Soviet Jews in the United States: A Profile

In the last decade, 1966–1975, some 125,000 Soviet Jews emigrated from the USSR. Of these, 11,336 came to the United States. Numerically, these newcomers are rather insignificant; but they loom large in the broad variety of problems they encountered in seeking to establish roots in their new homes.

The causes of these problems must be sought in their background. One Soviet immigrant, a film director, very aptly pinpointed what distinguishes the Soviet Jews from other nationalities who had sought refuge in this country:

> You Americans think that refugees from Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union are all the same. We Soviets are not like the Eastern Europeans. We have had 57 years of isolation and brainwashing. We are not just from another country. We are from another planet.[1]

Indeed, this designation was used by Andrei Sedich, editor of the New York City Russian-language newspaper *Novoye Russkoye Slovo,* who analyzed the impact of a free society on the new immigrants in a three-part series entitled, "People From Another Planet." Pointing out that they constitute the first wave of immigration of people whose whole lives have been spent under Communism, he said:

> They are used to having their jobs, their homes, their education provided by the state and even if they know intellectually that here there is no such agency, emotionally it is hard for them to adjust.[2]

This view is widely shared by resettlement personnel in their work of facilitating the integration of the emigrés.

In light of the difficulties experienced by many in leaving the USSR and in adjusting to a new life style, their motivations for emigration are of interest. Here the findings of a study of Soviet Jews in Israel, by Sovietologist Maurice Friedberg, are to the point, since they are applicable to the Soviet Jews in the United States:

> Almost without exception, the decisive reason for their decision to leave was a desire to live normal lives. By "normal" they did not mean "affluent." Many of them were economically better off in Russia than they can ever realistically hope to be in Israel, where not a few will have to adjust to a differ-

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[1] *Annual Report,* May 1973–April 1974, American Council for Emigrés in the Professions, p. 18.

[2] New York *Times,* March 9, 1975.

ent climate, learn a new language and often change their profession as well. Nor did they necessarily mean "security." Physically, most of them would have been secure enough in the USSR, if only they would submit meekly to an atmosphere of cultural genocide coupled with a rather strong discrimination in education and employment. . . . Normalcy invariably meant not to be humiliated for their "shameful" Jewish origins, non-Slavic appearance and "ludicrous" sounding Jewish names. It was understood as an opportunity to bring up their children as they see fit, in the language and traditions of their people, and not in schools where these values are constantly denigrated by omission (the absence of any references to the wartime Jewish tragedy in Russia in Soviet textbooks was often cited as an example) or by implication (one respondent pointed to the fact that his child was taught to revere the memory of Bogdan Khmelnitsky, a seventeenth-century Ukrainian leader whose military exploits included numerous massacres of Jews). Normalcy was defined as avoiding being constantly reminded that the Jews in the USSR are merely a tolerated minority, that they are allowed to "eat Russian bread" and ought to be grateful for that much; that they have no rights but only privileges that depend on the continued goodwill of the authorities. . In short, . to the overwhelming majority of immigrants the main reasons for leaving for Israel were definitely "Jewish" in nature. True, when questioned whether, if given the opportunity, they would have chosen to go to a country other than Israel, for instance Canada or the United States, about one in ten answered in the affirmative. Yet even these respondents, many of whom wish to join their relatives overseas, insisted that they wish to live "where a Jew can live as a Jew" and saw no real difference between themselves and the "ideological Zionists." [3]

Migration Pattern

The destination of 111,000 of the 125,000 Soviet Jews who had been permitted to emigrate was Israel. Almost all the remaining 14,000 were assisted by HIAS to the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Western Europe, and Latin America. The number of immigrants, the year, and country of destination are indicated in Table 1.

According to this breakdown, the preponderant number of Soviet Jews arrived in the designated countries between 1971 and 1975. During the preceding five years, only 541 (4 per cent of the ten-year total) were assisted by HIAS to countries in the West, while 7,692 (7 per cent of the ten-year total) arrived in Israel.

Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel peaked in 1973 with 33,477 arrivals. In the two years following the Yom Kippur war this number was sharply reduced to 16,816 in 1974 (a decline of 50 per cent from 1973) and to 8,531 in 1975 (a decline of 49 per cent from 1974)—or a 75 per cent decrease from the 1973 figure.

The number of Jews permitted to leave the USSR for whatever destination may be gauged by the number of arrivals in Vienna, the principal transit station for those

[3] *Why They Left: A Survey of Soviet Jewish Emigrants,* The Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry, 1973, pp. 12–15.

TABLE 1. SOVIET JEWISH ARRIVALS IN DESIGNATED AREAS, 1966–1975

HIAS-Assisted USSR Migrants

Destination	*1966*	*1967*	*1968*	*1969*	*1970*	*1971*	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*Grand Total*
United States	36	72	92	156	124	214	453	1,449	3,490	5,250	11,336
Canada	–	–	–	2	–	24	11	196	398	847	1,478
Australia	11	4	–	9	3	12	17	46	119	305	526
New Zealand	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	47	47
Latin America	3	–	4	15	5	8	26	11	13	20	105
Europe	2	–	–	–	3	7	33	71	90	207	413
Totals	52	76	96	182	135	265	540	1,773	4,110	6,676	13,905

USSR Arrivals in Israel

2,054	1,403	224	3,019	992	12,839	31,652	33,477	16,816	8,531	111,007

en route to Israel and the West. In 1975, 13,229 arrived in Vienna with Israel end visas; of these, 4,939 applied for immigration to countries other than Israel and were turned over by the Jewish Agency to HIAS for processing. Comparative figures from the start of the Russian program in March 1971 are as follows (Table 2):

TABLE 2. TRANSFERS IN TRANSIT[a]

Year	*Arrivals in Vienna*	*Transferred to HIAS*	*Per Cent Transferred*
1971	13,029	55	0.42
1972	31,457[b]	227	0.72
1973	32,049[c]	1,429	4.46
1974	20,634	3,832	18.57
1975	13,229	4,939	37.33
Total	110,398	10,482	9.49

[a] A recent study indicated that former residents of Odessa (Ukraine) and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic had the highest dropout rate. The latter were characterized as being more assimilated, more professional, and less Jewish-conscious.

[b] In addition, there were 334 who transited via Bucharest.

[c] In addition, there were 2,692 who transited via Bucharest.

In contrast to the total arriving in Israel, HIAS-assisted Soviet Jews, although comparatively small in number, continued to increase in substantial proportions from 1971 onward. In 1974 the 3,490 assisted Soviet migrants to the United States constituted an increase of 141 per cent over the 1,449 arrivals in 1973; the 5,250 in 1975 represented a 50 per cent increase over 1974 and a 262 per cent increase since 1973.

The Dropouts

A small number of Soviet Jews arrive in the United States directly from the USSR; others come to New York via Rome. Most of those who enter the United States travel in the so-called "Israeli pipeline" from the USSR to Vienna, where they become "dropouts" for any number of reasons. Table 2 shows a steady increase in their number and proportion, with the percentage climbing to 47 in the first eight months of 1976. Since most of them choose the United States as their destination, some voices have been raised to question whether they should be given American Jewish assistance. At times there is in-

sistence that aid be kept at a minimum, or withheld altogether in order to channel Soviet Jews to Israel. The situation has engendered increasing concern as well as considerable controversy. The latter is both painful and unfortunate; for no matter how one may deplore the decision of some Soviet Jews not to go to Israel, their right to determine their own destiny must be recognized and respected.

Some claim that if growing numbers of Soviet Jews decide to go to the United States, the USSR will close its doors to all Jewish emigration. Soviet actions appear to indicate, however, that the authorities well know who will or will not continue on to Israel. For example, they issue more visas to Odessa Jews, whose dropout rate is over 90 per cent, than to Kutaisi Jews, practically all of whom would go to Israel. (Ironically, the Soviet authorities themselves are using visas to Israel to get rid of "undesirables," including non-Jews like Andrei Amalrik, author of *Will the Soviet Union Survive to 1984?*, whom they forced into exile in the West.) There are other contradictions and shifts in Soviet policy toward Jews, as demonstrated by the fluctuating numbers permitted to emigrate, all indicating that the Russians apparently need no "excuse" for whatever they may decide to do.

It must be borne in mind that HIAS decisions are made after much discussion with the leadership of UJA, from which HIAS receives its basic subvention, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and other responsible Jewish leaders. But even if HIAS, at least three quarters of whose caseload is for reunion of families, were to refuse to assist Soviet Jews, and if these were somehow forced to go to Israel, the problem would not diminish. For while such refusal would reduce the proportion of dropouts, it would most probably increase the rate of Soviet Jewish emigration from Israel. At the same time, it would give credence to claims that Soviet Jews were being manipulated by Israel and the West for their own purposes.

The close cooperation among Israel, the Jewish Agency, and HIAS, made it possible for many Soviet Jews to receive letters of invitation, without which the entire process of seeking permission to leave for various destinations could not even begin. Since considerably more exit documents are issued by the USSR for Israel than for other countries, a number of Soviet Jews wishing to go to destinations other than Israel—primarily to the United States—receive letters of invitation from Israel and use the "Israeli pipeline" to emigrate.

TRANSIT POINT: VIENNA

Soviet Jews arriving in Vienna are met exclusively by Jewish Agency personnel, who not only provide orientation, but encourage them to continue to Israel. The process is described in detail by Rabbi Ira S. Youdovin, director of the North American Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, in a report (Rosh Hashana, 1975) to the leadership of the Reform movement:

Jewish Agency personnel meet every train and plane that might be carrying Russians. They have little advance notice of how many are arriving, and no information concerning who they are. The first word on train passengers comes via telephone from Austrian border police who have checked passports. Those few traveling by plane land completely unannounced. Security dictates that the refugees avoid traveling in groups and that no fixed meeting place be established. Thus, the Agency people stand on the platform and pick the refugees out from the crowd. How do they know who they are? "We just know. One Jew can always spot another Jew. We make mistakes, but not many."

Accounts of these initial encounters with the Russian refugees are charged with emotion. "They are wary. They fear that we are KGB agents. But we approach them, smile and say 'Shalom'. *We are the first to tell them 'Shalom'.*" The word has a mystical quality.

Immediately upon arrival, those refugees who are making *aliyah* are separated from those opting to go elsewhere. . Those refugees who do not intend making *aliyah*—they are called *noshrim*—are taken to hotels in downtown Vienna where they become the responsibility of HIAS. . . Although the Russian government will issue an exit visa to a Jew only if he lists Israel as his destination (except in a very few special cases), the Jewish Agency joins with most of the Jewish world in regarding this as a legal fiction. At the railroad station or airport, Agency representatives inform the refugees of their right to reject *aliyah* (most know already). The individual's preference is honored immediately; nobody is willing to compromise security by holding extended discussions on busy platforms.

The Agency does talk to every *nosher.* After the individual has had a night's rest, he is interviewed by an Agency representative. The Israelis admit that these sessions, which are held at the HIAS office, often become emotional. They share with many of their countrymen the conviction that every Jew should live in Israel, and feel this most deeply in regard to the Russians whom they have helped rescue and who are putting down fresh roots. The Agency people are candid in describing themselves as "salesmen", emphasizing the good points of Israel while minimizing possible difficulties. They also challenge the refugee's view of life in the United States and his motives in choosing America. But they insist that they never lie to the refugees. Rather, they point out that years of Soviet propaganda have engendered a distorted image of Israel, while letters from over-enthusiastic relatives have painted an equally unrealistic picture of the good life awaiting the refugees in North America. (In talks with immigrants in both Vienna and Rome, I found this to be absolutely true). The Israelis stress that most of the typical interview is spent dealing with these misconceptions. They stress, also, that where family reunification is involved, no attempt is made to question the decision.

Occasionally, the interview works to the benefit of both the refugee and of Israel. . But the plain fact is that these talks almost never succeed. Decisions reached over a period of years are unlikely to be reversed in a brief interview. Besides, misconceptions rarely fall easily—people believe what they want to believe. Finally, many of the *noshrim* present reasons that the Jewish Agency cannot challenge. "What do you tell a person who doesn't want to serve in the army?"

HIAS PROCESSING: ROME

Those who insist on going to a destination other than Israel, for family or other reasons, and who cannot be persuaded to do otherwise, are transferred to the Vienna HIAS office. There they are met by a Russian-speaking representative of the Jewish Agency who makes a further attempt to persuade them to go to Israel. Needless to say, there is a very close working relationship between HIAS, the Jewish Agency, and Israeli government officials.

Soviet Jews who continue to insist on going elsewhere are sent by HIAS to its Rome office, where still another attempt is made to have them reconsider. It is only then that the Rome office proceeds to process them for immigration to other countries. Most opt for the United States.

Rabbi Youdovin's account continued:

> The time spent in Rome is filled with tension. The refugees leave Russia with exit visas stamped for Israel. They must now first apply for permission to settle elsewhere. Most of the world (including Italy) is closed to them. At present, their choices are limited to the United States, Canada and Australia and Israel. Most opt for North America and most will be accepted. But there are applications and interviews—and the specter of those who have been denied emigration. (The United States routinely rejects individuals who have been "voluntary" members of the Communist Party, a formulation that exempts those who joined because their lives or careers depended on it. Other reasons for rejection are invoked inconsistently. Canada and Australia have different standards, so that individuals barred by one country may be welcomed by another. Re-application is possible, and is sometimes successful.)

There have been allegations that HIAS officials exert influence on immigrants to come to America, and that such immigrants are "rewarded and treated more generously than those who go to Israel." The facts speak for themselves. For example, the average amount expended by Jewish family agencies for the absorption of a Soviet Jewish family is about $3,500. The amount expended in Israel for that purpose is at least ten times as high, and entails the involvement of the entire machinery of government. In the United States, on the other hand, the costs of and responsibility for absorption are borne by the private sector: the local Jewish family agencies who receive their support from Jewish federations and welfare funds, except for the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA), which receives its funds from the United Jewish Appeal.

AN ISRAELI REACTION

Israel's deep concern over the growing number of dropouts was reflected in an article by Avraham Tirosh, "We Are Losing the Soviet Aliyah," which appeared in the Tel Aviv daily *Ma'ariv* of January 7, 1975. On the question of assistance to these Soviet Jews, he stated:

Should HIAS be asked to stop caring for the *noshrim?* This is a complicated question. On the one hand they are refugees who left a country of distress, and that mutual help to Jews obliges to take care of them. But on the other hand, should money collected for the needs of Israel go to people who have decided that Israel is not their country? Anyway, the subject should at least be given deep consideration. Maybe that a restricted assistance on the part of HIAS should be taken into consideration, even basing it at least on "reunion of families" alone.

Regarding the Soviet attitude on the question, Tirosh maintained:

In the past the Soviet authorities expressed their dissatisfaction with the *neshira.* . They even threatened then that they would find a way to liquidate this phenomenon. Now there are signs that after the ratification of the commercial treaty with the USA, with the Jackson Amendment, the Soviet Union has changed its attitude and reached a conclusion that an increasing number of Jews leaving Russia and not going to Israel may serve its interests, and therefore is to be encouraged.

There are even signs that they do so. A short time ago there was even an announcement that the Arabs received a promise from the Soviets "to channelize the departure of Jews to the West." The calculation is simple: if the Soviets will be forced to let go of 60 thousand Jews a year according to Jackson's amendment, then the more of them go to the West the less will the Soviets be accused of strengthening Israel and the less Israel will have a claim on the aliyah from Russia. There is no doubt also that the Soviets have cracked the "secret" of *neshira.*

Place of Origin

The 10,856 Soviet Jews assisted by HIAS to the United States came from communities in 14 of the Soviet Union's 15 republics (Table 3). Of these, 6,151 (57 per cent) were from the Ukrainian SSR and 2,429 (22 per cent) from the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. According to the 1970 census, more than half of all Soviet Jews lived in these two republics. In large part, the HIAS-assisted Soviet arrivals came from territories acquired by the USSR since 1939, including the Western Ukraine as well as the territories annexed during the era of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1940 and 1941, such as Moldavia, Latvia, and West Byelorussia, each with substantial Jewish populations.

Age and Sex Distribution

The newcomers were primarily young and middle-aged; 82 per cent were between one month and 50 years of age.[4] Analysis of the composite five year total of 10,856

[4]The 1970 USSR census report only provided data on the age structure of the Jews of the RSFSR, which demographers claim is typical of 90 per cent of all Soviet Jews. In that republic 42.6 per cent of the Jews were over 50 years of age. Over-all the age scale was the reverse of that of a normal population: a high percentage of elderly and aged, and a relatively low percentage of children and young people.

TABLE 3. REPUBLIC OF ORIGIN OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1971–1975

Republic	*Jewish Population (rounded) 1970 USSR Census*[a]	*Number of Arrivals* 1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	*Total*
Armenian SSR	1,100	–	–	–	5	4	9
Azerbaidzhan SSR	41,300	–	–	–	12	9	21
Byelorussian SSR	148,000	6	15	59	84	123	287
Estonian SSR	5,300	–	–	–	–	3	3
Georgian SSR	55,400	4	2	18	118	126	268
Kazakhstan SSR	27,700	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kirgizhian SSR	7,700	–	–	–	–	9	9
Latvian SSR	36,700	10	23	78	96	140	347
Lithuanian SSR	23,600	1	10	9	28	55	103
Moldavian SSR	98,100	10	31	77	148	200	466
Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic	808,000	14	58	388	891	1,078[b]	2,429
Tadzhikistan SSR	14,600	–	–	1	–	5	6
Turkmenistan SSR	3,500	–	–	–	–	6	6
Ukrainian SSR	777,000	166	306	797	2,067	2,815[c]	6,151
Uzbekistan SSR	103,000	1	8	19	15	58	101
Not Listed	–	2	–	3	26	619	650
Total	2,151,000	214	453	1,449	3,490	5,250	10,856

[a] See AJYB, 1971 [Vol. 72], pp. 403–04 for interpretation.

[b] Includes 686 from Moscow (64 per cent of RSFSR arrivals in 1975).
340 from Leningrad (32 per cent of RSFSR arrivals in 1975).

[c] Includes 1,373 from Odessa (constituting 49 per cent of Ukrainian arrivals and 26 per cent of total arrivals in 1975). Includes 751 from Kiev (27 per cent of Ukrainian arrivals in 1975). The 3,150 migrants from the four cities noted constituted 60 per cent of the total arrivals in 1975.

persons (Table 4) indicates that 3,071 (28 per cent) were age 20 and under; 5,866 (54 per cent)—the predominant number—were between the ages 21 and 50; and 1,887 persons (17 per cent) were 51 years and older.

Of the total, 5,593 (52 per cent) were males and 5,263 (48 per cent) females.[5] In the age range from one month to 20 years, primarily composed of children and students, there were 1,687 (30 per cent) males and 1,384 (26 per cent) females.

[5] Of the 2,151,000 Jews in the 1970 census, 988,000 (45.9 per cent) were males and 1,162,700 (54.1 per cent) were females.

TABLE 4. AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1971–1975

	1971			*1972*			*1973*			*1974*			*1975*			*Grand Total*		
Age Group	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
0 – 5	2	1	3	11	14	25	62	53	115	145	129	274	245	206	451	465	403	868
6 – 10	3	3	6	3	2	5	38	30	68	99	88	187	164	155	319	307	278	585
11 – 20	21	22	43	36	39	75	122	81	203	290	242	532	446	319	765	915	703	1,618
21 – 30	15	15	30	55	52	107	168	137	305	364	318	682	559	521	1,080	1,161	1,043	2,204
31 – 40	4	6	10	13	15	28	127	96	223	350	309	659	482	450	932	976	876	1,852
41 – 50	18	27	45	33	58	91	136	148	284	320	272	592	425	373	798	932	878	1,810
51 – 60	23	18	41	40	35	75	83	50	133	128	149	277	215	225	440	489	477	966
61 – 70	10	7	17	18	13	31	36	38	74	87	115	202	102	210	312	253	383	636
71 – 80	4	2	6	3	7	10	13	20	33	16	49	65	32	102	134	68	180	248
81 +	–	3	3	1	3	4	3	1	4	3	8	11	5	10	15	12	25	37
Not Listed	4	6	10	1	1	2	3	4	7	5	4	9	2	2	4	15	17	32
TOTAL	104	110	214	214	239	453	791	658	1,449	1,807	1,683	3,490	2,677	2,573	5,250	5,593	5,263	10,856

TABLE 5. SEX BY AGE RANGE AND YEAR

Per Cent

Age Range	*1971*			*1972*			*1973*			*1974*			*1975*			*Grand Total*		
	M	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*
1 mo. to 20 years	25	24	24	23	23	23	28	25	27	30	27	28	32	26	29	30	26	28
21 to 50 years	36	48	40	47	52	50	54	58	56	57	53	55	55	52	54	55	53	54
51 years and over	36	27	31	36	24	36	17	17	17	13	19	16	13	21	17	15	20	17

Between ages 21 and 50 there were 3,069 (55 per cent) males and 2,797 (53 per cent) females. However, the 51 years and over age group had fewer males (822) than females (1,065).

By year of arrival (Table 5) females exceeded males in 1971 (51 against 49 per cent) and in 1972 (53 against 47 per cent). However, in 1973, 1974 and 1975 males exceeded females (55 against 45 per cent; 52 against 48 per cent; and 51 against 49 per cent, respectively).

Selection of Settlement Community

While the immigrant families are still in Rome, plans are made for their reception in the United States. HIAS staff works closely with various officials of governments, as well as with the Joint Distribution Committee, which, with assistance from the United States Refugee Program, arranges for maintenance in that transit area. ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training) conducts English and some vocational classes for the emigrés, and other organizations cooperate with HIAS to provide a broad range of services while processing them for visas, which usually takes between three and four months, depending on the individual case.

The selection of an appropriate American community of initial settlement involves, among others, HIAS Rome staff, the immigrant family, the Premigration and Community Service departments in HIAS world headquarters in New York, local Jewish family agencies or federations, and the Jewish Vocational Service in communities having such an agency. These in turn establish contact with relatives, friends, colleagues, community groups, and others interested in incoming refugee families. The immigrants' choice as well as the situation in the particular communities are taken into consideration. The decision is based on such factors as reunion with close relatives, religious requirements, Jewish population of a particular community, experience and ability of communities to absorb anticipated numbers of immigrants, special job skills, the presence of industries, universities and other community and private resources having employment potential for newcomers. Other important factors are the availability of a state or public-supported college system, if families include teenagers, and medical facilities for the elderly or persons with special medical needs.

Distribution in Communities

During the five year period, the assisted Soviet immigrants were initially settled in communities indicated in Table 6.

As the table indicates, the number of communities of initial settlement has dramatically increased by 357 per cent, from 21 communities in 13 states and Puerto Rico in 1971, to 96 communities in 34 states and the District of Columbia in 1975. This increase was the result of a policy of careful community planning to distribute the newcomers over wider geographic areas and to involve more communities in the

TABLE 6. INITIAL SETTLEMENT OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR MIGRANTS IN SELECTED AMERICAN COMMUNITIES, 1971–1975

CITIES	*Jewish Population*[a]	*1971*	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*Total*[b]
Baltimore	94,000	3	4	36	83	150	276
Boston	180,000	–	2	49	83	140	274
Chicago	253,000	7	16	73	146	260	502
Cleveland	80,000	2	27	60	113	145	347
Detroit	80,000	3	4	49	120	157	333
Los Angeles	463,000	16	23	90	229	428	786
Metropolitan N.J.	95,000	–	5	25	62	67	159
Miami	225,000	1	5	16	94	124	240
New York City	1,998,000	138	276	731	1,572	2,247	4,964
Philadelphia	350,000	13	4	85	195	281	578
Pittsburgh	52,000	4	2	7	27	43	83
St. Louis	60,000	–	–	11	37	77	125
San Francisco	75,000	5	1	6	40	69	121
Washington, D.C.	112,500	–	–	10	27	11	48
Others	1,614,500	22	84	201	662	1,051	2,020
Total	5,732,000	214	453	1,449	3,490	5,250	10,856
Total # of Communities	–	21	34	45	78	96	
Total # of States	–	13 + Puerto Rico	15	24+ D. of C.	33+ D. of C.	34+ D. of C.	

[a] AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Vol. 76 (1976), pp. 233–37.

[b] The figures indicate *initial* settlement and do not take into account movements of migrants, for whatever reason, from community to community subsequent to initial settlement.

resettlement. Mindful of limitations of budget, staff, and resources of individual Jewish communities—especially the larger ones which, partly for reasons of family reunion, had been receiving most of the newcomers—HIAS and cooperating national and local organizations are seeking to distribute the immigrants among an increasing number of Jewish communities throughout the country. During the five-year period, almost half of the assisted arrivals (46 per cent) were initially settled in the New York metropolitan area, while the rest found new homes in other Jewish communities.

Adjustment Problems

Communities have encountered numerous problems in dealing with the newcomers. The process of integration in a new country with a different life-style is seldom

easy. But the transition from a closed, totalitarian society where the state provides many of the life-essential services and where, as a consequence, individual initiative and responsibility are largely reduced to a minimum, to an open society based on individual initiative and responsibility is a traumatic experience for many Soviet Jews. For the first time, they must cope with the fact that in this country fees have to be paid for medical services; that to attend a university costs money; that one has to seek actively an apartment and assume a financial risk when going into business; that there is competition in the job market, and that they might not always be able to find positions in occupations for which they considered themselves fully trained. They must also become accustomed to the American way of paying for their needs, such as bank loans, mortgages, credit cards—all strange to them.

In this new and sometimes bewildering world of the Soviet Jewish immigrants, the freedom to choose and the sudden need to make choices about jobs, apartments, schools, and other matters can be overwhelming; for the experiences of the immediate past tend to color their perceptions. The realization that they can hear and read what they choose; that they can travel when and where they wish without official permission and without an internal passport; that synagogues are no longer to be shunned because of fear of informers; that they can live freely as Jews in a manner of their own choice rather than be derisively called *piatye punkty* ("the five-pointers"), a reference to point 5 in their internal passport which officially identified the bearer as a Jew and, in effect, prevented them from holding certain positions, restricted opportunity for higher education and, in general, made life for them more difficult, is hardly believable at first.

Some of the newcomers, therefore, have difficulty discarding old fears and suspicions. Confronted with a new and unfamiliar phenomenon, the voluntary private agency, for example, some perceive it as an arm of government. And their attitudes toward officials representing the government and private sectors in their new communities tend to be influenced by recollection of the battle for exit documents, which many had to wage. Needless to say, such attitudes do not facilitate the resettlement task of local communities.

Process of Integration

Once a family arrives in the settlement community, they are taken in hand by the local Jewish family service or federation, which provides many services to help the newcomers establish roots: counseling, housing, vocational guidance, job placement in cooperation with the Jewish Vocational Service, registration of children in Jewish schools, if desired, referrals to health services and public schools for children, maintenance allowances, and a broad introduction to the organized Jewish life of the community.

RECRUITING THE COMMUNITY

Well aware of the need to make the newcomers psychologically receptive to the myriad of formalities, interviews, and decisions awaiting them, the communities have resorted to any number of unofficial programs. Chief among these is the use of volunteers. These are recruited with increasing frequency and success to provide the little "extras" that can mean so much—guided tours of supermarkets and other shopping facilities, tutoring in English, introduction to synagogues and Jewish community centers, invitations to the homes of local families, etc. In Cleveland, for example, the Jewish Family Service Association has a director of volunteers on staff, who supervises 70 people. The volunteers may be called upon to help in any number of ways, from putting up an immigrant family when they first arrive to settling family arguments. One veteran resettlement volunteer for the agency, Mrs. Betty Berliner, is a survivor of the Holocaust, who speaks Polish and Yiddish and understands Russian. Her role was described in the Cleveland *Jewish News* as follows:

> . a seemingly insignificant part of her work has been to talk many hours on the phone with the immigrants—"sometimes at weird hours"—calming their fears and anxieties in a world that is strange to them.
>
> Often the volunteer is called upon to be a liaison in the dealings of the family with the professional resettlement caseworker, even to the extent at times of advocating the immigrant's point of view in a difference with the caseworker.
>
> Many times the immigrant will trust the volunteer more and respond better to him than to the so-called "bureaucrat at the agency," explained Mrs. Berliner. She adds, however, that not every immigrant understands the concept of volunteerism and may distrust the volunteer worker as well.

San Francisco, in a similar effort, has developed Operation Outreach, a special project in which earlier Soviet Jewish arrivals help smooth the transition period for newcomers in much the same way as do volunteers elsewhere. In Rochester, the agency works closely with an organization of former refugees whose members serve as volunteers in orientation, transportation, and in other ways. In St. Paul, volunteers, through an unofficial "adopt a Russian family" approach, provide orientation, familiarizing the newcomers with the community, etc. Cleveland has an elaborate task force which provides valuable assistance in every stage of the process. Houston has a refugee planning committee consisting of representatives of various Jewish organizations, which works with the guidance of a Jewish Family Service worker. In the Philadelphia's Jewish Family Service's "Adopt a Family" program, American Jewish families are matched with the newly arrived families, whom they assist, for mutual interests, backgrounds, education and number and ages of children, and other characteristics.

In some instances, agencies were quite innovative. Thus in Atlanta, a caseworker and volunteers from the National Council of Jewish Women presented the arriving family with a "welcome basket" including, among other things, a letter of welcome, a small bottle of vodka, a bottle of kosher wine, a *challah*, and a map of Atlanta.

In Kansas City, a newly arrived family was first taken to its home and then to the agency office for lunch with social workers, translators, teachers, vocational counsellors, and others. On Friday evening, it was brought to the synagogue for services and an *Oneg Shabbat.*

LOCAL AGENCIES AT WORK

The common objective of the resettlement agencies was described by Burton S. Rubin, executive director of the Cleveland Jewish Family Service, in an address at the annual meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Services in June 1975:

> The basic life supportive services in our resettlement process—the provision of housing and furniture, maintenance, clothing, medical needs—are all geared to the concept that these tangible forms of assistance are time-limited emergency services moving toward casework goals and objectives of independence and self-support. We see the accomplishment of these goals as a sign of health and growth of individual adjustment.[6]

For the newcomers, this may mean placement in jobs which do not pay too well and which they may consider below the level of their qualifications. A number of communities have set time limits within which they are given the opportunity of finding employment of their choice. If they fail, they are required to accept the first available job, or lose agency financial assistance. In Los Angeles, the refugees are given three months, in Boston up to four. Financial support is also withdrawn if they refuse two or three job offers during that period without good reason. The practice adopted by the Cleveland Family Service has been:

> If a job is available, but the client refuses to accept it, because it is not in his field, etc., he has two months to locate his preferred employment either through JVS or on his own. The caseworker will again explain to the client that if he cannot find a job after two months, he will have to accept the "entry" job that JVS refers him to.

Miami deals with newcomers through an Inter-Agency Council on Russian Emigrés, established by the local federation. Composed of eight organizations[7] involved in the resettlement process, the Council coordinates activities, reviews special situations, and makes policy recommendations such as termination of financial support in the event of job refusal. The final decision rests with federation.

Communities have developed a variety of job-placement techniques. Thus the Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) of Metropolitan New Jersey's Board Committee

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[6]"The Soviet Refugee: Challenge to the American Jewish Community Resettlement System," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service,* No. 2, 1975, p. 198.

[7]Jewish Family and Children's Service, Central Agency for Jewish Education, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Vocational Service, Mount Sinai Medical Center, National Council of Jewish Women-Rescue and Migration Service, Rabbinical Association, and Community Chaplaincy Services, Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

submitted to the head of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign a list of jobs needed on the basis of which UJA supplied a "blue ribbon" list of employers and donors. JVS planned to use the federation's occupational list of donors in the same way. JVS in Los Angeles set up an Industrial Advisory Committee, consisting of some ten members of the Major Management Team of the Welfare Fund, which has been able to find for the newcomers the best-salaried jobs. It also hired a part-time job developer, and a placement counselor who concentrates on individualized job solicitation. JVS is also looking for ten large Jewish-owned businesses (over 500 employees), which would each agree to hire five emigrés.[8]

To remove the language barrier, most agencies use public-school facilities for English-language instruction; some offer intensive language courses, usually at the university level; others provide tutorial service. Where available, the Jewish Vocational Service closely works with the family agency in arranging as a facet of job placement, language instruction relating to the immigrant's occupation.

Most agencies indicate that they do not refer for public welfare those who fail to become self-supporting; others do in cases requiring long-term assistance. Health services for such families are usually provided by Jewish hospitals or, where none exist, by volunteer panels of Jewish physicians and dentists.

NEW YORK CITY

About half of the total HIAS-assisted arrivals in the United States are living in the New York City area. A report issued by the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA),[9] which is responsible for their absorption, states that it provides, besides counseling and all necessary services, an average cash allowance of about $4,200 for a family of four to cover rent, food, clothing, and medical care for an initial period that varies with each family's needs. Each family is handled on an individual basis. Helping the newcomers find work is the most urgent task. NYANA does this in several ways. It has on staff a job solicitor, who has succeeded in opening doors not normally accessible. It also contacts earlier Soviet immigrants for whom it had found jobs and who are now themselves employers for both evaluation of individual cases and job openings. It refers professionals to the American Council for Emigrés in the Professions.

Job Placement

For a clearer picture of what is involved in the intensive job search conducted by all resettlement agencies, one must look at the occupational distribution, training and work experience of the immigrants, as well as at their state of mind.

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[8] *The Job Scene: Russian Jews in the United States and Canada,* Jewish Occupational Council, New York, Spring 1974, pp. 13–14.

[9] *One For All,* n.d.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

On the basis of information provided by the newcomers in interviews with HIAS staff in Rome, a breakdown of occupations was prepared (Table 7).

The five-year total indicates that of the 10,856 assisted Soviet immigrants, 6,718 (62 per cent)—3,879 (58 per cent) males and 2,839 (42 per cent) females—were in the labor force. Of these, 1,852 (28 per cent) were professionals (doctors, nurses, artists, dentists, academicians, literary figures, musicians, scientists, journalists, translators, and related occupations); 709 (11 per cent) were engineers, and 809 (12 per cent) technicians. The 3,370 persons in these three categories constituted more than half of the labor force, indicating, among other things, a high degree of training and advanced schooling.

Analysis by sex distribution shows that there were almost twice as many women (38 per cent) as men (20 per cent) who reported occupations in the professional category; almost three times as many women (22 per cent) as men (8 per cent) in white-collar occupations, and almost twice as many women (17 per cent) as men (9 per cent) in service occupations. There were more than four times as many men (25 per cent) as women (6 per cent) in blue-collar occupations; three times as many men (15 per cent) as women (5 per cent) among the engineers; and almost twice as many men (15 per cent) as women (8 per cent) who were technicians.

Thus, while there were fewer females than males among the Soviet Jewish immigrants and the percentage of women in the labor force was lower, the professional category included 1,090 women (38 per cent) as against only 762 men (20 per cent). In part, this may be because some occupations like nursing are usually held by women. Women also outnumbered men in the white-collar and service categories. The largest percentage of men (25 per cent) were in blue collar occupations, and men outnumbered women in the engineering and technician categories.

JOB QUALIFICATION

The problem in job placement is, of course, the preponderance of professionals and academics. This is not only in terms of numbers and the relatively limited positions available, but of their qualifications. The almost total isolation of Soviet society for many years meant that they, like all Russians, were denied, or were limited in access to information from abroad about new developments and the literature in their fields of specialization. This tended to create large gaps in the knowledge and skills of most professionals, particularly of physicians, who often are unaware of new drugs and techniques developed in the Western world, and engineers, who could not keep abreast with discoveries affecting their work.

Consequently, aside from coping with language difficulties, many highly educated and trained emigrés must acquire the knowledge and skills long utilized by Western professionals. As a result, they are often frustrated because they cannot immediately

TABLE 7. OCCUPATIONAL BREAKDOWN OF HIAS

	1971				1972				1973			
Occupation	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*
Professionals	7	10	17	16	22	36	58	21	123	130	253	27
Engineers[a]	3	–	3	3	12	3	15	5	78	20	98	10
Technicians	3	1	4	4	21	7	28	10	77	35	112	12
White Collar (Managerial, Clerical, Sales)	7	10	17	16	22	28	50	18	55	74	129	14
Blue Collar (Machine Trades, Benchwork, Structural)	21	1	22	21	47	16	63	23	158	31	189	20
Service	13	6	19	18	19	12	31	11	39	61	100	11
Transportation	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	19	–	19	2
Unskilled	5	8	13	12	8	2	10	4	7	6	13	1
Not Listed	7	4	11	10	8	13	21	8	13	11	24	3
Not in Labor Force	37	70	107		55	122	177		222	290	512	
(Children)	(2)	(1)	(3)	(50)	(11)	(14)	(25)	(39)	(62)	(53)	(115)	(35)
(Housewives)	(–)	(25)	(25)		(–)	(49)	(49)		(–)	(105)	(105)	
(Students)	(27)	(28)	(55)		(40)	(44)	(84)		(140)	(102)	(242)	
(Retired)	(8)	(16)	(24)		(4)	(15)	(19)		(20)	(30)	(50)	
Total	104	110	214		214	239	453		791	658	1,449	
Number in Labor Force	67	40	107		159	117	276		569	368	937	
Per cent in Labor Force	63	37	50		58	42	61		61	39	65	

[a] Engineers, although in the professional category, are listed separately here because of their significant number.

resume the skilled occupations for which they feel they have been trained. Community agencies have reported at times that, upon examination of their functions in the Soviet Union, an engineer might be the equivalent of a construction foreman in the United States; an accountant might be considered a bookkeeper, and an economist might more properly have an occupational listing of pricing clerk. Pending further

ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE U.S.

1974				*1975*				*Grand Total*			
M	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*% in Labor Force*
275	382	657	30	335	532	867	27	762	1,090	1,852	28
191	41	232	10	284	77	361	11	568	141	709	11
255	93	348	16	219	98	317	10	575	234	809	12
105	221	326	15	116	295	411	13	305	628	933	14
241	46	287	13	516	84	600	19	983	178	1,161	17
115	147	262	12	174	249	423	13	360	475	835	12
55	1	56	2	87	–	87	3	162	1	163	2
7	5	12	–	27	16	43	1	54	37	91	1
18	17	35	2	64	10	74	2	110	55	165	2
545	730	1,275		855	1,212	2,067		1,714	2,424	4,138	
(145)	(129)	(274)	(37)	(245)	(206)	(451)	(39)	(465)	(403)	(868)	(38)
(–)	(227)	(227)		(–)	(330)	(330)		(–)	(736)	(736)	
(364)	(304)	(668)		(556)	(455)	(1,011)		(1,127)	(933)	(2,060)	
(36)	(70)	(106)		(54)	(221)	(275)		(122)	(352)	(474)	
1,807	1,683	3,490		2,677	2,573	5,250		5,593	5,263	10,856	
1,262	953	2,215		1,822	1,361	3,183		3,879	2,839	6,718	
57	43	63		57	43	61		58	42	62	

analysis, however, no general conclusions should be drawn from these cases, except that the job functions for which reported titles stand may not necessarily coincide with those of similar titles in the United States employment listings. There is, too, the problem that for some Soviet occupational categories, e.g., feldsher or stomatologist, there are no American equivalents.

PLACING THE PROFESSIONAL

The placement of professionals is difficult for a number of reasons. Chief among them is that most professions require licensing (or equivalent) examinations of those who had received their training overseas. The examination for physicians, the NYANA report notes[10], is a most difficult one, for which intensive preparation is required. To secure the license to practice in the United States, they must, in addition to having a general command of the English language, learn a highly specialized professional vocabulary and pass a rigorous examination. NYANA is now cosponsoring preparation courses for them in New York hospitals affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

The American Council for Emigrés in the Professions, an agency to which NYANA refers the professionals, assists physicians, teachers, engineers, artists, and others in securing jobs. In its *Annual Report* it refers to the sense of grievance and distrust of professionals, which, together with their lack of information about, and understanding of, our system, create

> situations that often are incomprehensible to Americans.
>
> In several cases, for example, Soviets placed in well-paying professional jobs left them with no explanation, within a few days.
>
> Intensive counseling elicited the information that in the Soviet Union one salary is paid for a job regardless of years of service. The emigre, discovering that persons doing the same job he was hired for but with seniority were being paid more, assumed he was being taken advantage of, and quit.
>
> A similar misunderstanding arose when Soviets, offered jobs in their professions in New Jersey, refused to leave New York City and accept the jobs. Again, intensive counseling uncovered the reason. In the USSR goods and services are often unavailable outside the large cities. Food—even articles of clothing available in Moscow cannot be found outside—more serious, once a Soviet has left a metropolitan area like Moscow or Leningrad, he is often refused an entry permit to return. In both cases, the emigre suspected that he was being deliberately hoaxed into accepting work that no American would do.[11]

These and similar experiences moved the Council to evolve a program to deal with more than the occupational placement of the immigrant:

> The life circumstances of a refugee after his arrival here can be very discouraging. Because he has fled his country and does not hope to return, the refugee must bring his family with him. Once here, he is faced with the task of learning English and qualifying for his profession and simultaneously finding some kind of work to support his wife and family. During this period he needs technical advice on the steps he must take for qualification, an interim job that will support him but still leave him time to study English and review his professional training, and

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[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Annual Report, op. cit.*, p. 20.

finally help with finding a job in his own profession. All these are provided as part of ACEP's general services.

Beyond counseling and the provision of technical information another important factor in the success of the refugee's job search is his knowledge and understanding of American life. To help provide this information, ACEP this year established a practice of providing group orientation seminars for emigrés in specific professions utilizing for these workshops American professionals and former emigrés who had made a successful professional adjustment.

Last fall, as part of the program, a group of newly arrived emigré engineers met with a number of American engineers working in their disciplines. The meeting lasted for over three hours and included a wide-ranging exchange of information, not only on professional requirements, but also on differences in ways of life. Similarly this spring an orientation seminar was established for physicians. In addition to a free exchange of ideas and comments, the seminar included a short lecture by a refugee physician who had come to the United States some years ago and had since qualified and been successful in his profession. The former refugee described his traumatic early months and years in this country and the newly-arrived refugee physicians were able to respond to his story with questions of their own.

In addition to its orientation seminars and special counseling services during 1973–4 the Council inaugurated two new training programs based on the special needs of newly-arrived emigrés. In the first program a group of engineers whose training was not up to American standards were given an eight week course in drafting and designing of air-conditioning and ventilating machines. Twelve persons completed the course and are now placed in the field. In the second program refugee physicians, primarily from the Soviet Union, but also from other Eastern European countries were given four hours a week of intensive English with emphasis on Medical English, reading comprehension and American testing techniques, plus two hours a week of lectures on medicine to help them prepare for qualifying examinations.[12]

Stress on Jewish Identification

In some Jewish communities there is growing emphasis on making the newcomers conscious Jews. Some of them had been estranged from Judaism through intermarriage; but even among the not intermarried are many who, deprived of the opportunity to be educated and to live as Jews in the USSR, are only peripherally related to Judaism.[13]

There is an interesting historical footnote reflecting this emphasis. In 1912, when considerable stress was being placed upon the Americanization of the large numbers of Russian Jewish immigrants arriving in this country—who, in contrast to the new immigrants, had been steeped in Judaism—Solomon Schechter, then head of the

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

[13] Increasing awareness of their lack of Jewish knowledge has moved some Jews in the USSR to organize clandestine classes in Hebrew, Jewish history, Bible, and related subjects.

Jewish Theological Seminary of America, blasted such emphasis in his letter of resignation from the board of the Educational Alliance in New York City, then prominent in furthering Americanization. He said in part:

> The great question before the Jewish community is not so much the Americanizing of the Russian Jew as his Judaizing. We have now quite sufficient agencies for his Americanization. But the problem is whether we are able to keep the immigrant within Judaism after he has become Americanized. [14]

Resettlement agencies, in cooperation with religious groups, Jewish community centers, and other organizations, are seeking ways to stimulate Jewish identification and involvement in Jewish communal life among Soviet Jews. Some communities provide free synagogue and center memberships, camp placements for children, scholarships for Jewish parochial schools, and more. In New York, for example, Rabbi Stanley Dreyfuss, chairman of the Brooklyn Jewish Community Council's newly established Ad Hoc Committee on Newly Arrived Jews, issued a call to the rabbis and institutional presidents in the borough, which states in part:

> Let us open our synagogues, our centers, our schools, our organizations to them. Let us seek them out, visit them in their homes, invite them to participate in our activities, and let that invitation come not once but again and again. Perhaps, since they are unaccustomed to our ways, they will be hesitant to join us. Let us make strenuous efforts to involve them in the life of our community.
>
> The Brooklyn Jewish Community Council suggests that each organization in the Borough form a committee to call upon Soviet Jews who are living in the neighborhood, to welcome them, to ascertain their needs, and to see how these can be met. The BJCC will assist to the fullest extent of its ability.[15]

The Orthodox community, and particularly the Lubavitcher Hasidim, are actively engaged in fostering programs to stimulate *yidishkayt* among the newcomers, many of whom have rediscovered their Jewishness as a result. The impact of this experience has been described by any number of families in press interviews. Reporting on Alexander Sukornik and his family, the New York *Times* wrote on March 9, 1975:

> Perhaps the biggest change for the family in terms of their own consciousness is that they are learning what it means to be Jews. There is a mezuzah, an encased parchment bearing passages from Deuteronomy, on the door of their apartment now; a year ago they did not know what one was. Their son goes to a Yeshiva and through him the parents are learning of religious festivals.
>
> "In Russia we know about Purim and Passover," said Mrs. Sukornik, "but we didn't know what they were." Her husband said he knew he was Jewish because his passport said he was. He said he had experienced World War II as a Russian

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[14] Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter—A Biography,* Burning Bush Press, 1946, p. 215.
[15] *Community Council News,* Brooklyn Jewish Community Council, February 1975.

rather than as a Jew and that even now the words "Stalingrad" and "Leningrad" had more emotional significance for him than "Auschwitz" and "Dachau."

Another Soviet Jewish woman, resettled in New Haven, described the deep emotion stirred by participating in a Jewish religious ceremony:

"We had never celebrated Jewish holidays," she said. "Jules and Susan Laser had us to dinner on New Year's eve. She gave us the respect to let us light the candles —rose glasses with wine for peace. It was a wonderful night. I wanted to cry for happiness!"[16]

The danger associated with religious observance in the USSR was recalled by Alexander Yakubowitch, a tailor who

. . . enjoys his freedom and the living he can make from his tailor shop. He and his wife Agnes, a teacher, speak of their enjoyment attending synagogue services without fear of reprisals.[17]

An account of newly arrived Soviet Jews in Denver emphasizes the last point:

This was the first time in their lives they have been able to attend Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur services without apprehension of what might happen.

It was the first time they entered a shul without being under the watchful eyes of the KGB.

It was the first time they were able to wear a Magen David proudly and without fear.

They are already speaking of how they look forward to Passover and their own exodus.

Shimon Timashpolsky told of Passover in Odessa. The Soviets announce to the world that matzos are provided for all the Jews, he remarked.

"Do you know what this means? A Jew cannot obtain matzos—and then only a few pieces for his entire family to last the full week—without a permission slip from the government authorities. Obtaining the permission often means several trips to the office and filling out many forms.

"Once we do have the slip it tells us exactly what day we are to be at the shul to get the matzos. They are sold for perhaps four or five days but we must be there only on the day designated on our slip. We have stood in line sometimes six or seven hours to buy the matzos. This means we had to be away from work. We received no pay and in addition it often means harrassment by our employers or fellow workers. For this reason many Jews are even afraid to ask permission."[18]

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[16] *New Haven Register,* October 20, 1974.
[17] *Jewish Week,* November 23, 1974.
[18] *Intermountain Jewish News,* Denver, Colo., October 3, 1975.

Effectiveness of Resettlement Programs

Despite the many difficulties, however, most of the family agencies have considerable success with their resettlement programs. The report of NYANA indicates as much:

> With all their difficulties, Russian Jews who arrive in the United States show an extraordinary degree of achievement in a very short time. It is perhaps to be expected: those who have reached the United States were not only willing to take the risk of applying for exit permits from the Soviet Union, but had the energy, the determination and the persistence to overcome all the obstacles which they faced during their wait for departure.
>
> The special qualities of these newest Jewish newcomers—and the intensive help of American Jewry—have already produced some remarkable statistics:
>
> Despite all the economic and social obstacles, within one or two months after their arrival 80% to 85% of all the Russian newcomers have found their own apartments.
>
> Within four to six months, if there are no unusual vocational, medical or other special problems, the average Russian family is by and large self-supporting—and no longer requires financial assistance from NYANA and the Jewish community.
>
> Yet as with earlier groups of Jewish refugees, there are some among the Russian newcomers who need aid for far longer periods, aid which NYANA continues to provide.[19]

Typical of the assessment of the resettlement process in the smaller communities is one by the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Pittsburgh:

> On the whole we have been favorably impressed with the attitudes and willingness of most of the families who have come to participate in the difficult settlement process. The community response and efforts towards socializing with the newcomers have been quite overwhelming. We have been impressed with the fact that the families are not demanding as has been our experience with some new Americans in the past. On the other hand, the employment situation is often difficult for them to comprehend, since as you know, a high proportion are professionals who were at the top in their occupations in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, they at least verbalize a willingness to take "any job." Staff members have been unusually responsive to the needs of Soviet Jews and difficulties have arisen in only a few situations where the newcomers may have brought personality problems which might exist in members of any group of people. Staff perhaps have been mainly frustrated because of the tremendous amount of time consumed by the detail work of settlement. We are hoping this will be somewhat alleviated as the volunteer program develops.[20]

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[19] *Op. cit.*

[20] Letter to HIAS, dated December 26, 1974.

The success thus far in resettling the Soviet Jewish immigrants has been achieved by the joint efforts of the various Jewish agencies and other groups, and by the commitment on the part of the entire Jewish community. It is hoped that the further sympathetic involvement of the total Jewish community will help the newcomers in the development of a more meaningful Jewish identity and ultimate involvement and participation in Jewish communal life and American society. Like the generation of their grandfathers, they are a rich source of potential spiritual and cultural contributions to American Jewish life. With patience, understanding, sensitivity, and time, this objective can be achieved.

JOSEPH EDELMAN