, most children of older people already are independent, thus diminishing parental motivation to leave in the interest of their children's future. Departure of younger Jews, aging of remaining Jews, the low Jewish birth rate, and extensive intermarriage reduce the Jewish population in general and the emigration pool in particular.

Finally, concern about conditions in Israel and other countries of destination may deter emigration. Ease of immigration and absorption, employment prospects, available housing, accessible health services, stipends for students and pensions for seniors, and potential military conscription are among the conditions considered before individuals decide to leave and to settle in a specific country. The security situation in Israel is another deterrent to some individuals contemplating aliyah.

According to research of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the average immigrant to Israel is in his or her mid-30s (compared to an average age of mid-50s for the post-Soviet Jewish population as a whole), married, well-educated, more likely to come from peripheral cities in Russia and Ukraine than from capital cities, and more likely to come from Ukraine than from Russia. Emigration from the Baltic states, Caucasus area, and most of Central Asia is decreasing in numbers, but sometimes increasing in proportion to the remaining Jewish population, mainly because large-scale earlier departures have depleted the emigration pool in these regions. Remnant Jewish populations remain behind in many areas.¹⁵¹

Immigration of post-Soviet Jews into the United States has declined from approximately 46,000 in 1992 to 14,529 in 1997.¹⁵² The decrease is attributed to the diminishing number of eligible candidates for an immigration program limited largely to family reunification. Many individuals entering the United States under current refugee resettlement regulations are older adults, i.e., parents of earlier and younger migrants who are now settled and prepared to assist older family members in adjusting to new lives.

The emigration of post-Soviet Jews to Germany less than 60 years after the Holocaust fills many Jews in other diaspora countries and in Israel with a profound sense of uneasiness. As many as 60,000 to 90,000 Jews from the successor states may have entered Germany between 1992 and 1997, although at least one-third of these migrants may have made fraudulent claims about Jewish ancestry and many others are non-Jews married to Jews. The major attraction of Germany is its very generous welfare benefits, a factor that has proved a significant enticement for middle-aged and older people with chronic health problems, such as asthma. Fully 80 percent of the post-Soviet Jewish population in Germany is unemployed, and most jobless are able to manage well on government welfare payments. Germany is also recruiting skilled younger post-Soviet Jews in such fields as computer technology, offering satisfying and well-remunerated positions along with subsidies for German-language instruction, housing, and other resettlement expenses.

Many Jewish activists in the successor states are bitter and disdainful toward the German-bound, referring to the phenomenon and its perceived mercenary motives as "sausage emigration" and the emigrants themselves as *kolbasniki*, or "sausage people".¹⁵³ Those en route to Germany effect a posture of offense at such labeling, claiming that World War II and the Shoah were "then" and emigration to Germany is "now" -- and that more than half a century separates *then* from *now*. Further, many of them assert, the hardships they have endured in the Soviet Union and its successor states entitle them to the good economic life that Germany offers. Many of those emigrating to Germany are assimilated and intermarried, unconcerned with the Jewish aspects of their action.

Although the economic incentives for settlement in Germany are paramount and should not be ignored, the phenomenon of earlier Soviet and current post-Soviet Jewish departures to Germany is more complex than mere charges of mercenary intent. In part because of ideological needs to present (Soviet) socialism and communism as besieged and in part because of its support of East Germany (the now defunct German Democratic Republic), Soviet propaganda depicted World War II as a war of fascism against socialism, i.e., as an ideological conflict, rather than as a war of national interests. Whereas citizens of Western countries perceive Germany (and Japan) as the enemy during World War II, Soviet citizens were taught that fascism was the enemy.¹⁵⁴ Such sentiment prevails among a significant segment of the post-Soviet population, including Jews, and serves to lessen the stigma attached to Germany. If fascism was the enemy and fascism was defeated, then emigration to Germany is perceived as normal and inoffensive.

On the German side, some Germans perceive Jewish immigration as desirable because it proves that Germany is hospitable to Jews and thus deserves to be rid of the opprobrium that it has been unable to shed even 50 years after the end of World War II. Among veteran German Jews, the post-

Soviet newcomers are increasingly resented as an economic burden on local governments and Jewish communities. However, most Jews in Germany recognize that it is impolitic to suggest immigration curbs on fellow Jews, especially because the majority of veteran Jews in Germany are themselves immigrants of an earlier era.¹⁵⁵

Among emigrants to Israel, the United States, and Europe are several thousand Soviet/post-Soviet Jews who have become transnationals, i.e., individuals who maintain residences in one of the successor states as well as in Israel or a Western country. Their knowledge of the ex-USSR, combined with skills and experience in countries of migration, have facilitated their entry into international trade involving their former homeland. Although their numbers appear to have diminished following the ruble devaluation in August 1998, they remain a presence in post-Soviet foreign trade.

Additional Soviet/post-Soviet Jews have found resettlement outside the successor states a difficult undertaking and have returned to the successor states on a more-or-less permanent basis, although many seem to have retained their passports from the country in which they attempted to establish themselves. In common with the transnationals, these individuals may have acquired some skills while abroad that are useful in the emerging economies of the transition states. Unlike the transnationals, they remain in the successor states and do not maintain duplicate residences in other countries.

Notwithstanding such instances of return to the post-Soviet states or of known hardship cases in all countries of resettlement, the overwhelming majority of Soviet/post-Soviet Jewish emigrants appear to have resettled successfully in their new countries. The resettlement/absorption process itself is complex and beyond the scope of this article.

Although many Jews outside the post-Soviet successor states perceive the emigration of post-Soviet Jewry as a positive act, particularly when departures lead to aliyah that strengthens the State of Israel, not all Jews share such sentiments. Clearly, many identifying Jews who elect to remain in the successor states feel threatened by the continuation of emigration. A Jewish population that does not feel entirely secure in the evolving post-Soviet states is eager to maintain a critical mass of Jews because of the "safety in numbers" concept, because it needs the leadership and resources of those who depart, and because it fears that the loyalty of those remaining will be suspect if emigration continues at its current visible level.¹⁵⁶ A 1996 article in a popular American Jewish magazine quotes Alex Frenkel, a prominent Jewish leader in St. Petersburg, as protesting: "Aliyah destroys our community, our leadership all the time." The article continues that many of those who leave are among the most devoted to Jewish life, the young and talented.¹⁵⁷ Mr. Frenkel's views are widely shared among those indigenous Jews whose identities and/or livelihoods

are dependent upon the continuation of a sizeable Jewish population mass in the post-Soviet successor states.

For many foreign Jews working with post-Soviet Jewry, sentiments about Jewish departure in general and aliyah in particular are more complex. Most rabbis are eager to build and strengthen their own religious and communal institutions, such as synagogues and day schools. An active and educated Jewish population is required if these and other community organizations are to be sustained and fortified. However, most rabbis believe that responsible leadership requires the encouragement of young people, especially, to build their lives elsewhere if future possibilities in the successor states appear limited.¹⁵⁸ As a result, many rabbis in Ukraine and other distressed areas vigorously promote emigration, most often to Israel. Some rabbis are strong Zionists regardless of local conditions and will encourage aliyah of every Jew whose absorption prospects are promising. Anguishing over the emigration of local Jews to Germany, some rabbis decline to endorse statements of Jewish origin required by German authorities, and others will do so only if those presenting such statements pay substantial fees, which then are applied to various communal projects.

Whereas Israeli expatriates employed by the Jewish Agency or by Nativ encourage aliyah, many Israelis working for the Joint Distribution Committee are less enthusiastic about potential emigration of local Jews, even from areas of acute political and/or economic distress. As noted earlier, JDC endorses aliyah as desirable at the same time that it is committed to Jewish community-building. The latter often appears to take precedence, even in distressed areas. For example, activities in JDC-assisted community center activities seem to follow a common plan from city to city, without considering whether local conditions might suggest the desirability of programs that suggest the possibility of emigration.

VIII. Post-Soviet Jewry on the Cusp of the Twenty-First Century

Post-Soviet Jewry on the cusp of the twenty-first century is a Jewish population in turmoil, an uncertain people in unstable circumstances. It has emerged from 70 years of spiritual and material devastation into 15 new societies that are ragged and disorderly. Amidst all the confusion, twelve issues demonstrate the complexity of our analysis.

1. No firm demographic data exists on the Jewish population in many areas of the post-Soviet successor states. Reasonable estimates are available, but their validity may be of limited duration. The post-Soviet Jewish population appears to be increasingly mobile, not only in terms of departures abroad, but also in terms of internal migration from smaller cities to larger urban areas within the successor states, and from southern regions (Caucasus area and Central

Asia) to European cities in Russia and Ukraine. The phenomenon of dual-residence or transnational Jews also eludes quantification.¹⁵⁹

Interpretation and application of existing demographic data is difficult as well due to the high rate of intermarriage, thought by some to be at least 70 percent. Applicable questions echo those in other diaspora countries: Should planners and organizers focus their efforts on halakhic Jews? What about individuals with a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother? What is the role of the "enlarged Jewish population", i.e., Jews and all non-Jews who are close to Jews?

2. Only a minority of post-Soviet Jews in large cities -- probably no more than 20 percent -- participate in Jewish activities. Many in this minority are elderly individuals dependent on Jewish organizations for welfare assistance. Most post-Soviet Jews seem detached from their Jewish heritage, a consequence of seven decades of forced estrangement from Judaism and/or, for many, a necessary preoccupation with the quotidian demands of life under post-Soviet conditions.

3. The debate over whether the priority for post-Soviet Jewry should be community-building in the successor states or emigration to other countries, usually Israel, is being resolved by post-Soviet Jews themselves. Their decisions appear to be based on local economic conditions in the transition states and their perceptions of potential resettlement success in countries of destination. Accordingly, younger Jews in Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus mountain region, Central Asia, smaller Jewish population centers in Russia, and other economically precarious areas are emigrating in large numbers. Younger Jews from large cities in Russia are showing new interest in emigration in the wake of economic instability following the mid-1998 ruble devaluation. Some indigenous Jews and some international Jewish organizations with programs in the successor states appear to oppose such departures, placing greater emphasis on community-building than on the aspirations of individuals to pursue better opportunities elsewhere.

4. Cooperation and coordination among international Jewish organizations in the successor states is inconsistent and incomplete, reflecting such issues as conflicting missions (e.g., JDC community-building and JAFI aliyah promotion), the ill-defined and questionable operating methods of Nativ, turf protection, and uneasiness of some in working with Orthodox (mainly hasidic) rabbis whose prominence in some cities may be perceived by some secular Jews as threatening. A welcome change in these circumstances was a March 1998 joint conference in Dnipropetrovsk of (mainly secular) Jewish Agency representatives and Orthodox rabbis serving throughout Ukraine. The two groups agreed to

pursue various forms of organizational collaboration and religious-civil partnership. The intent of the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine to hold additional joint conferences with other Jewish enterprises in the future offers some hope that Jewish interagency suspicion and mistrust may diminish, at least in Ukraine.

5. Neither Progressive (Reform) nor Masorti (Conservative) Judaism has directed significant resources to large Jewish population concentrations in major post-Soviet cities. Their inaction deprives many post-Soviet Jews, for whom Orthodox Judaism has little appeal, of a Jewish context in which to express the strong sense of spirituality (*dukhovnost'*) that exists within the Russian-speaking intelligentsia.

6. Some Orthodox rabbis in the successor states, particularly those associated with the Chabad Lubavitch movement, are reluctant to accord legitimacy to non-Orthodox expressions of Judaism. Such intolerance has generated confrontations between groups of Jews as well as attempts by some rabbis to discredit other Jews in public forums. Initially, such confrontations occurred regarding possession of Jewish communal property remaining from the pre-1917 era, but communal enmity has become more generalized and comprehensive in recent years. The situation in Moscow appears to be especially tense.

7. The dire circumstances of large numbers of Jewish elderly in the successor states have deflected attention from other Jewish populations at risk in the same areas, especially children. Although several rabbis in Ukraine have established residential programs for the most unfortunate children, the need for such care exceeds current capacity. Institutions of this type demand consistent financial support and professional supervision, neither of which is readily available.

8. The issue of Jewish community leadership, both volunteer and professional, remains acute. The legacy of Russian political culture and Soviet practice offer slim hope that a civil democracy will soon emerge in the larger post-Soviet successor states. In the absence of a civil democracy, confidence in the rapid development of an indigenous organized and accountable local Jewish community appears ill placed.

Civil debate, consensus-building, and planning and priority-setting were not considered essential skills in Soviet or early post-Soviet society. Tolerance and accountability are obscure concepts to some. Sensitivity to Jewish tradition is absent. Attitudes toward other diaspora Jewish populations or toward Israel

lack sophistication. Having never even observed a voluntary communal organization, few post-Soviet Jews are able to develop a vision of what they are trying to construct. Some who have stepped forward as leaders are individuals of dubious background; their pretensions and rejection of process impede community development, especially when they are extended credibility by ill-informed foreigners.¹⁶⁰

The issue of professional leadership affects all Jewish organizations working in the successor states. Few indigenous Jews possess the numerous skills required for effective professional leadership in Jewish communal structures; planning, consensus-building, motivating, enabling, managerial competence, fundraising, financial administration, and knowledge of Jewish tradition are unlikely to have been acquired under the Soviet system or during these early years of post-Soviet independence. Vision eludes those of shallow experience and narrow horizons.

Professional competence is wanting in almost all spheres of a standard communal service delivery system. No social work practice exists in the successor states. Skilled educators in Jewish subjects are rare among post-Soviet Jews. Specialists in community organization, community relations, youth work, geriatrics, counseling and therapy, and other specific services are few in number.

9. The larger international Jewish organizations working in the transition states remain dependent upon expatriate professional staff, almost always Israelis, for upper management responsibilities. However, the reservoir of capable Israelis willing to work and live in the transition states is limited. Each organization -- the Jewish Agency, the Joint Distribution Committee, and Nativ -- is encountering serious problems in attracting and retaining qualified key professional staff. Political and economic instability, recurring shortages of basic commodities, pervasive crime and corruption, ethnic turmoil, environmental degradation, and separation from loved ones all deter qualified Israelis from seeking onsite employment in these positions.

With the exception of the Jewish Agency, international Jewish organizations working in the successor states have failed to engage trained Soviet-area specialists as consultants in their planning. The apparent assumption that Jewish communal service professionals are also proficient in analyzing and interpreting information about the post-Soviet successor states seems untenable.

Lay leadership of foreign Jewish organizations that provide the majority of funding for Jewish communal programs in the post-Soviet successor states can be problematic in its own way. None of these organizations educates its lay

leadership in a systematic manner about the complexities of post-Soviet Jewish life.

10. Continuing discord and friction between post-Soviet Jews and international Jewish organizations appears almost inevitable, if only because indigenous Jews resent the overwhelming foreign Jewish presence. First and foremost, those Jews who intend to remain are offended by the unrelenting efforts of the Jewish Agency for Israel to promote *aliyah* or emigration to Israel; such emphasis on departure is deemed threatening to their own future in the successor states. Second, they are annoyed by the imposition of goals and objectives determined by outsiders, even if they agree with some of the goals and objectives, such as care of Jewish elderly.

Third, unable to raise sufficient funds from local sources, many Jews in the successor states resent their dependence on international assistance even as they castigate foreign Jewry for failing to allocate yet greater sums of money to post-Soviet Jewry. Fourth, many post-Soviet Jewish activists are indignant about the importation of foreign specialists to manage foreign-sponsored programs, offended by suggestions that they themselves lack necessary management skills. Finally, many local Jews are irritated by the authoritative role in many communities of foreign-born, mainly Orthodox, rabbis. For the highly secular and generally intellectual post-Soviet Jews, many of the hasidic rabbis who dominate local communities appear anachronistic.

11. Continued international funding for many programs affecting post-Soviet Jewry is by no means assured, at least not at current levels. Even now, many needs are unmet. It is possible that some program gaps may narrow as the Jewish population continues to decline, but it is unlikely that foreign organizations can support appropriate service levels in all areas. It is equally unlikely that post-Soviet Jews themselves will be able to fund all critical programs in the near to medium future.

12. Absorption of post-Soviet *olim* in Israel is beyond the scope of this article. However, its success is critical to the future of post-Soviet Jewry as Israel is the destination of the majority of those who leave the successor states. Even Jews in areas of economic and/or political instability may delay emigration if relatives and friends already settled in Israel send reports of poor employment and/or poor housing prospects in Israel, or of hostility by veteran Israelis.

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¹ The transition to democracy and modern capitalism required hundreds of years in such countries as England, France, and Germany, and was accompanied by multiple economic crises, revolutions, and counter-revolutions -- and, in Germany, by the Nazi horror. Only in 1787, eleven years after the Declaration of Independence, did the United States ratify a constitution. Nearly 100 years later, a great Civil War threatened to rend the United States into two countries. Democracy and modern capitalism have not grown with relentless logic from the Middle Ages to the present day. Instability is an abiding condition in most countries founded in the wake of post-World War II decolonization. See David Gress, "The Idea of the West," *Watch on the West* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute), 1:5 (August, 1998), *passim*.

² Evoking nostalgia for stability and the Soviet welfare state, the platform of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation calls for a return to government control over the economy. It summons forth renewed state patriotism, recalling a panoply of Russian heroes from the fourteenth-century peasant leader Ilya Muromets to Marshal Georgy Zhukov of the Great Patriotic War (World War II) to cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. It speaks to Russians who have lost their sense of dignity and sense of place. It envisions a revival of Great Russia. It refers to the monarchist philosophers Konstantin Leontiev and Nikolai Danilevsky, and it links Marxist egalitarianism and collectivism with Russian communality (*obshchinnost'*) and Slavophile spiritual consensus (*sobornost'*). See "Programma kommunisticheskoi Rossii," [Russian], *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, February 2, 1995, p. 2.

³ *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1998, and *The Wall Street Journal*, August 27, 1998.

⁴ According to Credit Suisse - First Boston, at least \$66 billion fled Russia alone from 1994 to 1997. See *The New York Times*, August 28, 1998.

⁵ See George Schöpflin, "Post-Communist East-Central Europe: Five Years On," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 24:2 (Winter, 1994), pp. 15-22.

⁶ These figures were reported at a conference on "The Shadow Economy: Its Economic, Social, and Legal Aspects" held in Moscow on July 9, 1996. See a summary in *Moscow News*, #29 (July 25, 1996).

⁷ *The Demographic Situation of Russian Jews: Interim Report, Summary* (Jerusalem: Former Soviet Union Department, Jewish Agency for Israel, 1998), p. 3. The full report was prepared by the Division of Demography and Statistics, A. Harman Institute of

Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Sergio DellaPergola is Director and Dr. Mark Tolts is Principal Project Investigator. The combined Jewish population of Russia and Ukraine may constitute 80 percent or more of the total Jewish population of all 15 post-Soviet successor states.

⁸ The "expanded" or "enlarged" Jewish population, i.e., the number of core Jews and their non-Jewish family members, is significantly larger, perhaps as high as 2.4 million. Many offspring of such mixed marriages do not identify as Jews, but probably will accompany Jewish family members if the latter emigrate.

⁹ Rosalina Rivkina, "Experts: The 'Jewish Question in Post-Soviet Russia,'" *Sevodnya* [Russian], May 8, 1996, p. 5. See also *Main Outlines of JAFI Activity in the FSU for the Years 1999-2001* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, 1998), p. 45.

¹⁰ Alan Cohen, "Rebuilding Jewish Life in the Former Soviet Union (FSU)," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 74:2/3 (Winter-Spring, 1998), p. 143.

¹¹ *Activity Plan in the Former Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, 1996), p. 12. Using different age cohorts, the Israeli Ministry of Absorption reported in November 1998 the following age distribution of post-Soviet *olim* (new immigrants) for the first ten months of 1998: age 0 to 24 - 36 percent; age 25 to 34 - 17 percent; age 35 to 49 - 20 percent; age 50 to 64 - 16 percent; age 65+ - 11 percent. Presentation by the Jewish Agency for Israel, Former Soviet Union Department, Information Section, at Jewish Agency Joint Meeting of the Former Soviet Union Committee and the Aliyah and Klitah Committee, November 10, 1998.

¹² See Baruch Gur, *The Jews of the Former Soviet Union: Leaving or Staying*, Position Paper #18 (Jerusalem: Unit for the C.I.S. and Eastern Europe, Jewish Agency for Israel, 1994), p. 13.

¹³ The Pale of Settlement, a territory within imperial Russia to which Jewish settlement was confined, was first developed after the initial partition of Poland in 1772 when large numbers of Jews in Poland came under Russian control. Over time, the specific area of the Pale was variously expanded or contracted in response to political and economic conditions of the day. Generally, the Pale comprised contemporary Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, and Poland -- and excluded Russia proper. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, the right of residence in major urban centers of Russia was granted to certain wealthy Jews, Jewish university graduates, Jewish medical professionals, and various Jewish craftsmen.

¹⁴ All figures are approximate and all but Moscow are declining. The Jewish population of Moscow may have increased by 40,000 or more in recent years due to an influx of Jews from the Caucasus area (Chechnya, Daghestan, and Georgia) and Central Asia as well as more modest migration from smaller cities in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. See *New York Times*, December 3, 1995; interviews with Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, Chief Rabbi of Moscow, December 2, 1997, and October 26, 1998; and Frank Brown, "Moscow, Where It's Cool to Be Kosher," *Jerusalem Report*, VII:24 (April 2, 1998), pp. 26-32.

¹⁵ See "The Jews in the Big Cities," *Update* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, June 1995), pp. 14-15.

¹⁶ Gur, *op. cit.*, p. 9. See also *Activity Plan in the Former Soviet Union*, p. 13.

¹⁷ For contemporary information, see *The Economist* (London), #7913 (May 6, 1995), p.2; *The New York Times*, July 11, 1996; *The Jewish Chronicle* (London), #6722 (February 20, 1998), p. 5; and *Ha'aretz*, March 4, 1998. For background, see chapters in comprehensive surveys of Soviet Jewry, such as: Solomon M. Schwarz, *The Jews in the Soviet Union* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1951), pp. 174-194; Chimen Abramsky, "The Biro-Bidzhan Project," in Lionel Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917*, third ed. (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 64-77; and Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 370-383. For recent books about Birobidzhan, see Allan Laine Kagedan, *Soviet Zion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) and Robert Weinberg, *Stalin's Forgotten Zion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For an account by a participant, see Israel Emiot, *The Birobidzhan Affair* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981), *passim*.

¹⁸ In most instances in this report, spelling of Ukrainian place-names reflects Ukrainian orthography.

¹⁹ Few Jews speak a Baltic language well. Most identify more closely with the highly unpopular Russians than with Estonians, Latvians, or Lithuanians.

Cognizant of anti-Russian hostility in the Baltic states, several international Jewish organizations (such as the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress) relate to Baltic Jewish populations within their European or east European divisions, rather than within their "former Soviet Union" departments. Jewish communities in the three post-Soviet Baltic states receive significant assistance from Jewish populations in other Baltic countries, particularly those in the Scandinavian countries.

²⁰ Approximately 160,000 Jews lived in independent Lithuania and perhaps 155,000 lived in Polish-controlled Vilna and the surrounding area. So outstanding was the level of Jewish religious learning in Vilna that it was known as "the Jerusalem of Lithuania."

²¹ *Vilnius* is the Lithuanian form of the Polish *Vilna*.

²² The community publishes a newspaper, hauntingly called *Jerusalem of Lithuania*, which is printed in Lithuanian, Russian, Yiddish, and English. Once appearing on a monthly basis in each of the four languages, it has been forced to cut back to bimonthly versions in Russian and Yiddish and quarterly versions in Lithuanian and English. Much of its text is devoted to historical accounts, reminiscences of individuals, reports of commemorative events, and protests against local antisemitism.

²³ The Caucasus Mountain area of southern Russia includes six "autonomous republics" (Daghestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia) and two districts (Stavropol and Krasnodar).

²⁴ The Tat or Judeo-Tat language spoken by these Jews is a northern Persian dialect that incorporates some Hebrew words.

²⁵ Michael Zand, "The Literature of the Mountain Jews of the Caucasus," Part 1, *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 15:2 (May, 1985), p.3.

²⁶ Central Statistical Administration of the Council of Ministers, USSR, *Itogi vsesoyuznoi perepisi nasileniya 1970 goda [All-Union Population Census of 1970]*, 7 vols. (Moscow: Statistika, 1973), 4:12-15, 19-42, 152-316. The lower figure, which may have been understated by Soviet authorities, derives from the cited volume. Some believe that the higher figure is more accurate.

²⁷ Bukharan Jews refer to themselves as "Isroel" or "Yahudi". See Mikhail Zand, "Bukharan Jewish Culture Under Soviet Rule," *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 9:2 (May, 1979), p. 15.

²⁸ Oddly, or perhaps not so oddly, given the many contradictions in Soviet ideology, Jewish ethnicity does not fulfill the conditions of nationhood as defined by Karl Marx. According to Marxism, nationhood is accorded to those groups of people who share three characteristics: a common language; a common territory; and ties to the soil through a productive agricultural tradition. (Israel is deemed by Marxists to be an *artificial* state because Zionists are perceived to have imposed such conditions upon a scattered group of individuals who spoke many languages, lived in disparate countries, and had not farmed any common land in recent centuries.) However, Vladimir Lenin was a pragmatist who realized that many Jews in the Soviet Union retained a strong sense of ethnic identity that would not be discarded easily. He advocated an interim phase of national and ethnic development that could be contained and then manipulated to encourage assimilation. Accordingly, the Soviet regime created national Jewish organizations (principally the Yevseksia or Yiddish-language Jewish sections of the Communist party, 1918-1930) whose major task was to force the secularization of Soviet Jewry and its adaptation to Soviet conditions.

²⁹ Zvi Gitelman, "The Reconstruction of Community and Jewish Identity in Russia," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 24:1 (Winter, 1994), p. 43.

³⁰ "Messianic Judaism" contends that Jews are incomplete or unfulfilled as Jews until they accept Jesus Christ as the messiah. For a general summary of Christian proselytization among Jews in the successor states, see Rachel Katz, "Bringing Jews to Jesus in Russia," *Moment*, 22:1 (February 1997), pp. 48-51+.

³¹ See, for example, the Russian daily newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossia* and the Russian weekly newspapers *Zavtra (Tomorrow)*, a hardline nationalist/communist publication, and *Kolokol (The Bell)*, published in Volgograd, the provincial city formerly known as Stalingrad. See also the literary weekly *Literaturnaya Rossia* and the literary monthlies *Nash Sovremennik (Our Contemporary)* and *Molodaya gvardia (Young Guard)*. Russian right-wing monthly newspapers include *Russkiy porjadok (Russian Order)*, *Russkaya pravda (Russian truth; pagan)*, *Shturmovik (Stormtrooper; neo-Nazi)*; and *Nashe otchestvo (Our fatherland)*. *Sovietskaya Rossia* and the literary periodicals are all holdovers from the Soviet era.

The most prominent Ukrainian antisemitic newspapers are *Za Vilnu Ukrainu* (*For a Free Ukraine*), published in Lviv, and *Vecherny Kyiv* (*Evening Kyiv*). Among the smaller-circulation antisemitic Ukrainian newspapers are *Neskorena natsia* (*Unsubdued Nation*), *Holos natsii* (*Voice of the Nation*), and *Ukrainski obrii* (*Ukrainian horizons*).

³² This view was expressed to the author during six journeys in Ukraine and Russia between 1996 and 1998. The speakers were many indigenous Jews (including officials of Jewish organizations), foreign Jews working in the successor states for Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and Western and Israeli diplomats. Several added that the level of insecurity was much greater outside the two largest Russian cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

For further analysis of contemporary antisemitism in the post-Soviet successor states, see: Rivkina, "Experts: The 'Jewish Question in Post-Soviet Russia,'" (see note 7, p.118); Robert J. Brym, "Russian Attitudes Toward Jews: An Update," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 26:1 (Summer, 1996), pp.55-64; Mark Mikhailovich Krasnoselsky, "Do Jews Have a Future in Our Country?" *Nezavisimaya gazeta* [Russian], August 27, 1997, p. 5; and *Trud* [Russian], March 18, 1998, for an interview with sociologist Yuri Levada.

³³ Comparable groups exist in several of the other successor states. Among the most notorious in Ukraine is the Ukrainian nationalist organization UNA-UNSO, an acronym for the Lviv-based Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self-Defense Organization; the latter is the paramilitary wing of the former. Between 6,000 and 8,000 individuals may be active in the more than 40 local branches of UNA-UNSO, of whom 3,000 to 4,000 are in the UNSO forces. About 1,000 UNSO members are well-trained. The organization maintains a military base near Lviv, and about 500 troops have had combat experience fighting with Croats in ex-Yugoslavia, Georgians against Abkhazia, Azerbaidzhanis against Armenia, and/or Chechens against Russia. UNA-UNSO is strongly anti-Russian and anti-Moslem (notwithstanding some of its military alliances), and maintains ties with right-wing organizations in Russia and the United States as well as with the Irish Republican Army. See Frank Brown, "It's the Jews' Fault," *The Jerusalem Report*, IX:15 (November 23, 1998), pp. 64-65, for a summary by a non-specialist of antisemitism in western Ukraine.

³⁴ Fitting this stereotype is Vladimir Gusinsky, a Muscovite who was President of the Most Bank Group until early 1997 and is currently chairman of Media-Most, a media conglomerate that controls the leading Russian television station NTV, *Ekho Moskvy* radio station, *Sevodnya* newspaper, *Itogi* news magazine (a joint venture with *Newsweek*), and the *Sem' dnei* Publishing Company. He recently purchased a 25 percent share of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*. Gusinsky is a confidante of Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and a major bankroller of the 1996 Boris Yeltsin Presidential campaign. Mr. Gusinsky is also the founder and first president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

An even more prominent Jewish "new Russian" is Boris Berezovsky, who controls the giant Logo-Vaz corporation, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, and ORT television. (The last is unrelated to ORT, the Jewish organization.) Mr. Berezovsky has held various positions in the Russian government and is a major financial supporter of political candidates

favoring the interests of "big business". Unlike Mr. Gusinsky, Mr. Berezovsky shuns involvement in Jewish causes.

³⁵ See, for example, the cartoon in *Sovietskaya Rossia*, March 25, 1995. Flanked by thuggish bodyguards, a "businessman" alights from a luxury car in front of a bank. An impoverished elderly woman passing by says, "You are not businessmen. You are swindlers." Responds the swaggering businessman, "You are wrong, old lady. We are the New Russians." Prominently shown on the door of his car is a six-pointed star.

³⁶ *Main Outlines of JAFI Activity, op. cit.*, p. 15. See also p. 45.

³⁷ In addition to attacking Jews, Mr. Kondratenko also maligns Chechenns, Meskhetian Turks, and Armenians. See Georgy Lesskis, "A Chauvinist at the Helm in Krasnodar," *Diagnosis* (Moscow), #2 (December 1997), pp. 6-7, and *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, 76:185 (October 19, 1998), p. 4. Krasnodar krai is an agricultural area with a small Jewish population. It is the home territory of Kuban Coassacks, one of the more active groups of contemporary Cossacks.

³⁸ Interview with diplomat at Embassy of the United States in Moscow, October 28, 1998.

³⁹ See: *The New York Times*, November 8 and 16, 1998; *The Washington Post*, November 8 and 14, 1998; and *The Jewish Chronicle* (London), #6761 (November 20, 1998), p. 4.

⁴⁰ Russian press reports, December 23 and 24, 1998; *JTA News Desk* [JTA E-mail Edition], December 24, 1998; *Jerusalem Post*, December 25, 1998. The open letter was addressed to Nikolai Bordyuzha, director of Kremlin administration and secretary of the Russian Security Council, and Minister of Justice Pavel Krashennikov.

⁴¹ Additional rabbis are employed as teachers, ritual slaughterers, welfare service administrators, etc.

⁴² Such organizations include the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Joint Distribution Committee, and Nativ.

⁴³ All of these rabbis are foreigners. Rabbi Goldschmidt is a native of Switzerland, Rabbi Bleich is an American, and the others are Israelis. Rabbi Bleich is a Karliner-Stoliner hasid, Rabbi Goldschmidt is independent, and the others are Chabad hasidim. The large-city rabbis are all in their mid- to late thirties; many of the smaller-city rabbis are younger. Rabbi Avrum Wolf was appointed chief Chabad rabbi in Odessa in mid-1998; his successor in Kherson is his younger brother, Rabbi Yosif Wolf.

A singular role among rabbis in the successor states is that performed by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, an internationally known rabbi, whose primary base is in Jerusalem. Through the Aleph Society in the United States, supporters of Rabbi Steinsaltz established a yeshiva (Mekor Chaim) in Moscow shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union; the yeshiva evolved into the Steinsaltz Institute for Jewish Community Service, which trained emerging Jewish leaders from small communities until a fire destroyed its premises in July 1996. The Aleph Society has provided Russian-language translations

of several major Jewish texts as well as several of Rabbi Steinsaltz's key works, and Rabbi Steinsaltz makes periodic brief visits to Jewish population centers in the post-Soviet successor states to lecture and to conduct various Jewish rituals. Although the translations are appreciated by other rabbis, the publicity accorded Rabbi Steinsaltz's occasional flying visits and the efforts by the Aleph Society to designate him the "chief spiritual authority (*glavny dukhovny rabbin*) of Russian Jewry" are resented by those rabbis who labor in the successor states on a long-term basis.

⁴⁴ Whereas larger Jewish population centers may host several rabbis from different movements and organizations, an informal agreement exists among hasidic groups to respect each other's "exclusive" claim to specific smaller cities. If a rabbi from one organization establishes a program in one of these smaller population centers, other movements generally will refrain from sending in their own rabbi to establish a competing program. On occasion in the early to mid-1990s, rabbis from two organizations appeared more-or-less simultaneously in one or another town; an altercation ensued and one rabbi was forced to leave. Such contests have almost ceased in recent years, as many medium-size Jewish population centers have already been claimed and financial constraints have precluded additional rabbinic placements.

⁴⁵ Specific positions generate their own demands. In one city, the expatriate rabbi has extended regular financial assistance to families of 12 local policemen who were murdered by local Jewish gangsters. The same rabbi has carried a gun for his own protection.

⁴⁶ The stress of rabbinic work in the post-Soviet states is intensified by the isolation of rabbis from their colleagues, friends of similar background, and extended family. Similarly, rabbinic wives are separated from others of common tradition, and children may grow up without friends from families who share essential values. As their children reach school age, rabbinic families in the transition states face difficult decisions regarding enrollment of youngsters in compatible religious schools and summer camps in distant countries.

⁴⁷ The independence of Or Avner so angered Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, the Brooklyn-based chief administrator of Chabad, that he decreed the expulsion of all Or Avner rabbis from Chabad during 1994 and 1995, banishing them from all Chabad conferences and other activities. Rabbi Krinsky tried, and failed, to force Mr. Levayev to channel all Or Avner funding through Chabad in Brooklyn. Rabbi Krinsky himself had declined to raise funds for Chabad operations in the transition states. In 1996, Rabbi Krinsky was compelled to abandon his campaign; he flew to Israel, which he had not visited in more than 40 years, to reconcile with Mr. Levayev. Rabbi Krinsky has never visited the Soviet Union or the post-Soviet successor states, and his relations with many Chabad rabbis in the region remain tense.

⁴⁸ The day schools participate in the Israeli government Tsofia program and receive Israeli government funding as well as an Or Avner subsidy. See below.

⁴⁹ The Jerusalem schools are especially beneficial to youngsters from small towns, whose educational and social needs cannot be addressed in such environments. Many pupils in the Jerusalem schools are recruited at the Yad Yisroel summer camp.

⁵⁰ Ohr Somayach was established in 1972 to provide an intellectually stimulating course of Orthodox Jewish studies for Jewish students with strong secular educational backgrounds, but limited knowledge of Jewish tradition. Originally geared toward young men from English-speaking countries, Ohr Somayach later initiated a Russian-speaking department to accommodate the growing number of Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel.

⁵¹ Each is young and inexperienced. However, the Progressive rabbi in Moscow is a native Muscovite who had emigrated to Israel as a child with his family. Returning to the Russian capital as a rabbi in August 1998 and working there without a synagogue or other program space, Rabbi Chaim Ben Yaakov nonetheless was able to attract several hundred local Jews to Rosh Hashanah services in rented premises one month after his arrival. A native Russian speaker, he appears to be an effective communicator with Moscow Jews. Rabbi Nelly Kogan, also a native Russian speaker, is in Minsk, and Rabbi David Wilfond, an American, is in Kyiv.

⁵² The main office of KEROOR is in the Moscow Choral Synagogue (Orthodox; associated with Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt). Zinovy Kogan, a representative in Moscow of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, is its executive vice president. However, although mainstream Orthodox groups work well with the liberal groups in KEROOR, the Chabad movement in Russia objects to the inclusion of Progressive communities. Its relations with KEROOR and with Rabbi Goldschmidt are strained.

⁵³ Its 1987 national Congress in Moscow provided ample evidence of its various weaknesses. The Va'ad leadership, headed awkwardly by three co-chairmen, could not agree upon the mission of the organization. Mikhail (Micha) Chlenov promoted the development of a strong highly-centralized national Jewish communal infrastructure with headquarters in Moscow. Iosif Zissels, a Ukrainian and the second co-chairman, urged participants to recognize that such a centralized Jewish community would be an anachronism when, even in 1987, the Soviet Union appeared to be disintegrating. Samuel Zilberg, the third co-chairman, disdained any emphasis on internal organization, advocating aliyah as the preferable course for Soviet Jews. An overambitious agenda and numerous procedural and ideological squabbles led to frequent schedule delays. As Friday evening approached, a call to adjourn for Shabbat was dismissed out-of-hand by secular organizers of the Congress. Rabbis in attendance walked out.

⁵⁴ Sch-pflin, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ The Russian Jewish Congress is known as REK, reflecting the first letter of each of the three Russian words in its name, *Rossiskiy Evreyskiy Kongress*. See note 34 above about Gusinsky.

⁵⁶ See *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (Moscow), January 11, 1996.

⁵⁷ The three vice-presidents are: Boris Hait, Most Bank; Vitaly Malkin, Russian Credit Bank; and Mikhail Fridman, Alfa Bank.

⁵⁸ Poklonnaya Gora is the point on the outskirts of Moscow where the Nazi thrust toward the Soviet capital was blocked during World War II. A memorial museum, Russian Orthodox church, mosque, and synagogue were constructed on the site to mark the 50th anniversary of the Soviet victory over German forces. The stated amount was expended in 1997 and the first three months of 1998. The synagogue structure also contains museum displays commemorating the Holocaust and Jewish participation in World War II Soviet armed forces and partisan groups.

⁵⁹ The largest expenditures in religious programs were for assistance to regional synagogues and religious communities (for public utilities, publication of Jewish calendars, kosher food, and security) and training of rabbinic assistants; the largest expenditures in culture were for various cultural events and publishing of academic Judaica, translations of diaspora and Israeli books, and subsidy of a major Russian Jewish newspaper; the largest expenditures in primary and secondary Jewish education were for subsidy of Jewish primary, day, and Sunday schools; the largest expenditures in social welfare were for Jewish-sponsored sports activities and charity kitchens; the largest expenditures in research and higher secular education were for support of Jewish studies in academic institutions; and the largest expenditures in higher religious education were for training of Jewish studies teachers in religious day schools and for operation of several yeshivot. Locally raised funds in each community were allocated to locally-determined projects, including synagogue restoration, youth clubs, welfare assistance, holiday programs, and Jewish education. See *The 1997 Annual Report of the Russian Jewish Congress* (Moscow: Russian Jewish Congress, 1998), *passim*. The relatively low amount of funding allocated to welfare programs reflects major expenditures in this area by the Joint Distribution Committee, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and other foreign organizations. See below.

⁶⁰ The economic crisis may have an especially severe impact on Jewish programs in several outlying cities in which only one or two donors contribute disproportionately large amounts. Russian cities other than Moscow with significant Jewish benefactors are St. Petersburg, Kazan, Samara, Saratov, Chelyabinsk, and Krasnoyarsk.

⁶¹ A division in fundraising among Jewish businessmen is apparent in Moscow. In general, those in "big business" support REK, and many Jews in smaller business enterprises contribute to Chabad.

⁶² Mr. Monastirsky broke with the Ukrainian Jewish Council in mid-1997 to establish the Ukrainian Jewish Fund, an organization that quickly became part of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress. See below.

⁶³ Vadim Rabinovich is on the "watch list" of the United States, denied entry to the U.S. and shunned by senior American officials because of his involvement in narcotics trafficking, weapons trading, money laundering, and other criminal activity. He is *persona non grata* in Great Britain as well.

Mr. Rabinovich lives near Netanya in Israel and commutes to Kyiv by private aircraft. His criminal activity attracted attention in the Israeli press in August 1998 when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refused to attend a dinner at which Mr. Rabinovich was to

have been honored. The organization sponsoring the dinner revoked the award. See *The Jerusalem Post*, August 24, 1998.

⁶⁴ See "Briefing Material for 1998 Budget Review," Report to the Former Soviet Union Area Committee, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, October 13, 1997.

⁶⁵ The writer knows of no records quantifying the number of such individuals. However, ample anecdotal evidence supports this conclusion.

⁶⁶ JDC estimates that the cost of food increased 22 percent in 1997 alone. See "Macro Issues for Discussion," Materials for the Former Soviet Union Area Committee Meeting, October 13, 1997. Inflation in 1994, 1995, and 1996 was even higher, and the collapse of the ruble in August 1998 led to expectations that inflation in Russia would be 60 to 70 percent in 1998.

⁶⁷ Bureaucracy and corruption often thwart attempts by Western aid organizations to administer inoculation programs or distribute free or low-cost medications. For example, a Jewish day school in Ukraine received a large quantity of Western-manufactured diphtheria vaccine in the mid-1990s to counter a local epidemic. Cumbersome Ukrainian regulatory procedures, which might have required a bribe for completion, would have required so much time that the vaccine would have deteriorated during certification processing. Rather than endangering children by withholding the U.S.-approved vaccine, the community rabbi moved the vaccination program from official school premises to a local private facility and proceeded with the inoculation schedule in an almost clandestine manner.

⁶⁸ An exhibit in the Holocaust museum in the new synagogue building at Poklonnaya Gora states that 2.9 million Jews were slaughtered during the Shoah on Soviet territory. The precise number may never be known due to (1) the nature of the Holocaust in much of this area, i.e., few precise records of victims exist, and (2) shifting borders in the area, prompting different scholars to use different boundaries in defining the territory of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, and the Soviet Union.

⁶⁹ The Hebrew word *hesed* means "acts of loving kindness" or "charitable deeds". The plural of *hesed* is *hasadim*.

⁷⁰ In an interview with two senior JDC officials in Jerusalem on November 19, 1998, one insisted to the writer that each *hesed* is operated locally with JDC playing only a minor role. In reality, few *hasadim* could function without significant JDC management assistance, including JDC financial support, planning expertise, staff training and supervision, and other aid.

⁷¹ JDC usually asks local businessmen, physicians, academics, and other prominent individuals to be members of a *hesed* board. In communities where a significant expatriate population resides, foreign Jews who work in the city also may be asked to join the board.

⁷² See "1999 FSU Budget," American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, October 2, 1998, p. 1. The core budget of JDC is supported by the United Jewish Appeal through contributions to Jewish federations throughout the United States.

⁷³ The cities are Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Odessa in Ukraine; Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia; Minsk in Belarus; and Kishinev in Moldova. Funds were designated for purchase and renovation of *hasadim* facilities, furnishing and equipping these buildings, purchase of medical equipment, establishment of repair shops for medical equipment, vehicles, food, homecare services, winter relief supplies, medical assistance, and social activities.

⁷⁴ "1999 FSU Budget," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁷⁵ The duration of funding depends on the number of properties identified and available, the characteristics of the German real estate market at any given time, and the conditions of sale of heirless Jewish property.

⁷⁶ APF and JDC have collaborated on a similar project in Romania. A third partner in the Dnipropetrovsk effort is Action for Post-Soviet Jewry, a Boston-area monitoring, advocacy, and support group.

⁷⁷ To comply with U.S. government requirements that such aid be provided on a non-sectarian basis, 15 percent of the beds must be available to non-Jewish elderly.

⁷⁸ "1999 FSU Budget," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ The writer visited five Jewish summer camps in Ukraine during 1997, three of which were sponsored by religious movements and two of which were Jewish Agency camps. In all five camps, administrators were acutely aware of the extraordinary nutritional needs of Ukrainian Jewish children. Three generous meals and two snacks were served to each child every day.

⁸⁰ Reported in *The Washington Post*, September 22, 1997.

⁸¹ One Russian newspaper has estimated that between one and two million Russian children are homeless, a level of homelessness exceeding that of the post-revolutionary or post-war (World War II) eras. See *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, April 9, 1997. Another newspaper reported that 50,000 children (under age 18) are homeless in Moscow alone. See *Moskovsky komsomolets*, March 7, 1997.

⁸² *The Washington Post*, September 22, 1997. Christian missionaries are active in some children's homes.

⁸³ "Summer Camp Brings Smiles to Jewish Kids with Cerebral Palsy," *Fast Facts . . . FSU*, n.v. (July, 1997), p. 2.

⁸⁴ Attitudes in the successor states are such that the birth of a disabled child frequently creates a single-parent family as the father abandons his wife and the child in hospital.

⁸⁵ See pages 54-55 for further discussion of Nativ.

⁸⁶ *Tsofia* is a Hebrew acronym for "Zionism and Jewish pedagogy".

⁸⁷ Some local authorities outside Russia fear that local Jews, most of whom speak Russian and identify with Russian culture (rather than, say, with Latvian or Ukrainian culture) would identify more with the political interests of Russia than with the interests of the state in which they reside.

⁸⁸ Although various Jewish day schools in the successor states differ in the strength of their commitment to Zionism, it is likely that all promote Zionism, even if only in a passive sense. Instruction in Hebrew, contact with Israeli and Israeli-trained teachers, celebration of Israeli holidays, and use of Israeli-developed learning materials all contribute to a strengthened identification with Israel.

A survey conducted among Jewish day school students in Ukraine, Moldova, and Lithuania by Alexander Galperin in 1994 shows that length of time of study in Jewish schools corresponds positively with a desire to move to Israel and negatively with a desire to move to the United States. See report by Michael Beizer, "New Publications about Jews of the FSU," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, #32 (Spring, 1997), p. 87.

⁸⁹ In Moscow, most day school pupils and teachers use the extensive Moscow Metro system for transportation.

⁹⁰ Interview with Dr. Shapiro at Jewish Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, December 1, 1997. The writer visited six of the seven Jewish day schools in Moscow during late November and early December, 1997, and revisited four of these schools in October 1998. In each school, officials mentioned the strength of their instructional program in English as a major attraction for families. Indeed, because qualified foreign-language teachers have left teaching for more lucrative positions in private industry, very few general public schools in any of the successor states now teach any foreign language.

⁹¹ Various Israeli government ministries have given the Association for Hebrew Education in the Diaspora/Wolfson Fund, which is based in the Israeli Ministry of Finance, between \$85 million and \$150 million over the past 15 years for distribution to selected Orthodox high schools in a small number of countries. Until court action was initiated by the Tsirei Chabad group in the mid-1990s, the selection of schools was controlled by Ze'ev Wolfson, an American, reportedly as an expression of gratitude for his contributions to the election campaigns of U.S. senators and congressmen who support Israel. See *Ha'aretz*, February 8 and 9, 1998. In a decision reached in October 1998, an Israeli court ordered that the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Jewish Agency for Israel distribute these funds to schools in the post-Soviet successor states and outside the successor states respectively. Some question remains about ultimate control of the allocation process.

⁹² With the exception of the Ministry of Education, all of these institutions have significant experience in training teachers for work in the diaspora.

⁹³ The Chabad school in Dnipropetrovsk, which enrolls more than 700 youngsters, is among the largest Jewish day schools in Europe. Enrollment at the Ohr Somayach school in Odessa is approaching 700. Other large day schools in Ukraine are the Karliner-Stoliner school in Kyiv and the Chabad school in Kharkiv, each of which enrolls about 450 youngsters. The Etz Chaim school in Moscow is likely to enroll about 400 pupils when its current curriculum is fully extended through the eleventh grade, the final grade in Soviet/post-Soviet schools.

⁹⁴ Most ulpanes are operated by the Jewish Agency for Israel and are geared toward the promotion of aliyah, not the training of teachers. However, some ulpan students of Hebrew delay emigration and become teachers of Hebrew. Indigenous pedagogical institutions are discussed below.

⁹⁵ Interviews in Moscow, October 1998. Israeli political considerations governed the choice of the Israeli Ministry of Education as the provider of services for formal education in the post-Soviet states, although the Ministry has no prior experience in diaspora Jewish education. The Jewish Agency Department of Jewish Zionist Education has been proscribed from offering such services in the post-Soviet successor states, although it specializes in diaspora Jewish education.

⁹⁶ The program is offered by the Joseph Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, which is part of Bar-Ilan University. Both ORT and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture have declared their intentions to develop such materials, but neither has supported their statements with financial resources.

⁹⁷ Approximately 3,000 youngsters are enrolled in Or Avner day schools throughout the successor states. Four additional schools supervised by Chabad rabbis - an elementary school in Moscow and larger schools in Minsk, Kyiv, and Kishinev - operate outside the Or Avner framework.

⁹⁸ An increasing number of such schools are accepting non-halakhically Jewish children in response to post-Soviet Jewish demographic reality, i.e., the exceptionally large proportion of intermarried families, referred to by some as the "expanded" or "enlarged" Jewish population.

⁹⁹ Some observers consider the best Tsofia schools to be those in Moscow (frequently called the Lipman school, in reference to its principal, Grigory Lipman), Odessa (co-sponsored with ORT), and Kishinev. The Lipman school offers a stronger religious curriculum than is customary in Tsofia schools. As of late 1998, preliminary discussions had occurred between the Moscow and Odessa schools with representatives of the Masorti and Chabad movements respectively about employment of Jewish-studies teachers from these movements in the two schools.

¹⁰⁰ The ORT schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg are new institutions. The ORT school in Odessa is a joint venture with an existing Tsofia school. The two schools in Russia enroll only youngsters in the middle and upper grades, whereas the Odessa school enrolls pupils in grades one through eleven. The schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg enroll many non-Jewish pupils, but the Odessa school is predominantly Jewish according to the Israeli Law of Return. ORT withdrew funding in 1998 from a

school in Kyiv, the Kyiv-Pechersk National Mathematics Lycee, a school founded in 1962, which enrolls very few Jewish pupils

¹⁰¹ Interview with Dr. Shapiro, December 1, 1997.

¹⁰² Most Jewish camps in the successor states are rented on a seasonal basis from factories or other institutions that operated them for the children of their employees during the Soviet period. With the loss of heavy subsidies that sustained the camps in the Soviet years, the owner-institutions are no longer able to offer camping experiences to employee families and are eager to rent the sites to organizations with foreign sponsors. Notwithstanding their tenant status, some organizations leasing such sites have invested significant funds in their capital improvement. (The Chabad organizations in Moscow and Dnipropetrovsk differ from this pattern as each actually owns its own camp.)

¹⁰³ With special funding from UJA Federation of New York, 560 youngsters between the ages of eight and ten in Minsk and Kharkiv participated in JAFI summer camps in 1998. Programs were geared to the needs of this age group and included the participation of parents.

¹⁰⁴ In visits to two Jewish Agency camps in Ukraine during the summer of 1997, the writer found both Israeli and local camp counselors to be well trained and the camp programs well planned and executed.

¹⁰⁵ Most of these camps receive some subsidy from the Jewish Agency.

¹⁰⁶ The broad age expanse in some cities may reflect previous experience in the old Komsomol organization, the youth division of the Soviet Communist party, which enrolled individuals between the ages of 14 and 35.

Perhaps the best known project of Hillel associations in the post-Soviet successor states is the organization of Pesach *sedarim* for Jews living in smaller Jewish population centers. Other activities include various social activities, holiday observances, classes and seminars, and Jewish student newspapers.

¹⁰⁷ For a survey of Jewish scholarship in the post-Soviet successor states, see David E. Fishman, "The Rebirth of Jewish Scholarship in Russia," in *American Jewish Year Book* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1997), pp. 391-400.

¹⁰⁸ In addition to training educators and research personnel in academic Jewish studies, the new Institute is likely to include a discrete department of Jewish communal service that will train professionals in social work, community organization, non-profit management, and fundraising.

¹⁰⁹ The full title of Sefer in Russian is *Tsentr nauchnikh rabotnikov i prepodavetelei iudeiki v VUZakh "Sefer"*. *Sefer* is the Hebrew word for book. *Sefer* remains dependent upon JDC for financial support.

¹¹⁰ See Hertzal Fishman, "A Moving Russian Experience," Atar ve' Atid, 3:1 (September, 1996), pp. 101-103.

¹¹¹ JDC allocates \$165,000 to this program area annually, an amount that may be sufficient for maintenance of the Sefer organization, but is insignificant in terms of the overall needs of post-Soviet academic Judaica. The Russian Jewish Congress allocates about \$370,000 to institutions of Jewish higher education in Russia, including the Jewish universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg and several teacher-training programs.

¹¹² This program is supported by the Pincus Fund of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Jewish Agency itself, and local resources.

¹¹³ Its curriculum includes study in social work, gerontology, community organization, leadership and management, supervision, and Jewish values. More than 1,000 individuals participate in such seminars annually.

¹¹⁴ The initial anti-Zionist mandate of Birobidzhan dictated a language policy favoring Yiddish as its official language.

¹¹⁵ Update on JAFI Activities in the CIS & Eastern Europe: Summary of 1997 (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, 1998), p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Full diplomatic relations were restored only in 1991, shortly before the Soviet Union collapsed.

¹¹⁷ Baruch Gur-Gurevitz, Open Gates (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency for Israel, 1996), p. 69. Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania and Tbilisi is the capital of Georgia (*Gruzia*). Many Jews in each country were known to be eager to emigrate to Israel.

¹¹⁸ For information on the Jewish Agency budget, see Proposed Budget 1998 (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency for Israel, 1998), passim. Total Jewish Agency expenditures (in the successor states and in Israel) related to post-Soviet Jewry constitute more than one-half of the JAFI budget.

¹¹⁹ These are in: Russia - Moscow, St. Petersburg, Samara, Saratov, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Rostov-on-Don, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Piatigorsk, and Makhachkala; Baltic states - Riga; Belarus - Minsk; Ukraine - Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Odessa, Simferopol, and Lviv; Moldova - Kishinev; Caucasus mountain area - Tbilisi and Baku; and Central Asia - Tashkent and Almaty.

¹²⁰ Some work from offices maintained by JAFI and others work from their own homes. Almost all have been trained for their work in JAFI seminars. Many have close relatives in Israel and most plan to live in Israel themselves.

¹²¹ More than 90 percent of Na'aleh participants remain in Israel. The Jewish Agency recruited participants and operated the Na'aleh program until budgetary pressures forced a transfer of actual program operations to the Israeli Ministry of Education in 1996. The Jewish Agency continues to recruit, screen, and tutor post-Soviet teens for

Na'aleh. The division of responsibilities has reduced the scope of the program as the Ministry has sharply curtailed the number of students accepted and retained as participants. Various programmatic discontinuities have also surfaced; for example, the Ministry of Education does not permit JAFI to see the admission exams for which it develops tutorial programs. Further, JAFI promotes Na'aleh as an aliyah program, whereas the Ministry emphasizes the quality of the Na'aleh academic experience as preparation for university entrance in multiple countries.

¹²² Technically, Nativ has no mandate to operate programs that promote aliyah, such as clubs offering instruction in small business management in Israel or classes focusing on computer skills for the Israeli market.

¹²³ See, for example, *Ha'aretz* of April 9, 1998, which quoted a 1998 report about a broad range of Nativ financial improprieties and dereliction of various responsibilities.

¹²⁴ The allocation to Nativ has represented 20% to 30% of the regular post-Soviet portion of the JDC budget in recent years.

¹²⁵ JDC maintains offices in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, Omsk, Kyiv, Odessa, Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Minsk, Kishinev, Baku, Tbilisi, Tashkent, and Almaty.

¹²⁶ Almost \$700,000 from private foundations supplement budgetary expenditures in this area. See Cohen, *op. cit.*, for a statement by a JDC professional staff member on the JDC approach to Jewish renewal in the post-Soviet successor states. Curiously, the author says nothing about the impact on JDC programs of the declining birth rate in the Jewish community, the high ratio of Jewish deaths to births, Jewish emigration, or the operations of other Jewish organizations working in the successor states.

¹²⁷ Joint Distribution Committee, *FSU Budget*, September 30, 1997; Jonathan Kolker, Report to the FSU Committee, October 13, 1997. JDC budgetary support for property reclamation will soon end.

¹²⁸ Many of these are developed in collaboration with other organizations possessing expertise in the creation of such materials, such as Melitz, pedagogical agencies, etc.

¹²⁹ See, for example, its *Former Soviet Union: Briefing Material for 1998 Budget Review* (N.p., n.d. [c September 1997]), p.1.

¹³⁰ See, for example, *Snapshots -- Activities in the Former Soviet Union* (N.p.: JDC, 1997), p. 9.

¹³¹ The acronym *ORT* derives from the its original Russian title *Obshchestvo rasprostraneniya truda sredi yevreyev* (Society for Promotion [and Development] of [Manual] Labor among Jews). The acronym was later anglicized to *Organization for Rehabilitation through Training*.

¹³² The ORT program in the successor states is managed by the headquarters office of World ORT Union in London.

¹³³ Among these institutions are the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute and the Moscow ORT Technological College in the Russian capital.

¹³⁴ The last named is an association of 17 small Jewish population centers in the southern region of Kyiv oblast and in neighboring Cherkassy oblast.

¹³⁵ *Kesher* means *connection* in Hebrew.

¹³⁶ Almost all Chabad rabbis who hold fulltime positions in a single city are foreign born, most in Israel.

¹³⁷ Some Soviet/post-Soviet *olim* (new immigrants) in Israel and some immigrants in Western diaspora countries believe that their knowledge of their former homelands entitles them to significant policy-making roles in various foreign organizations working in the successor states. Although some emigres may occupy such positions in the future, their inexperience in the Western philanthropic process and lack of leadership experience are deterrents to immediate involvement.

¹³⁸ Some UJA missions, dubbed "Disneyland tours" by their detractors, may well be counterproductive in terms of enhancing comprehension of post-Soviet Jewry. Typically, they have transported diaspora Jews to exotic and relatively small Jewish population groups, such as those in villages in the Caucasus mountains, that are strongly anomalous among post-Soviet Jewry in general.

¹³⁹ Area committee meetings in both the Jewish Agency and Joint Distribution Committee often pose fairly complex questions (for example, about program priorities) that ill-informed committee members are unable to address. Further, few meetings in either organization provide time for such discussions, even if participants possessed the essential knowledge for thoughtful deliberations. Committee rosters of both organizations are large and unwieldy, and permitted attendance by dozens of outsiders generates a sense of chaos that does little to encourage interested committee members to pursue seriously the issues at hand. (The Jewish Agency recently has adopted measures to control the number of individuals on its committees, but non-members of committees continue to participate in both JAFI and JDC committee deliberations.)

¹⁴⁰ The exception to this situation is the Jewish Agency, whose initial policy and programs in the Soviet and post-Soviet Union were crafted and led by Dr. Baruch Gur from 1989 until 1995. Dr. Gur has a strong academic background in Soviet-area studies and considerable prior experience in the Soviet Union. The Jewish Agency retains a strong research capacity. Other organizations appear not to consult in any substantive manner with political scientists, sociologists, or others with structured backgrounds in study of the Soviet Union and its successor states. A number of such specialists, many of whom are sensitive to Jewish issues, are available to Jewish organizations in Israel, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States.

¹⁴¹ The Jewish Agency, the Joint Distribution Committee, and Nativ all staff their programs with Israelis, a policy underscoring their commitment to Israel and Zionism.

¹⁴² *Main Outlines of JAFI Activity in the FSU for the Years 1999-2001*, *op. cit.*, p. 44 and Appendices 1 and 4. See also *Update on JAFI Activities in the CIS & Eastern Europe* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, June 1998), pp. 18-22.

¹⁴³ See Rimona Wiesel and Eli Leshem, "Trends in Aliyah from Russia and the Ukraine," *Inventory of All Current JAFI Programs* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, 1998), pp. 27-40.

¹⁴⁴ Unemployment in some smaller cities in Russia and Ukraine exceeds 80 percent. Even some cities with more than one million residents, such as Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk, are reporting unemployment rates of 80 percent.

¹⁴⁵ The economic crisis that began in Russia in August 1998 has generated a new group of potential olim from Moscow and several other large cities. Between the ages of 20 and 40, they are well educated and had been successful participants in the "new economy" - small to mid-size businesses, banking services, advertising, marketing, sales, and similar ventures. They perceived their futures in Russia as limitless and had shown no interest in emigration. Almost overnight, they became displaced as unemployment in the "new economic sector" reached 60 to 70 percent. Thousands of additional individuals were placed on "extended leave", without compensation. Some observers refer to this age cohort as the "lost generation" (*poteryannoje pokoleniye*). By September and October 1998, many Jews among them began to make inquiries about aliyah; enrollment in Jewish Agency Moscow Hebrew classes jumped from 585 in September 1997 to 1412 in September 1998. Interviews in Moscow, October 1998.

¹⁴⁶ Interview in Moscow, December 1, 1997. First-degree relatives are parents, children, or siblings. Cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents or grandchildren are second-degree relatives.

¹⁴⁷ In a survey of *olim* departing for Israel in 1998, Jewish Agency researchers found that less than ten percent of respondents listed antisemitism as a reason for departure. Presentation by the Jewish Agency for Israel, Former Soviet Union Department, Information Section, at Jewish Agency Joint Meeting of the Former Soviet Union Committee and the Aliyah and Klitah Committee, November 10, 1998. However, antisemitism frequently is cited in applications by post-Soviet Jews for asylum in the United States.

¹⁴⁸ In depressed areas of Ukraine, for example, one frequently encounters middle-age Jews who identify themselves as engineers and section chiefs or professors and department heads of prestigious institutions, although severe budgetary constraints forced the closure of the relevant divisions several years previously. An individual may be supporting himself and his family by buying and selling goods in a street bazaar, but remains insistent and comfortable in claiming a no longer existing intellectually-demanding position. Such deception is acceptable in post-Soviet society.

¹⁴⁹ However, a large number of intermarried families have emigrated to Israel and, reflecting the very high intermarriage rate in the successor states, it is likely that more will follow. Quoting figures of Nativ, *Ha'aretz* of June 12, 1998, reported that 27 percent of post-Soviet olim in 1997 were not Jewish according to the Israeli Law of Return and 43.6 percent were not Jewish according to the more stringent standards of *halakha* (Jewish law).

¹⁵⁰ Criticism has been leveled against Jewish Agency and Israeli government personnel in the successor states for discouraging or even prohibiting the aliyah of older Jews. Israel accepts all Jews who meet the immigration requirements outlined in the Israeli Law of Return, but emissaries may discourage Jewish seniors without family in Israel from immigration as their absorption without family support may be problematic. It is quite likely that some emissaries lack tact and sensitivity in conveying this message to Jewish seniors considering aliyah.

¹⁵¹ See, for example: Alla Levy, *Aliyah from the Former Soviet Union, 1995: How Many and Where From* (Jerusalem: JAFI, 1996); *Aliyah from the Former Soviet Union, 1995: An Analysis* (Jerusalem: JAFI, 1996); and Viacheslav Konstantinov, *Aliyah from the former Soviet Union: A Socio-Demographic Analysis, Briefing 21* (Jerusalem: JAFI, 1997).

¹⁵² HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), quoted in *The Washington Post*, September 20, 1998.

¹⁵³ *Kolbasa* is the Russian word for *sausage*.

¹⁵⁴ *Fascism* was a more acceptable enemy than *national socialism* because the latter could have been confused with the type of socialism promoted by the Soviet Union itself.

¹⁵⁵ Most veteran Jewish citizens of Germany were born in eastern Europe or are descendants of east European Jews who remained in Germany as refugees after World War II. Many of the first *Soviet* Jewish immigrants were actually recruited by Jews in West Berlin, who were determined to reinforce and strengthen the declining Jewish population in that western outpost deep inside East Germany. Some Soviet Jews were contacted while still in the USSR and then assisted in travel to Berlin as they passed through Vienna, the transit point to Israel commonly used in the 1970s. Other Soviet Jews were recruited in Rome, where many waited months for visas to the United States. Although these actions initiated Soviet Jewish emigration to Germany, it is likely that the ease of immigration into Germany would have attracted Soviet and post-Soviet Jews eager to remain in Europe and appreciative of generous welfare benefits. See: *The New York Times* of November 4, 1973; November 13, 1974; January 27, 1975; and February 25, 1979. See also the following articles: Jesse Zel Lurie, "Berlin Diary," *Hadassah Magazine*, 61:1 (August/September, 1979), p. 19; Ilya Levkov, "Russian Jews in West Berlin," *Midstream*, XXVI:6 (June/July, 1980), pp. 19-25; and "New Jews, Old Guilt," *The Economist*, #7688 (January 8, 1991), p. 41.

The following sources offer some insight into post-Soviet Jewish immigration into Germany during the 1990s: Hanan Ben Yehuda, "Re Jewish Migration to Germany from the F.S.U.," Report to the Jewish Agency Executive, June 3, 1996; Jeremy Epstein,

"Deutschland Uber Alles," *Moment*, 21:6 (December 1996), pp. 52-55+; Alan Mittleman, "The German Jewish Community: Between Adjustment and Ambivalence," *Jerusalem Letter*, #368 (October 15, 1997), pp. 1-8; and *Ha'aretz*, March 11 and June 2, 1998.

¹⁵⁶ In response to questions about continuing antisemitic discrimination in university admissions, some officials acknowledge that Jews may be judged more harshly because it is assumed that they will leave the country and use their education elsewhere. Interviews in Ukraine by the author in 1997 and 1998.

¹⁵⁷ Hershel Shanks, "Can Jewish Life Be Revived in the Former Soviet Union?" *Moment*, 21:1 (February 1996), p. 44.

¹⁵⁸ Some observers appear to disagree. See "The Dwindling Jewry of Ukraine," *The Economist*, 349:8099 (December 19, 1998), p. 64, for a suggestion that foreign rabbis in Ukraine may be negligent in failing to oppose the emigration of Jewish young people from economically depressed Ukraine.

¹⁵⁹ Some clarification of basic demographic issues may be achieved through census studies scheduled for 1999 and 2000 in specific areas of the successor states.

¹⁶⁰ Local citizens, journalists, rabbis, and foreign embassies are among those who are able to provide background information about nearly all prominent local individuals. However, although the participation of some Jews in organized crime is well known, it appears that some foreign organizations are reluctant to review credentials of leadership candidates and/or establish standards for leadership roles.