

# PATTERNS OF INTERACTION AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG SOVIET JEWISH REFUGEES: Findings from an Ethnography in the San Francisco Bay Area

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## INTRODUCTION

While a growing body of research reports on the economic adjustment and religious identification of Soviet Jews in North America, almost nothing has been published regarding the nature of interaction and association that exists among these new immigrants. This is a significant oversight because patterns of intra-ethnic association have important effects on the lives of immigrants and contribute greatly to their style of adjustment to the new country (Thomas and Znaniecki 1920, Cummings 1980, Bonacich and Modell 1980, Kim 1981). Interaction among Soviet Jews is especially worthy of scholarly attention because recent Soviet Jewish refugees fall into the category of "new immigrants" (Hutchinson 1966, Bryce-Laporte 1980, Min 1985). Unlike the last major cohort of Jewish immigrants who arrived in the U.S. between 1880 and 1924, Soviet Jews are educated, skilled, and possess extensive urban experience, have little religious training (Simon and Simon 1982) or experience with voluntary associations, and enjoy an exceptionally high quality of resettlement services (Eckles et al., 1982). Hence, the patterns of adjustment, interaction and community-formation which were common to earlier Jewish immigrants (Wirth 1928, Rischin 1962, Howe 1976, Gorelick 1981) may be inappropriate models for understanding the resettlement of this recent group.<sup>1</sup>

This paper explores some emergent patterns of social interaction, ideological orientation and adjustment among the Soviet Jewish population of the San Francisco Bay Area.

## COLLECTION OF DATA

Data for this report were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation with 47 Soviet Jews and 6 resettlement staff in San Francisco and Oakland, California between September 1982 and December 1984.<sup>2</sup> Interviews were open-ended but information about life history, socioeconomic status, time in the United States and opinions on community formation were collected from all subjects. Participant observation activities included weekly social visits to the homes of Soviet emigre families, instructing a job-finding class for Soviet Jews at a Jewish Community center and attending various emigre social activities including weddings, baby showers and dinner parties. Field notes were recorded immediately following interactions with refugees, producing about 800 pages of data. Fieldnotes were coded according to 13 topics (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Quotations in this paper are taken directly from taped interviews, which were conducted in English. Interviews ranged from a half hour to 6 hours, with the average about 3 hours. To insure confidentiality, all names used in this report are pseudonyms. Respondents were contacted through "snowball sample" techniques. Hence, these data do not represent a cross-sectional sample of all Soviet Jewish refugees in the San Francisco Bay Area.

## THE SOVIET JEWISH COMMUNITY

In the Bay Area, the geographical and social center of the Soviet Jewish community is located in the Sunset and Richmond districts of San Francisco. I call this the "Soviet Jewish enclave." It is a loose network of emigres representing a wide variety of occupations, regional origins and outlooks on adjustment to the U.S. Interaction among its members is frequent.

As is the case among most immigrant groups, networks of sponsorship and ties of family and friends are an important source of social attachment in the Soviet Jewish enclave (Lyman 1974, Light 1972, Sowell 1981, Glazer and Moynihan 1963). Established emigres sponsor friends and relatives who have recently arrived from the Soviet Union or other parts of the United States. Within

the Soviet Jewish enclave, a great deal of information is exchanged during frequent social visits. Emigres provide services, such as child care and auto repair, to one another. Because the recently arrived are baffled by the complexities of American economic life, emigres use their community connections to obtain information before making such major decisions as looking for work, purchasing something expensive or enrolling in trade school. Social activities and the selection of mates and friends are often focussed within this collectivity. While resettlement services are available, many emigres prefer to use community connections so that they can avoid the cultural and linguistic problems inherent in interactions with American service providers (Merton 1949:49, Gold 1985b).

Members of the Soviet Jewish enclave like to compare themselves to other members. Emigres are often curious about their fellows' impressions of American life as well as their fate in the new country. For this purpose, the successes and failures of various individuals are often enumerated in conversation so that any given emigre might know where he or she stands relative to others.

An important source of social links in the Soviet Jewish enclave is the large number of aged emigres—48% of those who entered the country in 1981 were over 45 years of age (Eckles et al., 1982). Because aged emigres do not generally become fluent in English and are much less likely than younger Soviet Jews to find employment in the U.S. (Simon 1985:18), they are dependent upon each other for a social life and upon their families for transportation, translation and other necessities. Elderly emigres with time on their hands meet each other in agencies, shops, apartment hallways and synagogues. Here they establish relationships with other elderly Jews which eventually unite entire families. Because many aged emigres can speak Yiddish and had Jewish training, they socialize easily with Yiddish-speaking American Jews. Younger emigres, on the other hand, lack the linguistic and religious skills which bond their parents or grandparents with American Jews.<sup>3</sup> Because of elderly emigres' need to be near other Russian-speakers, many emigre families remain in the Soviet Jewish enclave of San Francisco rather than moving to suburban areas where housing is less expensive. Hence, the presence of a large number of elderly emigres contributes to the geographical concentration and frequency of social interaction which exists within the Soviet Jewish enclave.

A final factor which serves to unite the Soviet Jewish enclave

involves difficulties in establishing social links with non-emigres. Despite initial hopes that it would be easy to interact with American Jews, many emigres discovered that the cultural and linguistic gulf between them and the host community is very difficult to cross. Many claim that the emigre community is the only source of social life. A Soviet Jew who has lived in the U.S. for ten years comments:

From the beginning, everybody wants to be assimilated, to get out of this ghetto and nobody wants to accept it that they are in a ghetto in the Richmond District, Sunset District. But after that, people get out and a lot of them probably didn't fill up their expectation and they had a problem socializing with American (Jews) and this is not their language. And after a while, they get back together and about 25 percent of the community still wanted to get out and 75 percent completely satisfied with what they have.

### *Ambivalence About Social Membership*

While the Soviet Jewish enclave is united by common language, immigration experience, networks of sponsorship and social bonds among the elderly, it is also atomized by several factors. As noted by Gitelman (1978), Soviet Jews come from a diversity of occupational, regional and cultural origins in the USSR. As a result, they may feel little interest in or attachment to the mass of Soviet Jews in the United States. Further, because many Soviet Jews lost prestigious social ranks in coming to the United States, many feel ashamed when confronted by their countrymen. Several complained that being associated with a mass of uncouth emigres with whom they had no connection in the USSR was unnatural and humiliating. An emigre who now works as an insurance salesman describes his ambivalence towards other Soviet Jews:

Because too many levels and they mix up. You know in Russia, I was highly educated. I had highly educated friends. I never used to be in the company of haircutters or . . . It wasn't because I didn't like them. They just wasn't to my level.

Now we are all together. You see it different times at this table: who drives the taxi and who makes manicure, a lot of different people. The life mix all kind of people, so you can't stay alone. You can't stay from them.

Regionalism is another important source of disunity among Soviet Jews in the San Francisco Bay Area. Generally, those from

the northern USSR consider themselves to be superior to southerners. Emigres from the Russian Republic (Moscow and Leningrad) feel themselves to be above those from the Ukraine. Among Ukrainians, those from Kiev sometimes denigrate Odessans. In the following quote, an accomplished chemical engineer points out the irony of losing his prestige as Muscovite among the "common" Odessan emigres of San Francisco:

The problem in my daughter too. Everyday she meet her friends from Odessa. An she begins to speak like Odessa with accent: I am mad about it. Its Odessa language, Odessa language. Its wrong Russian. (Laughs).

### *Lack of Formal Organizations*

One result of these feelings of ambivalence Soviet Jews hold towards one another is reflected in the near non-existence of formal, self-help organizations in their communities. Unlike earlier groups of Jewish immigrants to the U.S. who created a variety of organizations such as Landsmanschaften (Howe 1976, Wirth 1928) and contemporary immigrants from other countries who develop mutual assistance associations (Kim 1981, Bonnet 1980, Finnan and Cooperstein 1983), the Soviet Jews have created virtually no formal associations in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Soviet Jews and their resettlement staff and comparisons between Soviet Jewish and other immigrant communities suggest four possible reasons for the lack of formal organization among Soviet Jews. These include a reaction against the forced collectivism of the USSR, a lack of generally accepted leaders within the community, limited experience with voluntary associations, and finally, a very high quality of resettlement services provided by American Jewish agencies which may reduce the need for cooperative self-help activities.

Many Soviet emigres commented that the lack of formal organizations within their community was due to a direct reaction against the forced collectivism which was a common part of life in the USSR. An emigre describes this position:

Russian Jewish for generations were under the pressure of communism and they are tired of the different organizations. Because organization is an obligation. To be in this organization, you should be in it and do something. And they (Soviet Jews) don't wanna, because from generation to generation they were under pressure. Here Rus-

sian Jewish, they want to be free from actual everything. Free from all organization, because there is no freedom in Russia this way.<sup>5</sup>

A second reason why Soviet Jews do not form formal organizations is that their community lacks leaders whose status is carried over from the country of origin. In fieldwork, I found no evidence to suggest that individuals within the Soviet Jewish community are highly regarded because of country-of-origin status.<sup>6</sup> In fact, many indicators of prestige within the Soviet Union—such as Communist Party membership—were considered to be undesirable characteristics in the U.S. A third reason for Soviet Jews' not creating formal organizations is their lack of experience with these activities in the USSR. In the words of one emigre "And you try to get together, you have 20 people and 20 opinions and no one is really trained to compromise, so it is difficult". Finally, unlike earlier immigrants to the U.S., who were forced to band together for reasons of survival (Howe 1976, Wirth 1928, Light 1972, Bonacich and Modell 1982, Cohen 1969, Okely 1979), Soviet Jews are provided with an efficient battery of resettlement services (Eckles et al., 1982; ORR 1984). Many such services are specifically intended to establish links between Soviet Jewish individuals and established American Jewish institutions and communities and consequently, may hinder the development of emigre self-help activities (Goldberg 1981, Schiff 1980, Schwartz 1980).

In summary then, the Soviet Jewish enclave is characterized by physical closeness and frequent informal interaction. At the same time however, its members express ambivalence about their connections with one another due to their diverse origins and their anxiety over lost status. This ambivalence is reflected in the fact that the Soviet Jewish enclave reveals almost no formal organizations.

Despite the general reluctance of Soviet Jews to formalize their community ties, my fieldwork revealed two groups within the Soviet Jewish community of the San Francisco Bay Area who do engage in cooperative activities.

### BUSINESSPERSONS AND ACTIVISTS: TWO ORGANIZED GROUPS IN THE SOVIET JEWISH COMMUNITY

Soviet Jewish businesspersons and activists have a high level of organization. While Soviet Jewish businesspersons have not for-

malized their networks, I found that many do engage in frequent, large-scale cooperative activities. Activists have created a formal organization.

### *Businesspersons*

For one subgroup of Soviet Jews, business provides not only a source of income, but also a sense of personal and ethnic identity, a means of access to American society and a social life. The biographies of Soviet Jewish businesspersons bear certain similarities—8 of the 10 in my sample came from the Ukraine, most notably Odessa. In the U.S., often the entire family of these individuals becomes involved in business. For example, both husband and wife might work at the same business, they might each have their own business, or, while the husband runs a business, the wife might be involved in a selling occupation. Members of the businesspersons group have been in the U.S. much longer than the average member of the Soviet Jewish enclave. The average time in the U.S. for members of the enclave is 2.5 years. For businesspersons the average stay in America is 4.8 years. The length of time in the U.S. is reflected in the lower unemployment rate of the business group. While 30% of the Soviet Jewish enclave who were between 18 and 65 years of age were unemployed, only 10% of the businesspersons group of the same age category were without work. Past occupations of Soviet Jewish businesspersons are diverse. They include photographer, basketball coach, structural engineer, electrical engineer, ship-builder, economics student and history teacher.

While some Soviet Jewish businesspersons had experience with black market or under-the-table economic activity in the USSR, they generally agree that ability in business is more of an instinctual talent than a learned skill. The idea that a “nobody” in Russia can become a millionaire through business in the U.S. is a popular myth among Soviet Jewish businesspersons. In the following quote, the owner of a laundry plant describes business ability as “his feeling”:

Gold: Coming from a Communist country, how did you know how to run a business?

Joe Diamond: That is my feeling. Even if you graduate university, it gives you education, but it doesn't bring you the feeling for business.

Some people were born to make money and if you look around, not small business like this, but huge big corporations, people who started (them), the founders, sometimes don't have any education. They know how. Now they hire people with education.

I can just say you for sure, it's not necessary to be born in this country to business. Its not necessary to be in this (business) family. I have a lot of examples of friends of mine. Here, in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, L.A.

Because these Soviet Jews see business as an inborn ability and because they come from a secular Jewish background where one of the most notable facts about Jews is their accomplishments, a predisposition toward business is seen as a major component of Jewish ethnicity. A Soviet basketball coach who is now an insurance salesman tells how he drew upon Jewish identity in choosing a vocation:

I worked just maybe a month as coach for a girls' school. You know, I just quit because I didn't see my future in that. I have a family I have to support, and I decide "what are Jewish people doing when they don't have a profession? What are they doing? They should sell something."

Besides their allegedly inborn skill in business, emigres claim that tenacity and the ability to come back after failures are other ethnic traits useful in business. Joe Diamond, the laundry plant owner, comments again:

We get used to fight and we was born like this. We fight with Russian government. I tell you what. Mostly Jewish they have a good living in Russia. Discrimination and all stuff like this but they living economical highest level than another. So they learned some ways. And after (I left the USSR), I go to Italy. I spent 7 months in Italy; I survived. Now I am still here. I survived. You put me on Alaska, I'll survive there too, believe me.

Like sometimes I don't sleep. I'm working night time (at another job). I come home after my job, I take a shower and I come here. Sometimes I don't sleep for three days. We are fighter. I know so many people here who fall down, go up again, fall down, go up again.

Soviet Jewish businesspersons rely upon traditions of cooperation, trust and mutual obligation which they say were developed as means of surviving the scarcity and anti-Semitism of the Soviet Union. The owner of a San Francisco fast-food restaurant



describes these connections through which he claimed he would raise \$100,000 within a week:

We came from a different world. I would say that in Russia we could trust each other more than here in America. I have over 30 relatives in San Francisco and they didn't have a choice about giving me money, they were my relatives. I just said "I gotta have it".

We do take each other's word in many cases. At one point, I asked for a loan from a guy I hardly knew. He came up with a big amount of money without a paper (a contract) or without anything signed. Probably, I'd do the same thing if somebody wanted my support.

The networks which exist among Soviet Jewish businesspersons provide emigres with a variety of resources useful in opening and running a successful operation. Well-established entrepreneurs often give novices advice about contracts, licenses and appropriate store location.<sup>7</sup> The business networks often suggest opportunities for potential investors. For example, a Soviet Jewish realty company provides information about available storefronts and offers real estate speculators lists of homes that can be purchased and refurbished for later resale.

Business ties are frequently established and strengthened through social activities which include many emigre entrepreneurs. Soviet businesspersons enjoy the social contacts and sense of belonging they get from their work. An emigre who owns a shop in San Francisco describes the business person's social life:

Yes we know each other, no official meeting but we know each other. One month was L.A., was Bar Mitzvah. It was friend of mine's son. About 200 people (were there) all in business. They come from different city. We have good times.

We know each other and sometimes we fight, but usually we help each other. And I can tell you, our immigration, we do very well.

In summary, Soviet Jewish businesspersons are able to overcome the general feeling of disconnectedness which exists within the Soviet Jewish enclave. United by common economic purpose and consciously drawing upon their Soviet-based survival skills, they cooperate in business and pleasure. Further, they see their way of life as rooted in Jewish ethnicity. Because this outlook is shared, it allows for the establishment of a business network which provides members with economic and informational resources (Light 1984, Wilson and Martin 1982, Portes and Bach 1985, Cummings 1980).

## *Activists*

Soviet Jewish businesspersons are practical and down-to-earth in their approach towards life. Their work seems to provide a means of easing the confusion engendered by leaving their homeland and becoming established in a new country. The other organized group of emigres—activists—has more moralistic, idealistic and ideological concerns in the U.S. Taking their status as refugees seriously, activists hope to become participants in American democracy.

Activists generally sought to act as intermediaries between the Soviet Jewish community and the larger American Jewish community. Many were members of an association of emigres called "New Americans" which met at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. A major purpose of New Americans was to encourage emigres who were employed to contribute to Jewish Welfare. Members of this association also represented the Soviet Jewish community to the Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community Center and several synagogues. They were involved with the local council on Soviet Jewry and helped organize protests against the Soviet Union.

In addition to the official activities of the New Americans association, activists also engaged in a variety of informal community activities. For example, Ilena Karatov wrote articles in a JCC-sponsored Russian language newspaper and Tony Kalenoff, a civil engineer, taught a course to help new arrivals understand American construction techniques. Misha Kogan and Sasha Doctorovitch helped newcomers find jobs. Joe Brodsky assisted emigres in starting their own businesses and offered financial advice. Because of their community activities, newspaper articles and successful careers, many of the activists were well known within the emigre community of the Bay Area. Hence, they functioned as an elite group within the Bay Area Soviet Jewish population.

The social characteristics of the activists contribute to their elite status. Each of the 10 activists I interviewed had been in the U.S. for more than 4 years. Their average time in the U.S. was 6.2 years, longer than that of either the average member of the Soviet Jewish enclave (2.5 years) or the businesspersons group (4.8 years). Activists also had more education than other emigres. While businesspersons had an average of 16.3 years of education and members of the Soviet Jewish enclave had 16.5 years, the average education of activists was 17.5 years. Finally, the unem-

ployment rate among activists (10%) is much lower than the 30% unemployment rate for other members of the Soviet Jewish enclave. Activists were skilled in English, had a good understanding of American society and had close personal and/or work relationships with Americans. All of the activists were married and had children. In every case, the husband had professional or managerial employment. In many cases, the wife was also professionally employed, although in one case, the wife was a doctor seeking a residency. Activists had their origins throughout the USSR, but like the emigre community as a whole, the majority were from cities in the Ukraine including Dnepropetrovsk, Lvov, Odessa and Kiev (Gilson, 1981:33).

One of the major factors which activist emigres have in common is a high level of concern over leaving the USSR. The claim to have thought a great deal about their exit because they had strong ties to the Soviet Union. Tony Kalenoff comments:

When you leave your country, and I think it is my country, I don't think those sons of bitches who run that country have more rights than I have . . . Because first of all, they don't possess as much Russian culture as we have, being intelligent and so on. So we had to go away and they stayed. And this is something I can't forgive ever.

And second, you lose your friends, you lose your language, you lose all your ties. You lose the countryside that you love and there is nothing in the world that will substitute for that.

Activist emigres often claim that they put much more consideration into their exit than did emigres of other subgroups. Helena Silberstein comments:

They didn't make their own decision to leave the country. It was like a big number of sheeps. Everyone goes and they should go. Why? First of all, you should ask yourself why. That is the beginning. And I hate this part of our Russian experience. They are not realizing why and they are not thinking why they left Russia. They didn't have their own choice. They just borrow ideas from other people and follow like sheeps.

The value placed upon conformity in the USSR (Friedgut 1979) is, to activists, one of the worst elements of Soviet life. Tony Kalenoff claims that this trait is basically foreign to the Jewish personality and its presence within the emigre community is the result of having lived under the Soviet system. He terms the lack

of individual initiative “the Soviet sickness”. In the following quote, Kalenoff describes his reaction to being forced to conform:

There was no special reason for me to hate the Communists for what they have done to me except this particular case. Say put it this way. A person that was raped and had a deep emotional reaction on it, never will forgive the rapist.

You ask me what the rape was, and the rape was not that they have done something to me, but that they made me a part of the system. And after a while, you understand that you really become a part of that system and they pass whatever they do through you and there is no way that you can escape it. And that is what I name a rape.

Activists reveal their ideological orientation as they compare the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They feel that the U.S. is a better society and that they have a mission to tell Americans about the USSR.

I had this feeling after we came here that hey, we’ve got to do something to help people who are still there, who have no way of expressing themselves to Americans . . . And the way of life is so different that unless Americans really start to understand, there is no way that they could pick correct way of dealing with that country.

More than other groups within the Soviet Jewish community, activists are interested in making connections with and contributions to the larger community, both Jewish and gentile. As already indicated, emigre activists seek involvement with the institutions of American democracy. Recoiling from their cynicism towards the Soviet system, they take participation in American society seriously. Helena Silberstein describes her desire to participate in American society in a “good way”:

Adjustment is difficult in a different country. And some people, adjustment, they just don’t even want to adjust in a good way. But if you want to be a good member of society, I mean working member, I don’t mean with a job, I mean just thinking and everything, and giving everything, which is most important point, not only to take but to give. Its important. For me it was difficult.

It wasn’t difficult to find a car or buy an apartment, no. But language and understanding and reading the papers and realizing at least what’s going on and how this country is built and everything, I think for me to live here my whole life doesn’t give me enough experience.

While Soviet activists are interested in becoming a part of the American Jewish community, they feel it is wrong to participate

in religious activities which they do not understand or believe in. This feeling is in part, based in their revulsion towards the ideological conformity which marks Soviet life. Further, although they are not Russophiles, emigre activists feel that it is essential to acknowledge their investment in Russian as well as Jewish identity. As a result, they believe that if their community is to develop a really positive relationship with American Jews, the existence of Russian/Jewish identity must be accepted by both emigres and American Jews alike. In the words of Ilena Karatov:

I want the American community to understand who we are, because I feel personally a lot of our problems and a lot of our, you know, negative feelings towards each other, is because people don't understand each other.

If you talk about the (Soviet Jewish) community in general, its a non-religious community and that's it. Because they don't have religious ground. You have to form this ground first, but I don't think this will be an overnight thing. Right now, I try really to impress to American community for us, Jewishness is non-religious.

As an elite group, activists can be critical of the emigre community. They are most annoyed by the unwillingness of other emigres to become full participants, morally and economically, in American life. Criticisms are directed at emigres who refuse less-than-desirable jobs. Activists are also upset by evidence of racism and intolerance within the emigre community. At the same time, Soviet Jewish activists take great pride in their group. They feel the Soviet Jews of San Francisco are extremely successful and have a bright future. Joe Brodsky expresses his evaluation:

Most of the people came here without any language, without any history, without religious training. When they (become) established, they will look around and come together. In my opinion, the San Francisco (emigre community) will grow up every year more and more strong.

As believers in American democracy, Soviet Jewish activists tend to reject the ethnocentric views maintained by certain Soviet and American Jews and sometimes incorporated in resettlement programs (Goldberg 1981, Schiff 1980, Schwartz 1980). This is, at least in part, because many seek to escape the minority status they were forced to occupy in the USSR. For example, one activist claimed that other emigres who were involved with the Jewish Community Center were making their "nationality into

their profession" as token representatives to the American community. In a like manner, another activist claimed she withdrew her children from the Hebrew Academy, not only because of the excessive time spent on religious training (mentioned by other emigres) but also because an exclusively Jewish environment deprived her children of experience with other ethnic groups:

That's what I explained to Rabbi Lichtenstein, I want . . . my kids not in Hebrew school, not in a Catholic school, just in a normal public school. Because life is different. I couldn't hold their life, make a fence from the people and separate them from the real life.

Everything can happen and they should get along with . . . the different people. They should have their own experience. Its easier to teach kids step by step and from the beginning then later on to make it too much for them. Now, while the kids are young, they should learn about other people.

For Soviet Jewish activists, ethnicity suggests the moral implications of Jews' status as a minority group. From this point of view, they find that America is superior to the Soviet Union because America is better able to tolerate non-conformity, diversity and individualism.

Ironically, while activists reveal the highest levels of structural and cultural assimilation in their community, as evidenced by professional employment, home ownership and membership in American religious and community organizations, they display a style of ethnic community development much like that of earlier Jewish immigrants. While the mass of the Soviet Jewish community avoids formal collective activities, the activists are working to create ethnic-based associations not unlike the *Landsmanschaften* of earlier Jewish immigrants. In this manner, the activists seem to be maintaining the tradition of immigrant idealism which brought hope to the Jewish tenement communities of the turn of the century (Howe 1976, Gorelick 1981, Rischin 1962, Wirth 1928).

## CONCLUSIONS

The Soviet Jewish community maintains many informal ties but few formal ones. However, two subgroups, one formally organized and one informal but highly integrated, do exist. What is it about the businesspersons and the activists that causes them to unite while the vast majority of emigres remain atomized?

One major factor which distinguishes the two organized

groups from the mass is their length of time in the U.S. Members of the businesspersons and activists groups have been in the U.S. much longer than most members of the Soviet Jewish enclave. Hence, they have resolved many of the immediate problems of readjustment to the new society which might keep their more recently arrived countrymen from engaging in organized activities. Further, because businesspersons and activists have lived in the U.S. a longer period of time, they may feel more distanced from the Soviet-based feelings of status anxiety and resistance to collectivism which mark the outlook of recently arrived Soviet Jews. Another element which may explain why these two groups are more likely to engage in organized activities is their rate of unemployment. While 30% of the members of the Soviet Jewish enclave are without jobs, only 10% of the members of the two organized groups lack employment. Consequently, these individuals may have the emotional and economic resources required for organizing, which most enclave members lack.

Finally, it is clear that businesspersons and activists are united in their subgroups by an ideological orientation which draws upon both Soviet experience and Jewish ethnicity. Among these two groups, feelings of common experience and common goals allow mutually beneficial connections and activities to be established. The ability of shared definitions of ethnicity to facilitate organization around collective political and economic goals has been the subject of a growing body of recent research in sociology (Olzak 1983, Portes 1984, Cohen 1969, Bonacich and Modell 1980, Nielsen 1985).

Since length of time in the U.S. appears to be an important difference between organized and unorganized elements of the Soviet Jewish community, as time passes it is likely that more and perhaps larger organizations will be formed. If this is the case, and if the Soviet Union once again allows Jews to leave in numbers (Los Angeles Times, 10-31-85:23), then Soviet Jews may become an increasingly organized and self-identified group in the U.S.

## NOTES

1. The lack of information on Soviet Jewish communities in the U.S. is ironic considering the large body of literature devoted to the ways of life characteristic of Jewish immigrants of earlier periods (Wirth 1928, Eisenstadt 1954, Rischin 1962, Glazer and Moynihan 1963, Howe 1976, Kosmin 1979, Gorelick 1981, Zenner 1983).

2. Data reported here are part of a larger comparative study of the resettlement and community formation of Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees. See Gold (1985a, 1985b).
3. A comparison of Soviet Jewish populations in Los Angeles with those of the San Francisco Bay Area suggests that the ability of elderly Soviet Jews to connect with Yiddish-speaking Americans is far greater in Los Angeles, which has a geographic concentration of elderly Jews, than is the case in San Francisco and Oakland which lack distinct Jewish neighborhoods.
4. For example, while I counted 58 mutual assistance associations among the 30,000 Vietnamese of the San Francisco Bay Area (Indochinese Refugee Action Center 1982, Indochinese Technical Assistance Project 1981, ORR 1983), my research revealed 1 formal organization among the area's 6000 Soviet Jews (Kipperman 1982).
5. Several emigres gave similar reasons for their choice of the U.S. rather than Israel as a country of settlement. In the words of one: "I didn't go to Israel because I am not Orthodox Jew, I am not religious. And I know that Israel is Orthodox country. Their religion and their civil life is very close in Israel. Like in Russia, the civil life and the ideology. Oh, I don't need it anymore! I am mad about this for my fifty years. That is why I cannot live in Israel. This is my position and I can tell it to anybody. I know I am Jew. I like Jewish people, but this is my headache. This is why I don't go to Israel."
6. Country-of-origin status is noted to be an important factor in immigrant organization among diverse groups including the Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Hausa and Iranian Jews (Gold 1985a, Light 1972, Lyman 1974, Cohen 1969, Rabin et al., 1986).
7. For a summary of problems experienced by Soviet Jewish business owners see Lubin (1985).

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