

Ze'ev Khanin, Velvl Chernin

Identity, Assimilation and Revival:
Ethnosocial Processes among the Jewish Population of the Former Soviet Union



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The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research
and Strengthening Jewish Vitality
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to the authors and
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Preface

The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality was founded in Bar Ilan University in the spring of 2001 at the initiative of Ruth and Baruch Rappaport, who identified assimilation as the primary danger to the future of the Jewish people.

A central working hypothesis of the Center is that assimilation is not an inexorable force of nature, but rather the result of human choices. In the past, Jews chose assimilation in order to avoid persecution and social stigmatization. Today, however, this is rarely the case. In our times, assimilation stems from the fact that for many Jews, maintaining Jewish involvements and affiliations seems less attractive than pursuing the alternatives available to them in the pluralistic societies of contemporary Europe and America. A working hypothesis of the Rappaport Center is that the tendency of many Jews to disassociate from Jewishness is a reflection of real flaws and weaknesses that exist in various areas and institutions of Jewish life today.

However, since assimilation is not a force of nature, it should be possible to move beyond analysis, towards mending

and repair. This is the second stage of our activities, and these two aspects are reflected in our name: The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality.

Dr. Velvl Chernin and Dr. Ze'ev Khanin have been research fellows of the Rappaport Center since 2003. At that time, Dr. Chernin was a lecturer at Bar Ilan university. One of the unexpected consequences of his involvement in this research project was, that his talents and personality came to the attention of the Jewish Agency, who asked him to fill a central role in educational and community activity in the FSU. While serving in that capacity, Dr. Chernin continued to develop his research for our center, and also had the opportunity to conduct field-research on the Subbotnik Jews in the FSU (his findings on that topic were published separately by the Rappaport Center). As his joint research with Dr. Khanin goes to press, he is on his way back to Israel, and we wish him great success in his next steps in life.

Dr. Ze'ev Khanin is on the faculty of Bar Ilan's Department of Political Science. In addition to his fine academic research and teaching, he is a well-known personality to the Russian-speaking public in Israel, and a sought after media commentator and lecturer. He has been instrumental in initiating and organizing two major international conferences of the Rappaport Center. The first conference, held in June 2004, bore the title "Russian-speaking Jewry in Global Perspective: Assimilation, Integration and Community-building". Due to the conference's striking success, researchers around the world and the Russian speaking public requested a sequel. This took place in October 2006 and was devoted to "Russian-speaking Jewry in Global Perspective: Power, Politics and Community"; it too enjoyed great success.

All this while, Dr. Chernin and Dr. Khanin were toiling together on their major joint research project, whose results are before us today in this publication. This research is invaluable in providing two crucial prisms for viewing the multifaceted reality of Russian-speaking Jews in our time. The first prism is, a finely nuanced typology of the groups comprising Russian-speaking Jewry in the FSU. As the reader will see, the authors (on the basis of research) identify fourteen such types, each with its own traits and characteristics. The second prism is, a fourfold typology of the membership of the “extended population” of Russian-speaking Jewry, with careful analysis of the views and attitudes of each type, regarding central aspects of identity.

It is clear, that after reading this research, no person or organization will be able to relate to Russian-speaking Jewry in the FSU (or elsewhere) “in general”; rather, all intelligent attempts to formulate policy and to construct programs will do so, only after considering the effectiveness for the policy or program with regard to the specific types of Russian-speaking Jews that the policy/program seeks to affect. For this reason, anyone involved in activity or research relating to Russian-speaking Jewry will be henceforth deeply indebted to the painstaking research and serious analysis of Drs. Chernin and Khanin. Moreover, their findings should lead to emulation by researchers focusing on other sectors of the Jewish People – both throughout the Diaspora and in Israel.

* * * *

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Ze’ev Khanin and Dr. Velvl Chernin for their fine contribution to the endeavors of the Rappaport center, and to express appreciation to all those

whose efforts have enabled the publication of this paper: Ms. Iris Aaron, Editor of the text, who was also directly responsible for proofreading and for coordination with the press; Ms. Denise Levin (English translator); the Ben Gasner studio (cover graphics), and Art Plus press.

For all of us involved in the activities of the Rappaport Center, and indeed for all Jews and people of good will concerned with the vitality of the Jewish people, the publication of this paper is an opportunity to acknowledge the vision and commitment of Ruth and Baruch Rappaport. It is their initiative and continued generosity that enable the manifold activities of the Rappaport Center – thus making an important contribution to ensuring the future well-being of the Jewish people. May they continue to enjoy together many years of health, activity, satisfaction and happiness.

Zvi Zohar, Director
The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research
and Strengthening Jewish Vitality

List of Publications

The Rappaport Center publishes research and position papers, authored by outstanding scholars and experts. These papers present original and interesting findings concerning issues pertaining to assimilation and Jewish identity. Written at a high level of cultural and conceptual analysis, they are nevertheless not ‘ivory tower’ research; they bear operational implications for ameliorating and improving real-life situations. The research and position papers of the Rappaport Center are an invaluable and original series, constituting a significant addition to the collection of any public and research library and to the bookshelves of individuals interested in, or concerned with, the future of the Jewish people. To date, the following publications have appeared in this series:

- **Israeli Assimilation: The Absorption of Non-Jews into Israeli Society and its Influence on the Collective Identity**, by Asher Cohen (Hebrew)
- **A Critique of Jewish Identity Discourse**, by Avi Sagi (Hebrew)
- **Halakhic Responses to Assimilation**, by Ariel Picard (Hebrew)

- **Training American Orthodox Rabbis to Play a Role in Confronting Assimilation: Programs, Methodologies and Directions**, by Adam S. Ferziger (English)
- **Making the Jewish Canon Accessible to Our Generation**, by Yedidia Z. Stern (Hebrew/English)
- **Psychological Aspects of Identity Formation and Their Implications for Understanding the Concept of Jewish Identity: A Review of the Scientific Literature**, by Michal Tur-Kaspa Shimoni, Dana Pereg and Mario Mikulincer (Hebrew)
- **“The Jewish Story”: The Meaning of Jewish Identity and the Factors Shaping it Among Jewish Youth in Mexico City and Tashkent**, by Dana Pereg, Mario Mikulincer and Maya Aksakalov (Hebrew)
- **The Quintessential Dilemma: American Jewish Responses to Inter-marriage**, by Gerald Cromer (Hebrew/English)
- **“Jewishness” in Postmodernity: The Case of Sweden**, by Lars Dencik (Hebrew/English)
- **Assimilation in Italy and the Methods of confronting it**, by Yaakov Andrea Lattes (Hebrew/Italian)
- **The Rosenzweig Lehrhaus: Proposal for a Jewish House of Study in Kassel Inspired by Franz Rosenzweig’s *Frankfurt Lehrhaus***, by Ephraim Meir (English)
- **The Emergence of the Community Kollel: A New Model for Addressing Assimilation**, by Adam S. Ferziger (English)
- **Caucasus Jews in Daghestan: Identity and Survival**, by Chen Bram (Hebrew)
- ***Tikkun Olam*: Engaged Spirituality and Jewish Identity**, by Gerald Cromer (English)

The Rappaport Center also publishes Field Reports, which give a voice to local Jewish community members addressing issues of Jewish identity and assimilation in a straightforward manner. The insights and information expressed in these publications aim at motivating communities and leaders to take a new look at the strengths and weaknesses of the ways in which they have until now related to community life, and encourage them to seriously consider and implement new strategies, better suited to ensuring the future of the community in today's turbulent times. To date, the following publications have appeared in this series:

- **Threat and Opportunity: Assimilation and Response Amongst Basel's Jews**, by Valerie Rhein (English)
- **Jewish Identity Patterns and Assimilation Trends Among Young Adult Jews in Hungary**, by David Bitter (English)
- **Why Don't They Participate? A Short Voyage into the Hearts, Minds and Concerns of the Jews of Subotica, Yugoslavia**, by Sara Stojković (English)
- **A Lively Community: The Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam**, by Clary Rooda (English)
- **Jewish Education in the Czech Republic: a Case Study of the Lauder Schools in Prague**, by Tereze Foltýnová (English)
- **The Subbotniks**, by Velvl Chrnin (Hebrew/English)

For more books and for further information, please contact the Rappaport Center at rjcenter@mail.biu.ac.il, by fax 972-3-6724915 or by phone 972-3-6734050.



Introduction

1. General Background of the Study

Since the eighteenth century, when Judah he-Hasid (1660 – circa 1700) and his pupils immigrated to the Land of Israel, immigrants from Russia have played an important – and with time, major – role in the history of the Jewish *Yishuv*¹ in the Land of Israel and in the history of Zionism. The vast majority of immigrants to the Land of Israel in the First, Second and Third *Aliyot*² were Jews from Russia – members of the *Bilu*³ movement and founders of the *Hashomer*⁴ and *Hagana*⁵ organizations. Russia was the

- 1 *Yishuv* (Hebrew for "settlement"): Term used in the Zionist movement before the establishment of the State of Israel to refer to the body of Jewish residents and new settlers in the Land of Israel.
- 2 *Aliyah/Aliyot* (Hebrew for "ascent/s"): Term/s used to denote wave/s of immigration ("ascent/s") to Israel ("To make *Aliyah*" denotes "to immigrate to Israel"; "*Olim*" denotes "people who make *Aliyah*").
- 3 *Bilu*: Hebrew acronym of verse 2:5 in the Book of Isaiah, *Beit Ya'akov Lekhu Ve'nelekha* ("House of Jacob, Let Us Go Up").
- 4 *Hashomer* (Hebrew for "The Watchman"): Jewish defense organization in the Land of Israel, founded in April 1907.
- 5 *Hagana*: Underground Jewish militia that operated in the Land of Israel during the British Mandate.

birthplace of the ideologists of socialist Zionism (Ber Borochov, Berl Katznelson), of the ideologists of Revisionist Zionism (Ze'ev {Vladimir} Jabotinsky), of the ideologists of spiritual Zionism (Achad Ha'am), and of the ideologists of religious Zionism (Rabbi Kook). Immigrants from the Soviet Union also reached the Land of Israel immediately after the Holocaust and during the first years of the State of Israel's independence (via Poland). Some 50% of all Israeli Jews are connected in one way or other to Russia. Most of the political, religious and military leaders of the New *Yishuv*⁶ and of the State of Israel were born in Russia. Suffice it to mention the Russian Jews' representation in the political elite in Israel: The first four presidents of the State of Israel were born in Russia (Chaim Weizmann, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Shneiur Zalman Shazar, and Ephraim Katzir). Prime Ministers David Ben-Gurion, Levi Eshkol, and Golda Meir were also born there. The parents of Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Binyamin Netanyahu, and Ariel Sharon immigrated to Israel from Russia, as did the parents of President Ezer Weizmann. Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres were born in Western Belorussia, which, except for a short period in between the two World Wars, used to be part of the former Soviet Union. These statesmen knew (and still know) the Russian language, at least to some extent.

Most of the founders of modern Israeli culture were born in Russia: Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who revived the Hebrew language,

6 *New Yishuv*: Term used to refer to the body of Jewish residents and new settlers in the Land of Israel who built homes in Jerusalem outside the walls of the Old City in the 1860s, to the founding of the city of Petah Tikva in 1878, to the First *Aliyah* of 1882, and to the subsequent settlements established until 1948, when the State of Israel was declared.

and its greatest writers and poets – Judah Leib Gordon, Chaim Nachman Bialik, Shaul Tchernichovsky, Yosef Chaim Brenner, and so on. Israel’s national theater, *Habima*, was founded in Moscow. Russia was also the birthplace of the great Yiddish writers, Isaac Leib Peretz, Mendele Moicher Sforim, and Shalom Aleichem, whose original works and their translations into Hebrew profoundly influenced modern Israeli literature. Many great ultra-Orthodox rabbis of the twentieth century were also born in Russia: The Chazon Ish, The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Eliezer Shach, and the rabbis of the Lubavitch dynasty.

The term “Russian” is no longer used to refer to all native-born Russians and their offspring: Nowadays, it refers to those Russians who made *Aliyah* to Israel starting in the early 1970s – that is, only to “new” *Olim*. It has no connection to length of time in Israel but, rather, to cultural and ideological causes. This can be illustrated by comparing the two concepts, “Jews of Russia” and “Russian Jews”. At first glance, they seem almost identical in their usage in modern Israel reality. However, they are significantly different: While the concept “Jews of Russia” has, first and foremost, a geographical significance, the concept “Russian Jews” describes cultural affiliation. Most of the immigrants from Russia in the early *Aliyot* had the traits of Jewish culture – education, spoken language, religion, and so forth; they acquired their mastery of the Russian language outside their parents’ home, if at all. Many members of the Second and, in particular, the Third *Aliyot* indeed were very much influenced by Russian culture: They read books in Russian, and some even wrote books in Russian after they made *Aliyah* (for example, Mordechai Ben Ami, Ze’ev Jabotinsky, and Dovid Knut). Some of the latter books had a strong influence on Israeli culture (for

example, Jabotinsky's novel, "Samson"). Some spoke Russian at home. However, they were the formative nucleus of Hebrew speakers in the Jewish *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel, and viewed themselves as "Hebrews" (*Ivriyyim*), not "Russians". It is no coincidence that of all the writers who described the pioneering period in the new *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel, Shai Agnon, who was born in Galicia, was the one to look on from the side, as it were. The hero of his novel "Yesteryear", Yitzhak Kumer, a pioneer who arrives on his own from Galicia, immediately sees the central role played by the *Olim* from Russia in the new *Yishuv*, and feels different. These *Olim* did not pass on the Russian element in their ethnocultural identity to their children, leading to the cultural gap between the parent generation of *Olim* and the generation of native-born Israelis, the *Sabras*.⁷ This gap appears both in Hebrew literature, as in Aharon Megged's novel "The Living on the Dead", and in the works of Jewish writers in the Diaspora, as in Arthur Koestler's novel, "Thieves in the Night". Nevertheless, the Jewish element in the cultural identity of the veteran immigrants from Russia was dominant, and the non-Jewish, Russian element remained secondary. The dominance of the Jewish element was what enabled *Olim* from other countries to view this group as the legitimate representatives of the Jewish people. The unifying Jewish element was the platform for the "ingathering of the exiles" and the Israeli version of the "melting pot" – the Zionist cultural policy that was such a success in spite of all of its internal contradictions; a policy that turned the

7 *Sabras* (Hebrew for "prickly pear"): Local slang for native-born Israeli Jews (like prickly pear, they were said to be thorny on the outside, but sweet and tender inside).

citizens of Israel into a culturally unified group, whose language was Hebrew.

Olim from the Soviet Union started reaching this socio-cultural reality in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Contrary to previous *Aliyot*, most were representatives of the second and third generations, who had lived in the Soviet regime and had undergone an acculturation process to Soviet non-Jewish society. In most cases, Russian was their first language, often their only one. Most of the *Olim* had not received any Jewish education at all, and did not know even the most basic of Jewish concepts. This trend reached its peak in the *Aliyot* of the 1990s. These *Olim* can be characterized as Jews by origin and identity, and Russian by culture. Consequently, there was a clash between two patterns of Jewish identity: Hebrew-Israeli and Jewish-Russian. The Jewish element of the latter, the element that could have united the two patterns, was so weakened that the dividing factor often overpowered the unifying factor. Consequently, fundamental problems arose in the cultural integration of the new *Olim* in Israeli society. The melting pot policy, in its old version, underwent a deep crisis. The “Russians” became yet another sector in Israeli society – a sector that, not only because of its size, but also because of its degree of isolation, was similar to the Arab and Jewish ultra-Orthodox sectors, with their separate cultural and education systems. However, in contrast to the Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox, these new *Olim* are already integrated into, and active in, all the systems of Israeli society, including the educational system and the army, which have always served as efficient tools of the melting pot policy. These systems have been experiencing difficulties under the new conditions created following the *Aliyah* from the Commonwealth of Independent

States (CIS) and the other states that replaced the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

A commonly accepted definition of these *Olim* is that in their country of origin they were “assimilated”. We will not reject this popular definition outright. Rather, we will try to compare it with another common term in sociology – “acculturated”. These concepts are not synonymous: In Israel, the concept “assimilation” is often understood as implying physical mixing with non-Jews, primarily through intermarriage; however, in the case of the Jews of the former Soviet Union, “assimilation” refers to a type of acculturation that does not imply physical mixing and loss of Jewish identity; rather, it implies the shaping of a double loyalty with regard both to culture and to identity, a loyalty that integrates a person’s Jewish identity with his or her ‘external’ identity – in this case, with his or her Russian identity.

This phenomenon finds expression in the literature written by Jews in non-Jewish languages, including Russian. As far back as the early 1920s, the Jewish Russian writer, Lev Lunts (1901-1924), described this phenomenon in his story, “The Homeland”: “On summer evenings in Saint Petersburg, my friends and I drink samgon (homemade alcoholic liquor – Hebrew translator’s note), while in the adjoining room, my father, an old Polish Jew, who is bald, has a white beard and side-locks, prays facing the East, and his soul weeps, because his only son, the last scion of the old generation, drinks samgon on the eve of the holy Sabbath. Behold, the old Jew sees the blue skies of the Land of Israel, where he never visited, but which he saw, sees and will see. And I, who do not believe in God, I weep, too, because I so want to see the distant Jordan River and the blue skies, because I so love the city where I was born, and the language that I speak, a strange language”.

The double identity of the hero of the story is revealed in the contradiction between his will “to see the distant Jordan River” and his love for “the city where I was born” and “the language that I speak, a strange language”. In Lunts’ lifetime, this contradiction only affected a few Jewish intellectuals. However, in the following generations, when the Jews of Russia increasingly became Russian Jews, it turned into a widespread problem. This contradiction is the present key problem in the identity of the *Olim* from the former Soviet Union.

On the one hand, the last decade of the twentieth century was characterized by the mass emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union, and from the states that replaced it, to Israel and the West. On the other hand, it was precisely during this period that many of those who had previously hidden or denied their identity, now returned to their Jewishness. Therefore, in spite of mass emigration, the Jewish community of the CIS is currently the fourth largest in the world, immediately after North America, the State of Israel and the European Union countries (many researchers believe that the official demographic data on the size of the Jewish population in the CIS are lower than in reality, and that, in fact, it is the largest on the European continent).

Furthermore, the two waves of immigration to Israel from Eastern Europe, between 1969 and 1979, and since 1989, have considerably changed the geographic distribution of Russian-speaking Jewish communities. Since the 1990s, Israel has become the largest center of Russian-speaking Jews – with over 1,100,000 people.

Israel is currently the home of approximately 40% of all Jews originating in the former Soviet Union, who constitute over 15% of the citizens of Israel. The *Aliyah* of this professional,

educated group to Israel has had an enormous influence on various areas in the life of the country, including the economy, politics, education, culture, and the health system. At the same time, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of people from a different cultural background has served as an agent of change in Israeli society, while reinforcing its internal political contradictions and antagonisms.

Over half a million Russian Jews and their families live in North America (according to other estimates, over 800,000). Immigrant Jews from the CIS constitute some 80% of the 140,000 Jews registered in congregations in Germany (some 100,000 additional Russian Jews live in Germany, but are not registered in local congregations). In addition, at least 25% of the 100,000 Jews of Australia are Russian. Moreover, the waves of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union/ CIS led to the establishment or reinforcement of Jewish communities in dozens of other countries. Overall, the lion's share of the three million Russian-speaking Jews throughout the world are distributed among three centers: Eurasia, Israel, and North America.

Despite the considerable differences between the condition of the Russian-speaking Jews in their countries of origin, in the Jewish State and in their new countries of dispersion, they have many common denominators, such as characteristics of their cultural, linguistic and national identity. Most Russian Jews can be viewed as a kind of sub-ethnic union (or a group of such unions) of Jews from Eastern Europe sharing a common fate, values and national consciousness; they can be viewed thus, even though they have largely been assimilated and detached from Jewish culture, and have undergone Russification. Their national consciousness derives from residues of the local (East European)

Jewish cultural tradition, from the pressure of the political and social environment, and from the fact that they viewed themselves as Jews in the ethnic sense, when this perception was implanted in their historic memory and in their social experience (see Chervyakov, Gittelman and Shapiro, 1997; Khanin, 1998; Ryvkina, 1996 and 2005 [in Russian]). Many elements of this Jewish Russian identity, whose manifest expressions are more in the realm of values than in the realm of culture, have been preserved in all Russian Jewish communities.

In recent years, several new trends in the development of the international Jewish Russian community found expression. Thus, for example, the predictions of the rapid assimilation of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants into their host societies proved to be unfounded, as did the predictions of the total disappearance of the Jewish population in the CIS as a result of mass emigration and the demographic attrition of the remaining population. In the destination countries of this migration, concepts such as “the one-and-a-half generation” and “integration without acculturation” developed, as did sub-cultures among the Russian Jewish youth, and all these leave room for hope that their Russian Jewish identity will be preserved in this generation, and perhaps also in the coming generations. The Jewish population in the CIS has stabilized in 10–12 large cities, where an extensive network of community and inter-communal organizations has developed, apparently guaranteeing the continuity of these communities.

On the international level, processes of community preservation have been manifested in the establishment of the “Transnational Russian Jewish Union”, and in the appearance of “umbrella organizations”, such as “The World Congress of Russian Jewry”, “The Euro-Asian Jewish Congress”, and “The

Russian Jewish Congress”, with the influence and fields of interest of the latter extending considerably beyond the limits of the Russian Federation.

The picture is even more complex, because between 33% and 50% of Russian Jews are not Jewish according to *Halakha* [Jewish religious law]. These non-halakhic Jews are comprised of three groups of equal size. The first group can be defined as “Sociological Jews”. Most members of this group have a Jewish father or spouse, and view themselves as belonging to the Jewish people in the Soviet Union/ CIS or to the Jewish communities in their countries of dispersion. Members of the second group, ‘ethnic non-Jews’, represent an intermediate trend, of “integration without acculturation”. They view themselves as belonging to the Jewish people, but do not give up their Russian (or Ukrainian, or Uzbek, and so forth) or mixed identity. Finally, the members of the third group, which is numerically increasing, openly display their non-Jewish identity. They manifest a trend towards cultural and ethnic isolation, or towards assimilation in the non-Jewish environment (For details see: Khanin, 2003 [in Russian]; Kozulin and Venger, 1994; Markowitz, 1993; Peres and Lissitsa, 2000 [in Russian], 2001 [in Hebrew]; Zilberg, Leshem and Lissak, 1995).

In sum, contrasting processes are clearly visible, already today: On the one hand, a Russian-speaking non-Jewish element is being absorbed into the extended Jewish Russian population; on the other hand, Jews are being assimilated into the (Russian) non-Jewish ethnic environment in the CIS and in their countries of dispersion. Considering the current rate of mixed marriages, it seems reasonable to predict that one result of these contrasting processes will be, that children who have been (or will be) born

of these marriages (especially those children characterized by a Jewish or dual identity) will have a considerable influence on the national Jewish culture both in the Diaspora and in Israel. Such groups have been researched in several countries (Crohn, 1986; Barak-Fishman, 2001, 2002), and several studies have also been published on the processes that Russian speakers, ethnic Jews, and children of mixed marriages undergo (Chlenov, 2002 [in Hebrew]; Gittelman, 2003; Gittelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, 1994 [in Russian]; Kogan, 1995; Nosenko, 2004 [in Russian]; Ryvkina, 1996 and 2005 [in Russian]; Sobkin, 1998 [in Russian]; Tolts, 1992). Nevertheless, the subject has not yet been researched in depth.

2. Ethnocultural Diversity and Jewish Identity in the Former Soviet Union

The post-Soviet period in the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe is characterized by a variety of (sometimes contradictory) processes and trends. Consequently, the ethnic identity of post-Soviet Jewry is not uniform, and has no unequivocal definition.

When a nationalist Jewish movement restarted in the Soviet Union in the late 1960s, it had no organizational infrastructure. Moreover, this movement did not directly inherit anything from the historic Zionist movement in Russia. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, small illegal groups of Jews with a Zionist ideology developed in Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, Vilna, Odessa, Kishinev, Kiev, Kharkiv and several other cities. Most of these activists did not define themselves openly as Zionists. However, their manner of operation (their struggle for the right to make *Aliyah* to Israel and against state anti-Semitism; their study of Hebrew and of Jewish history and tradition) spoke for itself, and these groups

became the infrastructure of revived Zionist activity in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, most of the *Olim* from the Soviet Union in the 1970s were not active in these groups, or were active on a low scale, such as studying Hebrew in underground *Ulpans* [special schools for the intensive study of Hebrew].

In the 1980s and 1990s, when the gates of the Soviet Union were opened, most of the Zionist activists remaining there made *Aliyah*. Hundreds of thousands of others who were not connected in any way to organized Jewish or Zionist activity in their country of origin made *Aliyah*, and this trend strengthened from year to year. This led to objective difficulties in their integration into Israeli society. It also led to the development of the widespread stereotype about the “non-Zionist *Aliyah*”, frequently defined in accordance with the ideological concepts of post-Zionism as mere “immigration”, thus negating its national dimension.

Sociological surveys also tend to present the *Aliyah* process superficially. Most researchers assert that the *Aliyot* of the 1990s had no Zionist motivation, and were motivated solely by practical considerations. These researchers emphasize that these *Aliyot* included 300,000 people who were not Jewish at all, and that even those who were Jews had no Zionist Jewish identity. In actual fact, the situation is much more complex.

First, both the non-Jewish and Jewish elements in these *Aliyot* were not uniform. Although children of mixed marriages between a Jewish man and a Gentile woman are halakhically not Jewish, the Jewish consciousness of these children is not thereby negated. Indeed, their connection to Judaism is frequently a dominant factor in their self-identity; therefore, they view themselves as Jewish even if they have no such official status (this subjective identification is reflected, inter alia, in the findings of sociological

research). It should be noted that the offspring of intermarriages, who are not Jewish by *Halakha* but who are entitled by law to make *Aliyah*, also include people with one Jewish grandparent. Also included are persons whose maternal grandmother was a Jewess who adopted a different religion.⁸ It is clear that, due to the influence of each particular family environment, the differences between the members of this group are very significant.

On the other hand, among non-Jews entitled to make *Aliyah* are included also the non-Jewish spouses of Jews, including spouses of the offspring of mixed marriages, as well as spouses of persons who themselves had one Jewish grandparent. In other words, the connection of these *Olim* to Judaism may be through grandparents that even their spouses never knew. It should be pointed out that the portrayal of Jewish familial structure that we depict here varies between Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The main demographic potential of the Jewish population in the FSU, in particular of its ethnic nucleus, is concentrated in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Kiev, though no exact figures exist. This is due to a lack of uniform criteria and to contrasting estimates of different organizations active in Russia (these estimates vary between one million to several million Jews). Outside the three centers, the potential of the extended Jewish population is concentrated in big cities. It is commonly assumed that most of the current *Olim* to Israel come from small cities, where assimilation is very high and Jewish life is undeveloped. If so, this *Aliyah* is not a typical reflection of the character of the main Jewish population in the CIS.

8 A Jew(ess) who voluntarily opted to join another religion is not personally eligible for *Aliyya*, according to the Law of Return.

The differences between the parts of the Jewish population, and their *Aliyah* tendencies, stem from the economic situation in the CIS. The standard of living and its quality in the smaller cities is lower than in the big cities, especially Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Therefore, the Jews, like the population as a whole, are inclined to migrate from the smaller cities to the bigger ones. Many who actually make *Aliyah* or inquire about the possibility of doing so in the near future are welfare cases, that is, people who find it hard to make a living under the conditions of the especially harsh market economy that has developed in the post-Soviet realm. This phenomenon is especially pronounced in the smaller cities, where the possibilities of earning a living are very limited. Thus, we found (by examining the questionnaires) that the *Olim* who reached Israel from Moscow had two main considerations: The first was to be reunited with their families – usually this refers to aged parents whose children were already in Israel; the second was to receive medical care that was unavailable in Russia. The vast majority of those who apply for emigration through the Jewish Agency are not halakhically Jewish (except those beyond retirement age). Their level of ethnic identification is low, and the religious and national considerations behind their desire to make *Aliyah* are entirely marginal.

Therefore, it can be asserted that even among the *Olim* who are not halakhically Jewish, at least two subgroups are identifiable, that differ with respect to their Jewish identity. The Jewish identity of these people, to whom the Law of Return⁹

9 *Law of Return*: Basic Israeli law stating that Israel constitutes a home for all Jews, and that Jews worldwide are eligible for Israeli citizenship. According to it, the term “Jew” refers to anybody with two Jewish parents, to anybody

applies, is primarily connected to the nature of their Jewish group of origin, which differ in spite of their basic common roots. The Jews of the former Soviet Union can be divided into three main groups, according to their attitude to the issue of national identity and according to their degree of integration in the non-Jewish host society and its culture:

1. The non-Ashkenazi communities – such as Georgian, Bukharian, and “Mountain” Jews. These Jews represented a mere 6% of the total Jewish population of the former Soviet Union, but their representation in the immigration waves of the 1970s and 1980s was approximately 40%, and very few of them have subsequently left Israel. The Caucasus region and Central Asia were annexed to Russia only in the nineteenth century, and the Jews lived there among peoples, both Christian and Moslem, with strong religious and national identities. In the 1920s, the Soviet authorities introduced a “special Eastern policy”, based on special tolerance towards the local religions in these regions, i.e., the repression of religion was slower and less aggressive there than in other Soviet regions. Thanks to this policy, the Jews of these regions managed to maintain their cultural, religious and Jewish heritage better than Jews in other parts of the Soviet Union. From this aspect, the Oriental Jewish communities resemble the Slavic converts, known since the beginning of Zionism as “Subbotniks”. These converts preserved their Jewish identity, and the residents of

with one Jewish parent, to anybody with one or more Jewish grandparents, to spouses of the aforementioned, and so forth.

several villages, in particular in the Voronezh region, were registered in the nationality clause in Soviet documents as Jews. Thousands of Subbotniks made *Aliyah* to Israel in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰

2. Ashkenazi Jews from regions annexed to the Soviet Union on the eve or at the end of World War Two: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bessarabia, Eastern Galicia, Western Belarus, Bukovina, and areas west of the Carpathian Mountains. Before being annexed to the Soviet Union, the Jews there enjoyed a large degree of cultural autonomy. Consequently, the Sovietization process was applied to them 20 years after it was applied to the other Jews of the Soviet Union. In 1941, the Nazis conquered these regions and annihilated most of the Jews. Those who survived the Holocaust maintained a strong national awareness, many spoke Yiddish, and some were fluent in Hebrew and had connections with the Zionist world. In these regions, informal Jewish activity was resumed immediately after the famous Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, signifying the end of the era of Stalinist persecution. Thus, for example, a Jewish national theatre was established in Vilna in 1956 – the first Jewish cultural institute to be established after the death of Stalin. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, these “new” Soviet Jews represented 12% of the total Jewish population in the Soviet Union. However, they constituted 47% of the total number of *Olim*.

10 The reader is invited to read the Rappaport Center Field Report written by Dr. Chernin and devoted to the issue of the Subbotniks.

3. “Genuine” Soviet Ashkenazi Jews, who had lived in the Soviet Union since its establishment. They represented 82% of the total Jewish population of the Soviet Union between the 1960s and the 1980s, but represented only 13% of the total number of *Olim*. What is the reason for this imbalance? In these regions, attempts to lead a Jewish social life met with a very severe response by the authorities. The secularization processes were more vigorous, and those who tried to maintain Jewish traditions and a religious lifestyle were persecuted by the authorities. Jews from this group responded to the authorities’ policy in several manners: The first group, constituting the majority, did not devote much thought to the matter of their Jewishness, though they did not take any practical steps to be rid of it, not even by changing the nationality clause in their Soviet documents. When these Jews decided to leave the Soviet Union, they preferred countries where the question of nationality was insignificant, such as the U.S.A., Canada and Australia. They were attracted by Western cosmopolitan democracy. The second largest group consisted of people who viewed their Jewishness as a burden, and tried to be rid of it by forging documents and by changing their first and family names to hide their Jewish sound, or by adopting the names of non-Jewish spouses. Following developments in the post-Soviet states, these Jews, who regarded their Jewishness negatively, were forced to reexamine their opinions in this matter. The third group was very small, and consisted of people who were proud of belonging to the Jewish people. The Six Day War, in 1967, reinforced their national consciousness and encouraged them to decide to make *Aliyah*.

Today, all these groups together constitute the Jewish population in the post-Soviet states, as well as the “Jewish Russian” population in the State of Israel and in the other countries that absorbed immigration from the CIS and the Baltic States. An understanding of the complexity of the ethnic and cultural situation of the Russian-speaking Jews will enable us to reach valid conclusions and to make wise policy decisions with regard to three matters: Jewish life in the post-Soviet states, integration of Russian Jews in the countries to which they emigrated, and response to the tendency of Russian Jews to assimilate within non-Jewish society, outside of Israel.

3. The Research Question and Methodology

Against the background presented above, the aims of this research project were formulated as follows:

1. To describe the characteristics of the main strata and groups in the extended Jewish population in the FSU, in the context of assimilative and post-assimilative (ethnic consolidation) tendencies.
2. To define the types and main components of the Jewish identity of post-Soviet Jews and their families in the first, second and third generations, and the hierarchy of these components, taking into account developments with regard to birth rate, mortality, and immigration and assimilation processes.

Consequently, the direct research tasks included the following points:

- Definition of criteria and parameters of Jewish identity and of the extent of assimilation under post-Soviet conditions.

- Discovery of cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements in the ethnic identity of different strata of post-Soviet Jewry. This refers both to that part of post-Soviet Jewry actively involved in Jewish life, as well as to the part that has been significantly assimilated and acculturated to the general non-Jewish society.
- Construction of a hierarchy of priorities held by the Jewish population in general, and by its various groups in particular, in choosing a specific religion, including the emotional and cognitive attitude of the Jewish population to its national religion.
- Evaluation of the extent of knowledge of Yiddish and of written Hebrew among the Jewish population; understanding the importance of the national language as an element of Jewish ethnicity.
- Evaluation of ethnic purposes and preferences with regard to marriage (between Jews, mixed marriages), and considerations in such choices.
- Definition of the ethnic composition of the Jews' immediate environment – family network, circle of close friends, casual friends, acquaintances. The existence of psychological intentions when choosing partners for communication from the same ethnic group, and the extent of the influence of this micro-environment on ethnic awareness.
- Familiarization with the cognitive and emotional attitude of the subjects of the survey towards the State of Israel, including its place in their national awareness, plans for making *Aliyah*, and level of personal identification with the Land of Israel.

The study commenced in March 2003, using a number of research methods:

- (1) Participating observation.
- (2) Personal interviews. On the basis of the results of these interviews, a standard questionnaire was compiled that was presented to 470 respondents from five cities in Russia and Ukraine who identify with the Jewish community to some extent. The respondents were chosen from two capital cities (Kiev and Moscow) and from three administrative centers (Vladimir, Samara, and Zaporizhia).
- (3) Interviews with experts: leaders of Jewish organizations, heads of institutions, professional Jewish community activists as well as *Shlichim* [representatives] of the Jewish Agency and of other Jewish organizations operating in various regions in Russia, Ukraine and other CIS states, as well as in the Baltic region.¹¹

11 Among the experts interviewed were Eugene Satanovsky (President of the Russian Jewish Congress), Mikhail Chlenov (one of the chairmen of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress), Pinchas Goldschmidt (President of the Rabbinical Court in Russia), Anatoly Pinsky (Executive Vice-President of the Congress of the Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations in Russia), Grigory Kotlyar (Head of the Union of Religious Congregations of Modern Judaism in Russia, the central body of the Reform Movement), Alexander Frankel (Director of the Saint Petersburg Jewish Community Center), Mikhail Bunimovich (Manager of the Jewish School in Kazan), Josef Zissels (Chairman of the Congress of National Communities of Ukraine and Acting Vice-President of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress), Leonid Finberg (Manager of the Institute of Judaica in Kiev), Illya Levitas (President of the Jewish Council of Ukraine), Y. D. Bleich (Chief Rabbi of Ukraine), Moshe Azman (Chief Rabbi of Kiev), and many others

The interviewees talked about the situation of the Jewish population in the following cities and regions: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Samara, Saratov, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Birobizhan, Tomsk, Petrozavodsk, Chelyabinsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Vladimir, Ryazan, Tula, Rostov, Pyatigorsk, Nalchik, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, Zaporizhia, as well as several cities in Belarus and Latvia. The purpose of the interviews was to define the main forms of ethnic identity in the Jewish population in these places, and the processes of ethnic identity developing there.

- (4) Examination and analysis of documents of the Jewish Agency and of the Jewish organizations in Russia and Ukraine.



Chapter 1: Major Models of Jewish Ethnic Identity in the Former Soviet Union

The post-Soviet period in the history of Eastern European Jewry is characterized by a number of sometimes-contradictory processes and trends. As a result, the ethnic identity of the Jews of the post-Soviet states is not uniform, and cannot be summed up by a single definition. Moreover, in the course of the years since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, during which most of its Jews have emigrated to Israel and the West, fundamental changes have also taken place in the self-awareness of the Jews remaining in the post-Soviet states. New groups have emerged that have no parallel in previous periods in the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe. During our research, we managed to identify and define the following types of Jewish ethnic identity:

1. Traditional Soviet Jewish Identity

This type of Jewish identity developed from the traditional Eastern European Ashkenazi identity, under the conditions of the Soviet regime. These are its characteristics:

- a. Attribution of high importance to registering their Jewish nationality (ethnic affiliation) in official documents;
- b. No significant influence of religion on their Jewish identity (beyond a negative attitude to conversion to a non-Jewish religion);
- c. The Yiddish language and the remnants of its culture play a major role as symbols of ethnic identity;

Yiddish was perceived by the older age groups as part of their childhood socialization processes, and remains the spoken language of some of the older Jews (in spite of the fact that the number of native Yiddish speakers has greatly diminished since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, due to both emigration and death). Today, there are no native Yiddish speakers in the intermediate and younger age groups, though many still recall the occasional expression or word. These remnants of Yiddish have also been naturally absorbed into daily life from older family members, and continue to constitute a significant element in this type of Jewish identity.

This Jewish identity type is typical primarily of the elderly. It negates the idea of the centrality of the State of Israel, although it is not necessarily anti-Zionist. During the decades of Soviet history, this Jewish identity type gradually distanced itself from the traditional Eastern European Jewish identity type, in conjunction with the development of cultural and linguistic assimilation. Today, due to the death of the members of the older age groups, the importance of this Jewish identity type has weakened. However, the high average age of the entire Jewish population, especially of its ethnic nucleus, obliges us to acknowledge the influence of this identity type in the post-

Soviet states. It should be noted that the Soviet institutions of Yiddish culture have ceased to exist. For example, the literary periodical, *Sovyetish Heymland*, was closed in the early 1990s, as was *Di Yidishe Gas*. The standard of the Jewish theater is very poor, and the use of Yiddish is limited to song and bilingual jokes. Most of the Yiddish writers have either made *Aliyah* or died. Nevertheless, the *Birobidzhaner Stern* newspaper is still published in Birobizhan, and has a weekly page in Yiddish. Three Yiddish writers from the Soviet generation are still active – Josef Burg in Chernivtsi (Czernowitz), Zisi Weitzman in Samara, and Alexander Beiderman in Odessa – as well as one bilingual poet (Belorussian and Yiddish), Felix Khaymovich.

2. Hebrew Jewish Identity

This identity type was imported into the post-Soviet region through the cultural and educational activity of Israeli elements, and is partly influenced by local Zionist frameworks. The roots of this identity type can be identified in the activity of the few underground Zionist groups in the Soviet Union back in the 1970s and 1980s. This found expression, for example, in the population census held in the Soviet Union in 1989, when several activists of the informal Jewish movement declared that their native language was Hebrew and that their national affiliation was – “Israeli”.

The main ethno-identity symbols of this identity type are the State of Israel and the Hebrew language, and it is characteristic of members of the younger and intermediate age groups. In contrast to the traditional Soviet Jewish identity type, the Hebrew Jewish identity type has vigorous support from outside the borders of the former Soviet Union. However, it is not the leading identity

type within the FSU, due both to mass *Aliyah* from among its ranks, as well as to a pronounced demographic imbalance among post-Soviet Jewry, most of whose members typically belong to the older age groups.

This identity type is not identical to the Israeli Jewish identity type discussed below. Rather, it is its Diaspora reflection. Under the conditions of the CIS, the Hebrew language is not acquired at home, but is learned at school and in courses, and usually does not become the vehicle of communication of the local Jews. During our research, it emerged that the prevalence of the Hebrew Jewish identity type in the CIS has increased significantly in recent years. This is due to the return to the CIS of tens of thousands of *Olim* who lived in Israel for ten years, or even more, and whose children were educated, and sometimes even born, in Israel. The *Yordim* in the CIS include in their ranks a few adult (non-Russian) *Sabras*, whose native language is, of course, Hebrew. An additional factor reinforcing this Hebrew Jewish identity type is the return to the CIS of youth who participated in the *Naale* program [an educational program where youth of high school age make *Aliyah* before their parents]. Many of the Hebrew language teachers, youth leaders and workers in the Israeli organizations in the CIS belong to either the *Yordim* group or the *Naale* group. There is not much self-organization among this identity type. In fact, such organizational activity is limited to the Israeli citizens' club in Moscow, *Darkon*, whose activity was revived in early 2006, after a long break. In contrast to the vast majority of Jewish entities in the CIS, whose language of activity is only Russian, this club operates in both Russian and Hebrew.

3. Traditional Identity of the Oriental Jewish Communities

The Oriental Jewish communities living in the CIS (the Bukharan, Caucasian and Georgian Jews) are characterized by a low degree of assimilation and by a relatively strong degree of daily religiosity. The Jews of Bukhara and the Caucasus region speak Jewish languages that are unique to them and that are well-preserved in the intermediate age groups and, partly, even among the young. Their ethnic identity is discernible at several levels – their particular Jewish sub-ethnic identification, their Russian Jewish identification, and their identification with the Jewish People in general. They are characterized by high levels of communal and ethnic solidarity.

Due to the mass migration of the Oriental Jewish communities from their traditional places of residence to the big cities of Russia – in particular, to Moscow and Saint Petersburg – they turned from a marginal, even exotic, element into a very major one in these key communities. Their children make up a high percentage of the students in the Jewish schools in Moscow (for example, in the Lipman School, considered to be one of the best Jewish schools in the Russian capital); they, apparently, are the main regular customers of the *Kosher*¹² butchers (e.g., the shop affiliated with the *Habad*¹³ Synagogue, on Bolshaya Bronnaya Street); on Jewish holidays, members of the Oriental Jewish communities (from Georgia and from the Caucasian area) are the main participants in the services at the central synagogue

12 *Kosher*: Food fit for eating according to Jewish dietary laws.

13 *Habad*: Mystical Jewish movement founded in Poland in the eighteenth century by Zalman Shneor (the Baal Shem-Tov)

in Moscow (on Upper Spasoglinishchevsky Lane), including the service held in the main hall where worship is conducted according to *Nusach Ashkenaz* [the Ashkenazic prayer rite], even though there are two other little prayer halls where worship is conducted simultaneously according to *Nusach Eidot Hamizrach* [the prayer rite of the Oriental Jewish communities]; the activity of religious Jewish organizations in both Moscow and Saint Petersburg is conducted partly in the Georgian language (newspapers, translated *Siddurs*¹⁴, and so forth) and sometimes even in Caucasian Judeo-Tat. Yiddish, which until the late 1980s was one of the two standard languages used in synagogues (together with Russian), has now been replaced by Georgian.

The Caucasian and Georgian Jews make the largest donations to the main synagogues in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. It is of note that the big *Habad* synagogue and cultural center in Moscow (in the Marina Roshcha neighborhood) was built and substantially supported by the Israeli businessman Lev Leviev, who ethnically is a member of the Bukharan community. At the same time, the presence of the Oriental Jewish communities is not at all felt in the reform synagogues, or in organizations such as *Hillel* [organization for Jewish students in the Diaspora].

4. Separatist Ethnic Identity

This identity type is common among some descendants of the non-Ashkenazi Jewish communities in the CIS. It is characterized by the desire to emphasize the community's cultural and ethnic uniqueness, even going so far as to deny that it is a part of the Jewish people. Intellectuals who develop this identity type utilize

14 *Siddur*: Jewish ritual prayer book.

a new ethnic myth, whose main purpose, in the Soviet era, was to free the members of the community from the discrimination that was the lot of the Jewish population as a whole. At this point, this identity type is common among the Karaites in the CIS and also, to a lesser extent, among members of the Krymchak¹⁵ community. In the recent past, it was also held by the elite of the Caucasian Jewish community, and was aggressively supported by the Soviet authorities, who tried to instill into the consciousness of the Jews of the Caucasus the idea that they were not part of the Jewish people, but, rather, were part of another distinct people – the Tats, from whom they differed in religion but not in nationality. Although the sphere of influence of this separatist ethnic identity type has contracted, it has not yet completely died out in the CIS, and has adherents in spite of the changed situation (the disintegration of the Soviet Union, mass *Aliyah*, the possibility to receive material aid from Jewish organizations, first signs of some of its members becoming newly religiously observant, and so forth).

5. Neo-Yiddishism

This identity type can be viewed as a continuation of the traditional Soviet Jewish identity type, since both view Yiddish and its culture as symbols of nationality and identity. However, in contrast to most members of the Soviet Jewish identity group, the partisans of the Neo-Yiddishist identity model belong to the intermediate and younger age group, within which it is

15 Krymchaks are Rabbanite Jews speaking a Turcic Jewish dialect (the Krymchak language) and residing originally in the Crimean peninsula.

more widespread than might be expected. Its advocates prefer to regard themselves as the heirs of secular Ashkenazi Jewish culture as a whole, and not as the heirs of Soviet Jewish culture. This identity model is largely influenced by the ideology of modern Yiddishist movements in the West, and in particular in the U.S.A. (such as *Yugntruf*). It can be viewed as an attempt to create a new secular Diaspora Jewish identity, so as to deal with the danger of assimilation without need to have recourse to Zionism or to lead an Orthodox religious life. Moreover, Yiddish culture is perceived as a deep-rooted local Jewish culture, not imported from Israel.

The hard core of neo-Yiddishism numbers several dozen people – in Saint Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev. They are mostly intellectuals who have studied or are studying Yiddish and who are trying to employ it as a spoken language and for cultural purposes. In the course of our research, we interviewed ten young people in their twenties who are fluent in Yiddish, even though they did not acquire its rudiments at home.

A translators' circle is active in Saint Petersburg that translates masterpieces of Yiddish literature into Russian. Its unofficial leader is the poet, Valery Dimshits, director of the local center for Judaic studies, "Saint Petersburg Judaica". His Yiddishist activity is not limited to Yiddish language and literature. Thus, for example, in the summer of 2003, he organized an exhibition, "Red Zion", devoted to the Jewish agricultural colonies in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, "when Yiddish was Yiddish", as the organizers emphasized. Some members of the translators' circle write original poetry in Yiddish, and one of them – Yisroyl (Sergey) Nekrasov – has published his works in the electronic periodical, "*Der Bavebter Yid*", which is edited in

New York, and has gained a reputation among Yiddish poetry lovers in the West and in Israel.

The center of neo-Yiddishist activity in Russia is in Saint Petersburg. The community center there is now preparing the first issue of a new bilingual literary periodical (in Yiddish and Russian), called *Der Nayer Fraynd* – signifying it as the successor of *Der Fraynd*, which appeared in Saint Petersburg in the nineteenth century. The editor, Yisroyl Nekrasov, 30+, has a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, and learned Yiddish on his own.

There is also neo-Yiddishist activity in Moscow, where we came upon at least three circles of neo-Yiddishist young people, in the course of our research. The most important – *Yiddish Club* – operates within the framework of the *Hillel* students' club.

However, the influence of Neo-Yiddishism extends beyond the limits of these small organized circles. Besides the hard core, there exists quite a large “extended neo-Yiddishist population” that advocates the idea of Ashkenazi Jewish uniqueness, sometimes going so far as to manifest Ashkenazi ethnic separatism in face of the many Oriental Jews and Israelis arriving of late in the Russian capital cities. One frequently hears utterances by them, such as “Israelis are not like Jews” and “The Jew is a creature of the Diaspora”. Though the “inactive” neo-Yiddishists do not study Yiddish or use it, they regard these attempts with empathy, and view Yiddish and the unique culture of Ashkenazi Jewry as being an important, even central, ethnic symbol.

One of the important manifestations of neo-Yiddishism is interest in *Klezmer*¹⁶ music, which has also been defined as

16 *Klezmer music*: Expressive Jewish folk music originating in Eastern Europe, whose repertoire is mainly dance songs for weddings and other

“musical Yiddishism”. Two such troupes were recently founded in Moscow (all the players are in their twenties), and other troupes are active in Kiev, Minsk and additional cities. The important center of “musical Yiddishism” in the CIS is in Kiev, where a special “*Klezmer Fest*” is held.

In the course of our research, we found that there is also neo-Yiddishist activity in Minsk, Tula, Yaroslavl and Saratov – as well as in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Kiev.

Anti-Zionism can be identified among many neo-Yiddishists. Some ostentatiously refuse to learn Hebrew. Dimitri Farber, 22, who is active in the Moscow “Yiddish club”, expressed himself in typical fashion in Yiddish: “I only recently started to relate normally to the State of Israel. Before, I could not tolerate it”. Interestingly, Farber and many other neo-Yiddishists support the State of Israel without reservation in its struggle against the Arabs. However, they cannot accept the present cultural and linguistic character of the Jewish State.

Alexander Frankel, manager of the Jewish Community Center in Saint Petersburg, said in a private conversation: “We are definitely patriots of the Jewish Diaspora. Simply, we do not shout it out loud, so as not to get into quarrels and lose the support of certain foreign organizations”.

6. Ultra-Orthodox Jewry

Small but highly influential communities of non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jews, leading a devout religious lifestyle, have sprung up in the CIS and the Baltic states in the last fifteen years. These

celebrations. The lyrics, accompanied by the violin, flute, clarinet and other wind instruments, are typically in Yiddish.

communities are not a continuation of the few ultra-Orthodox communities that survived Communist suppression. Rather, they are composed of foreign citizens living in the territories of the former Soviet Union, as well as newly religious local Jews, many of whom were educated in religious educational institutes that operate in the CIS with foreign funding. The model for these communities is existing ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and worldwide, and one of their main features is interest in Yiddish and a desire to make it their spoken language, as a kind of opposition to Hebrew, which is perceived in these circles as a “Zionist language”. As noted, the vast majority of these new ultra-Orthodox are newly religious Jews who did not speak Yiddish in their childhood. Therefore, in practice, Yiddish is not their spoken language but, rather, a type of protest.

Worship in the synagogues of the ultra-Orthodox Jews is conducted according to the Ashkenazi pronunciation (though frequently with mistakes), not the modern Israeli pronunciation learned in the *Ulpans* and in the Jewish schools. On the other hand, the synagogues of the ultra-Orthodox Oriental Jews use both the Sephardic Israeli pronunciation and what remains of their own special pronunciation, and sometimes even the Ashkenazi pronunciation.

There is a struggle within the ultra-Orthodox population between two large rival communities: *Habad* followers and “Lithuanians”.¹⁷ Both have established parallel religious systems in most cities in the CIS—synagogues, schools, *Yeshivas*¹⁸, *Kashrut*

17 Non-Hassidic ultra-Orthodox Jews are commonly termed “Lithuanians”, since it was in 18th and 19th century Lithuania that resistance to Hasidism was most powerful.

18 *Yeshiva*: Jewish institution devoted to study of religious texts.

services, matchmaking services, and so forth. The severe rivalry between them often degenerates into open hostility, in particular at the leadership level. Nevertheless, this rivalry is hardly felt among the rank-and-file ultra-Orthodox, who even cooperate in certain matters. Examples are the Perovo community and the Steinsaltz Center in Moscow.

The term “extended community” can be used also in reference to the ultra-Orthodox communities, because the hard core is surrounded by a much larger peripheral population, which is influenced by it. Many young and middle aged Jews are at different stages of becoming religious and, in the conditions prevailing in the CIS, this process is funded by the religious organizations. *Habad* members are especially active in this field. The *Habad* schools have a certain prestige in the provincial centers (for example, in Yekaterinburg). However, in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the lion's share of students attending ultra-Orthodox educational institutions come from the weaker social strata, and can even be defined as welfare cases (this phenomenon is especially marked compared with the non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish schools – such as the Lipman School in Moscow – and compared with the prestigious Russian schools, the majority of whose pupils are Jewish – such as the Humanities High School and School Number 57 in Moscow). Thus, for example, almost all the students at the small *Habad Yeshiva* in Saint Petersburg are children of mixed marriages who are not halakhically Jewish. Their families are very poor, and many were even homeless before they joined the *Yeshiva*. Understandably, under the influence of such educational institutions, these children rapidly adopt the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle.

Most members of the ultra-Orthodox communities are not interested in making *Aliyah*, and some are anti-Zionist. A prominent example of this was observed in the first convention of *Neturei Karta*¹⁹ adherents, held in Moscow at the end of December 2005 at the Rabbi Zelikman's Torah Center. Some thirty people participated in the convention, including Jewish businessmen who donate money for *Neturei Karta* activity in Russia.

The question of *giyyur*²⁰ is one of the most pressing problems of the Jews of the CIS. However, the rabbis of the ultra-Orthodox communities are very strict, and do not convert more than several tens applicants each year. Naturally, the ultra-Orthodox community is mainly active among people defined as Jews according to *Halakha* (although there are some exceptions). Accordingly, the Jewish population is divided into “Jewish by *Halakha*” and “mixed”. Thus, for example, *Habad* established a large community center in the city of Yekaterinburg, which is active mainly among Jews by *Halakha*, while the Jewish Agency and the Joint are active among the mixed community.

7. Religious Zionist Identity

This identity type is rare in the CIS. The local religious Zionist organization, *Mahanayim*, which started out as an underground organization, has disappeared, after all its members made *Aliyah* in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The only remaining religious Zionist center is in Ukraine – the Zionist Academy in Kiev,

19 *Neturei Karta*: Ultra-Orthodox movement that rejects Zionism

20 *Giyyur*: Conversion to Judaism.

established by the Jewish Agency, and headed by Rabbi Zeev Mashkov. It has a certain influence outside the borders of Ukraine, too, thanks to its journal, *Zemlia pod Nogami* (“The Soil under our Feet”). The Steinsaltz Center, which is active in Russia, is close in spirit to religious Zionism. However, the Zionist *Kollel*²¹ headed by Rabbi Ushavayev, established in Moscow with the support of the Jewish Agency, does not exist except on paper.

8. Non-Orthodox Religious Identity

A new phenomenon in the CIS is non-Orthodox religious Jewry, which began in the *Perestroika* era. The Conservative Movement has little influence (except in the city of Chernivtsi in Ukraine, where it has a school). On the other hand, the Reform Movement, which is organized under the name *Orasir*, is very widespread in the cities of the CIS, including in the remote administrative centers in Siberia (such as Tyumen). It is mainly active among the young, who have no religious tradition at all and treat Reform Judaism as a natural, legitimate form of Judaism. At the same time, it is hard to view the non-Orthodox stream of Judaism in the CIS as an identity type with clear, defined characteristics, because it is still in the development stage. Its leaders perceive its significance in the CIS as representing “the last barrier before converting to Christianity”, or as representing “the first stage in becoming religious”. The only Jewish youth movement in the CIS that openly defines itself as Zionist, *Netzer* (“Reform Zionist Youth”), belongs to the Reform Movement. Most of its members are non-Jewish according to traditional *Halakha*. From conversations with *Netzer* youth leaders it seems that many

21 *Kollel*: An advanced Yeshiva for men, usually married.

are unsure if they intend to remain in the Reform Movement, and that they are interested in making *Aliyah* and in following a religious Zionist (moderate Orthodox) lifestyle as it exists in Israel.

9. Spiritual Judaism

This identity type is also a new phenomenon. We found that it is only widespread in the metropolitan cities, in particular in Saint Petersburg, among several dozen intellectuals of Jewish and non-Jewish origins (Many members of this identity type are not Jewish by birth. Neither are they eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return, since they can not prove that at least one of their grandparents was Jewish). The members of this identity type have no formal organizational framework. They do not accept the authority of the ultra-Orthodox leadership nor belong to any of the organizational frameworks of the existing communities. However, they do not differ substantially with regard to attitudes towards *Halakha*, observance of the Sabbath, *Kashrut* and the laws of family purity, worship, and so forth. The “spiritual Jews” stress the difference between **Israel of above** and **Israel of below**, and view religion and morals as the essence of Judaism, with nationality taking second place. They are not anti-Zionist. However, they totally reject practical Zionism and *Aliyah* as a religious and national duty.

The leader of the spiritual Jews in Saint Petersburg is Alexander Lvov, who is well known to Jewish ethnographic researchers. Despite having no organizational framework, it may be said that spiritual Judaism does exert influence upon an “extended population”.

10. Subbotniks

Many persons descended from 18th and 19th century converts to Judaism, generally known as “Subbotniks”, live in the CIS, especially in Russia, and some have made *Aliyah*. Their exact number is unknown, but it apparently totals thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands. Neither their status according to *Halakha*, nor their eligibility for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return, is completely clear. Some of their forefathers underwent formal conversion to Judaism while others “Judaized” – that is, adopted a Jewish way of life. So far, data have been collected on several concentrations of Subbotniks in the CIS:

- a. After some of its residents made *Aliyah*, there now remain in the rural settlement of Vysoky, in the region of Voronezh, approximately 1,000 Subbotniks who define themselves as Jews, even though they are registered as Russians. Some 800 submitted requests to make *Aliyah*, but were rejected by the Israeli Embassy. There is an active Orthodox synagogue in the village.
- b. There is a synagogue in the city of Volgograd that, until recently, was maintained by a group of local Subbotniks – until it was taken over by a *Habad* Shali’ach [representative] who reached the city. However, the Subbotniks still constitute a significant factor in the local religious community.
- c. There is a synagogue in the city of Birobizhan that, alongside the *Habad* synagogue, has been used since the end of the Soviet period by Subbotniks, who reached the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (region) from the Volga area in the 1940s, originally settling in a village by the name of Stalindorf. The members of *Habad* and some local Jews

- claim the Subbotniks are not Jews, but rather Christians who observe the Sabbath.
- d. In the course of the last decade, the community of Subbotniks in the large village of Privolnoye, in Azerbaijan, ceased to exist. Sixty six percent of the village's residents were Karaite Subbotniks (who did not accept the Oral Law²²), and 33% were Rabbanite Subbotniks. Both communities left the village, following the pressure put on the entire Russian-speaking population in Azerbaijan. The Rabbanite Subbotniks from Privolnoye are dispersed in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, and in several administrative centers in Russia.
 - e. A group of Ukrainian-speaking Subbotniks, who lived until the late 1980s in the Crimea, has ceased to exist. Its members were registered as Jews, and many of the young people have married Ashkenazi Jews. The vast majority made *Aliyah* in the 1990s.

In late 2003 and in the years 2004 and 2005, extensive field work was conducted to locate groups of Subbotniks still existing in Russia. Its purpose was to clarify the extent to which they observed Jewish traditions or had assimilated into the Christian majority, and to initiate action to reinforce their Jewish identity and to put a stop to their assimilation. The findings of this survey are published separately (see, *The Subbotniks*, by Velvl Chernin, published by the Rappaport Center).

22 *Oral Law*: Orally transmitted Jewish traditions and laws.

11. Assimilative Identity

Many Jews and children of mixed marriages have been fully absorbed into Russian culture and society. Nevertheless, they still retain consciousness of their unique origin. Naturally, members of this Jewish identity type have no special organizational frameworks, although they themselves are numerous and very influential. A characteristic utterance by members of this identity type is, "I'm aware I belong to the Jewish people, but I don't understand why I have to be in touch with someone only because he, too, is Jewish". Others formulate their essentially anti-Zionist attitude with the help of the slogan, "Jews are the intelligentsia of Russia".

12. "Christianizers"

Many Jews and children of mixed marriages in the CIS, especially in Russia, try to combine their Jewish consciousness with different forms of Christianity, sometimes even observing the rituals of both religions. There are also organized groups, such as "Jews for Jesus". The subject has not yet been researched. Therefore, at this stage, we are forced to content ourselves with determining that the phenomenon indeed exists, is widespread, and is also penetrating organized Jewish activity in different ways.

The "return to one's roots" typical of present-day Russians finds expression among some Russians in an ostentatious return to the Russian Orthodox Church. This phenomenon does not go unnoticed by the Jewish and half-Jewish youngsters who have daily contact with Russians. For example, it should be noted that in all the summer camps held by the Jewish organizations, the leaders must deal with the problem created by the fact that many children wear crosses, as do many other Russians their age.

Sometimes, the leaders' demands to remove these crosses lead to open conflict. This incident, which took place at a summer camp held by the Jewish Agency in the central region of European Russia in summer, 2005, is typical: On the eve of *Tisha B'Av*²³, the children were given talks on the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, and then were asked to draw it. To the leaders' amazement, many of these drawings contained crosses. When asked why they added them, the children explained that they were not at all aware of the fact that the cross was not a Jewish symbol – they thought it was the symbol of all religions. It should be noted that the Temple [of Jerusalem] is called “*khram*” in Russian, the same word that indicates “church”.

13. Post-Assimilative Identity

The post-assimilative phenomenon is quite widespread, even if it is difficult to estimate its exact dimensions. In every Jewish group (with the exception, perhaps, of clubs for the aged), whether religious or secular, Zionist or non-Zionist, there are many young people who did not learn about their connection to Judaism at home, and discovered it on their own or under the influence of the activity of Jewish organizations. Their Jewish identity can be defined as an acquired one. These Jews undoubtedly constitute a potential for the development of an attachment to Jewish community and Jewish life frameworks. The phenomenon is widespread, first and foremost, among the young. The children and youngsters who participate in any Jewish activity become a factor that reinforces the Jewish identity of their parents, or

23 *Tisha B'Av* (Hebrew for “Ninth of the Jewish month of Av”): Jewish fast day, mourning the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem.

even of their grandparents. A typical example of this potential emerges from an interview with a 57-year-old woman from Yekaterinburg, whose mother was Jewish and father Russian, who was married to a non-Jew, and whose 12-year-old granddaughter was attending a *Habad* school. Although only the 12-year-old girl's maternal great-grandmother was a full ethnic Jew, she (the girl) was nevertheless Jewish according to *Halakha*.²⁴ The 57-year-old woman, who was not educated as a Jew and who concealed her Jewishness for most of her life, says: "I am not familiar with the Jewish religion and customs. But Oxana (my granddaughter) comes home from school and teaches me. You see, she told me about *Yom Kippur*²⁵ not long ago. I had not even heard of it before".

14. The Israeli *Yordim*²⁶

The Israeli *Yordim* can be viewed as belonging to the ethnic core of the extended Jewish community. At first, the matter of the Israeli *Yordim* in the CIS seemed marginal to us. However, in the course of our research, the true dimensions of the phenomenon and the extent of its influence on the Jewish population in the former Soviet Union became apparent. The research questionnaires were not designed for such a population and our research, as an

24 According to halakha, Jewishness is matrilineal, and is not contingent upon subjective belief or religious observance.

25 *Yom Kippur* (Hebrew for "Day of Atonement"): The most important Jewish fast day, when Jews atone for their sins. Usually falls in September or October.

26 *Yordim* (Hebrew for "people who descend"): Denoting Jewish Israelis who emigrate from Israel.

organized survey with defined goals, was not intended to deal with Jews defined as *Yordim*. Therefore, we can not talk of a representative sample in connection with this group. At the same time, we collected a large amount of material on it in the course of our field work (dozens of people were interviewed, among other things), which presents an additional perspective on the character of the current Jewish population in the former Soviet Union and on the possibilities for its ethnic development.

First, we will relate to the matter of numbers. According to the most careful estimates, some 30,000 Jews with Israeli citizenship live in Moscow alone. Accordingly, they represent over a tenth of the total Jewish population in the Russian capital, where the largest Jewish community in the whole post-Soviet states is concentrated. Thousands more Israelis live in Saint Petersburg and Kiev. To these must be added the small groups and individuals holding Israeli citizenship who live in most of the populated areas of the former Soviet Union where there are Jews.

***Yordim* Subgroups and Their Status**

The status of the Israelis living in the CIS is not uniform. They can be divided into several typical subgroups:

- a. The largest subgroup, numerically, consists of Jews born in the former Soviet Union (and their *Sabra* children) who, as of the mid-1990s, made *Aliyah* to Israel, returning to Russia several years later. They kept their Russian citizenship, and are considered Russian citizens for all intents and purposes, even though they have also kept their Israeli citizenship.
- b. The second-largest subgroup apparently consists of more veteran *Olim* from the Soviet Union (including their *Sabra*

children and, at times, their Israeli spouses), who were stripped of their Russian citizenship, in accordance with Soviet law at the time, and who returned to Russia as Israeli citizens with all that implied (including the need to receive a visa, to register and to comply with the other bureaucratic arrangements applying to foreigners entering Russia). Some of the representatives of this subgroup put up a tough fight to receive Russian citizenship, based on the fact that they or their parents used to be citizens of the Soviet Union. Others continue to be considered Israeli citizens residing permanently in Russia without local citizenship.

- c. *Naale* children. We include in this subgroup youngsters who arrived in Israel without their parents, within the setting of various educational programs organized by the Jewish Agency – *Naale*, *Selah*, and the like. Some returned to the CIS upon completing their high school studies, without receiving Israeli citizenship. However, most received Israeli citizenship, served in the Israel Defense Army (IDF), and even worked in Israel for some time and/or went on to university after completing their military service, and only subsequently returned to Russia.
- d. Businessmen, most born in the former Soviet Union and some *Sabras*. Representatives of this subgroup live on the Moscow (or some other city in the CIS) – Ben-Gurion Airport line. Some have family in Israel and the vast majority view themselves as *Yordim*.
- e. Workers at the various Jewish institutions. Besides the official representatives of the State of Israel, whose official position obliges them to reside in the CIS (embassy and El-Al workers, *Shlichim* of the Jewish Agency, teachers, young

religious women doing *Sherut Le'umi*,²⁷ and so forth), this subgroup includes the staff of the (mostly religious) Jewish institutions, who are mostly Israeli citizens born in the Soviet Union, *Sabras* and workers born in other countries.

Cultural Identity Characteristics of the Israeli *Yordim* Group

The vast majority of the representatives of this group typically have a strong connection to the State of Israel, expressed by:

1. Family and social ties in Israel. Most visit Israel regularly or, at least, do not want to “break off relations”.
2. Fluency in spoken Hebrew (in some cases, it is the main spoken language in the family).
3. More traditional lifestyle compared to most local Jews (observance of Jewish rites of passage, such as circumcision, religious wedding ceremonies, giving Jewish names to children born in Russia, and so forth).

The Role of the Israeli *Yordim* in the Local Population

The Israeli *Yordim* constitute a very substantial and active element in the local Jewish communities and among the workers at the various Jewish institutions. By way of example, here are several familiar figures from the Moscow Jewish community, representing only part of a long list:

1. Yitzhak Kogan, rabbi of the *Habad* synagogue on Bronnaya Street.

27 *Sherut Le'umi* (Hebrew for “national service”): National service done by some young religious women, instead of compulsory military service, usually consisting of assistance in hospitals, educational work, and the like.

2. Rabbi David Ushavayev, Deputy Presiding Judge of the Rabbinical Court of Russia (KEROOR).
3. Uri Spassky, manager of the *Habad* House of Study and *Giyur Ulpan* in the Marina Roscha neighborhood.
4. Baruch Gurin, editor of the Jewish periodical, *Lechayim*.
5. Evgenia Malkina, manager of the Jewish Agency youth club in Moscow.

The members of this group prefer Jewish schools to general ones. This is due to the fact that their children were born or grew up in Israel and often do not know Russian well and thus have difficulty fitting into non-Jewish society. A large number of the students at the Jewish schools, both religious and non-religious, are the children of *Yordim*. Many of the *Yordim* view their stay in Russia as temporary, and say they left Israel for family and financial reasons, and not for want of national identification.

The Attitude of the Israeli Establishment to the Phenomenon

Until recently, the Israeli establishment tried to ignore the phenomenon, and even treated it negatively. Thus, for example, the Education Department of the Jewish Agency was prohibited to employ *Yordim* as local teachers. This was the rule even though many of the local workers of the Jewish Agency office in Moscow belonged to that group (for example, the guards and most of the workers in the Accounting Department). In the last two years, the attitude of the Israeli establishment has become “understanding and sympathetic”, since it really has no alternative. The derogatory term, *Yordim*, has been replaced by neutral terms, such as “Israelis living abroad” or “returners”. However, no activity is conducted

among this population to preserve its command of the Hebrew language and its ties to Israel (the only educational institution in Moscow where Hebrew is the language of instruction is the *Habad* Talmud Torah School). Even the opening of the *Darkon* club was not the fruit of an official Israeli initiative.

The *Yordim* are an integral part of the hard ethnic core of CIS Jewry. Their ties to Israel, to Judaism and to the Hebrew language are substantive, and constitute an important element in their lifestyle. The very fact that they tried to settle in Israel (and some of their younger members were even born there) reflects their Jewish identity. From the incomplete data in our possession, it transpires that the average age of the *Yordim* is lower than that of the permanent ethnic nucleus of CIS Jewry. There are two possible scenarios for their future in the CIS:

1. If conditions worsen, the *Yordim* will be the first to leave the CIS and to return to Israel.
2. If the Jewish communities in Russia continue to develop uneventfully, the *Yordim* will, in time, constitute a large, influential part of the local Jewish communities.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop special projects designed to preserve and strengthen the Israeli and the Jewish identity of this population.



Chapter 2: The Extended Jewish Population

1. Social and Demographic Aspects of Assimilation and of Maintenance of Jewish Identity

Over the decades following World War Two, the Jewish population in the Soviet Union, and in the states that came into being on its ruins, has steadily dwindled – from 2.3 million in 1959, to 1.5 million in 1989, and to approximately 544,000 in 1999. Experts give four main factors for this decrease (see, Gidwitz, 1999; Kupovetsky, 2000 [in Hebrew]; Sinel'nikov, 1994 [in Russian]; Tolts, 2001, 2003):

- a. A low birth rate.
- b. A large proportion of older people, leading to a high death rate.
- c. Migration.
- d. Assimilation.

The negative social and demographic outcome of the first three factors is clear. However, the directions and effects of the fourth factor are not unequivocal. Traditionally, demography experts note two processes, each with a different content, in the definition of “Jewish assimilation”:

1. Jewish identity is not preserved among the children of mixed marriages.
2. Loss of cultural and national identity by ethnic Jews, due to acculturation to a foreign ethnic environment.

As noted, for a number of reasons, the mass acculturation of the Jews of the Soviet Union to the Russian environment did not lead to their abandoning their Jewish identity. Rather, it led to the shaping of a special model of the Soviet Jewish identity type (Some researchers go so far as to claim that new sub-peoples developed in the course of the twentieth century in various republics of the Soviet Union, such as “Jews of Russia” {Yukhneva, 2004 [in Russian]} and “Jews of Ukraine” {Petrovsky-Shtern, 2004 [in Russian]}).

The process of cultural and physical assimilation affected the children of mixed marriages to a more significant extent. This can be seen from official Soviet statistics. Thus, according to the population censuses of the Soviet Union, only 2% to 5% of the members of this group were registered as Jews in official documents (the exception to the rule was Lithuania, where nearly 12% of all the children of mixed marriages were registered as Jews in the nationality clause). Mordechai Altshuler, who investigated the matter, is of the opinion that the children of mixed marriages who were registered as non-Jews usually adopted a non-Jewish identity, too (Altshuler, 1987: 236). According to the American researcher, Zvi Gittelman, precisely the children of mixed marriages who adopted a non-Jewish identity can be considered as assimilated in the full sense of the word, in contrast to ethnic Jews (the offspring of two Jewish parents), who were not fully assimilated at the end of the Soviet era (Gittelman, 1991: 4–5).

At the same time, it must be taken into account that despite the fact that many children of mixed marriages preferred to be registered as non-Jews in the nationality clause in official documents, this does not necessarily express a choice of identity but, rather, reflects calculations regarding career and “physical and social comfort”. Under the half-official conditions of Soviet anti-Semitism and “bans on professions”, persons registered as Jews found it hard to materialize these goals. These were also the reasons why some ethnic Jews hid their national affiliation. According to the authorities’ unofficial estimate, the dimensions of the phenomenon were statistically significant in the Ukraine in the 1970s (Central State Archive of Public Associations of the Ukraine, 6–16 and Appendix 2 [in Russian]) (For the full text of the document, see: Khanin, 2003: 246–256 {in Russian}).

In fact, many members of this group acknowledged their Jewish roots in various ways, irrespective of what appeared in the nationality clause in their documents. Therefore, the arguments of some researchers, that the offspring of mixed marriages could, under certain conditions, become a “reserve” for the preservation and revival of Jewish identity in the Russian Jewish world, should not be rejected outright (see, Militarev, 2003: 47–48 [in Russian]; Ryvkina, 2005: 66 [in Russian]).

Indeed, it seems that two groups can play a role, in both theory and practice, in the revival of organized Jewish life in the post-Soviet territories and in activities held by communal institutions, such as schools, cultural centers, media, and social assistance services.

The first group consists of ethnic Jews, representing the **“core of the Jewish population”** – its ethnic core. Demographers include in this definition people with two Jewish parents, as well

as the offspring of mixed marriages defining themselves as Jews in the population censuses held in the Soviet Union in 1989 and in the post-Soviet states in 1999–2000. Most members of this group have two Jewish parents.

The second group consists of the “**extended Jewish population**”. The concept was proposed by a group of American researchers (see, Goldstein, 1992; Kosmin, etc. 1991), and was first used in the post-Soviet reality by the Muscovite researcher, Alexander Sinel’nikov (Sinel’nikov, 1994 [in Russian]).²⁸ In addition to ethnic Jews, this category also includes the children of mixed marriages who defined themselves as non-Jews in the population censuses, and even the non-Jewish spouses of Jews and of half-Jews. According to existing estimates, the relationship between the extended Jewish population and the ethnic core was 1.5:1 in 1979, 1.6:1 in 1989, and 1.8:1 in 1994.

In this context, three questions arise:

1. How significant is this group?
2. Can it be viewed as a potential ‘reserve’ for Jewish activity?
3. If they do become involved in such activity, does this cause the children of mixed marriages and the non-Jewish spouses of Jews to develop any kind of Jewish or quasi-Jewish identity (a Judaizing identity or social behavior patterns that can be interpreted as “post-assimilative”)?

28 Theoretical aspects of the concept “extended Jewish population” were also discussed in DellaPergola, 1993.

According to existing estimates, the extended Jewish population totaled 2,170,000 people on the eve of the disintegration of the Soviet Union (the estimates presented here and below are taken from Tolts, 2001/2). Of these, 910,000 lived in the Federation of Russian States, 660,000 in the Ukraine, 155,000 in Belarus, and 445,000 in the other regions of the USSR. This number dropped to 1,000,030 towards the end of the twentieth century, mainly due to emigration. Both the ethnic nucleus and the non-Jewish and mixed portion of the extended population have been influenced by the same demographic processes – emigration, negative natural increase (a higher death rate than birth rate), and mixed marriages. However, the results of these processes are not identical for both groups – the ethnic core has been mainly affected, decreasing in the decade between 1989 and 1999 by 66%, from 1,480,000 to 544,000 people. In the same period, the non-Jewish and mixed element of the extended Jewish population only decreased by 33%, from 690,000 to 486,000 people. It is easy to identify that this decrease was almost entirely a result of emigration.

The influence of this negative natural increase on the non-Jewish component of the extended Jewish population was not noticeable, because the rate of mixed marriages is higher among the younger age groups, where there is also a positive natural increase. Marriages of this type weaken the ethnic core. At the same time, they raise the percentage of the non-Jewish component in the extended Jewish population, thus diminishing the effects of migration and of negative natural increase. Thus, while the ethnic Jewish core dropped by 66% in the decade after 1989, the extended Jewish population dropped by only 50% – from 2.1 million people to over a million. Accordingly, the relationship

between the extended Jewish population and the ethnic core was 1.9:1 in 1999.

Currently, nearly half a million people, representing the ethnic core of the Jewish population, live in the former Soviet Union. Their average age is 52–56, and most are married to non-Jews. The children of mixed marriages and the non-Jewish spouses of Jews and of half-Jews constitute a similar number. Accordingly, approximately a million people in the post-Soviet states constitute a potential both for Jewish emigration and for Jewish community activity.

It should be noted that many experts do not agree with the minimalist approach of the Israeli demographers. Mark Kupovetsky estimates that at least two million Jews and children of mixed marriages lived in Russia alone in the late 1990s (Kupovetsky, 2002: 61–64 [in Hebrew]; Ryvkina, 2005: 45 [in Russian]), while the representative of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FEOR), Baruch Gurin (an Israeli citizen who lives alternately in Moscow and Jerusalem), has asserted that “according to various calculations, between 230,000 and 10 million Jews live in Russia today. A more realistic figure is a million people” (quoted in 2004, in *Demoscope Weekly* [in Russian]). Gurin, a member of *Habad*, only refers to Jews as defined by *Halakha* – which is seemingly parallel to the ethnic core. However, this definition does not refer to self-identity: It refers to status as determined by *Halakha* – according to which even people with Jewish mothers and non-Jewish fathers, as well as the maternal grandchildren and even great grandchildren of Jews, are considered Jewish. According to the definitions commonly accepted by demographers, the vast majority of these people are not part of the ethnic Jewish core. Indeed, the number

noted by Gurin is four times as large as the one agreed on by demographers – 250,000 people (Tolts, 2003).

According to well-informed sources in the Ukrainian Jewish *VA'AD* [Hebrew for “committee”], the relationship between the extended population and the ethnic core is not 2:1, as Tolts asserts, but at least 4:1 or even 5:1 (VA'AD, 1998; Shulga et al, 2001: 14 [in Russian]). Therefore, even though only a little over 103,000 people declared that they were Jewish in the population census of Ukraine in 2001, Ukrainian Jewry leaders estimate that its “Jewish population” numbers somewhere between 400,000 and 450,000 people (Zissels, 2002).

It can be seen that these contradictory estimates do not stem from differences of opinion among demographers or even from political interests (though these exist). Rather, they mainly stem from a realistic phenomenon – the shaping of a sociocultural environment that can be defined as kindred to Judaism, a type of unique sub-culture. The agents of this phenomenon are the local and foreign Jewish organizations, the sharp rise in the status of the Jewish community following the changed social and political situation as of the end of the Soviet era, and the emigration options open to anyone who is defined as Jewish.

It is common knowledge that in the current political, economic and social conditions of Eastern Europe, many non-Jewish spouses and children of mixed marriages prefer to be connected to Jewish communities and to avail themselves of their services in the fields of education, information, culture and welfare (see, Khanin, 2002a). Moreover, it emerges from previous research (Khanin, 2000b) that there is an apparently paradoxical difference between ethnic Jews and the mixed part of the extended population in some CIS countries, such as Ukraine.

While most ethnic Jews are more interested in projects in the field of culture and community, the percentage of the offspring of mixed marriages participating in preparatory projects for making *Aliyah*, especially in cities with a small Jewish population, is much higher than their total representation in the Jewish population. Moreover, as Joseph Zissels noted, the post-Soviet situation is “pushing many of the children of mixed marriages to search for their religious and national roots – not only in order to make *Aliyah* or to receive aid, but also in order to attain a certain mental balance by creating a revived set of traditional values” (Zissels, 2002).

All this provides further legitimization for most local Jewish leaders, who view these people as target groups for their community activity which, according to the present procedure, is open to everyone defined as eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return (that is, not only to Jews by *Halakha*, but also to second and third generation descendants of mixed marriages, as well as to the non-Jewish spouses of these three groups). Sometimes, this community activity extends even beyond these broad boundaries (to include fourth generation descendants of mixed marriages).

Thus, on the one hand, affiliation to the Jewish cultural community is viewed as positive by this group. On the other hand, as emerges from the population censuses conducted in the years 1999–2002, this affiliation is not perceived by the descendants of mixed marriages and the non-Jewish spouses of Jews as first and foremost in their list of priorities, from the point of view of their national identity.

As noted, in the population census held in Ukraine in 2001, 103,000 people defined themselves as Jewish, that is to say, the

same hard ethnic core that also defined itself as Jewish in the previous Soviet population census, held in 1989 (see, *National Structure of the Ukrainian Population*, 1991: 19, 147–150, 176–182 [in Russian]). This nucleus decreased due to emigration and negative natural increase. At the same time, according to official data, *Hesed*, the Jewish welfare center in Ukraine, extended assistance to 106,601 people in the middle of 2001, while tens of thousands more participated in other social, educational, cultural and *Aliyah*-related Jewish projects (Zissels, 2002).

The Muscovite sociologist, Elena Nosenko (Nosenko, 2004 [in Russian]), identified at least four identity types among the offspring of mixed marriages in Russia:

1. Russian or non-Jewish.
2. Inter- or supra-ethnic.
3. Mixed.
4. Fundamentally Jewish.

The first identity type is represented by people who never defined or felt themselves to be Jewish, and were never interested in Jewish culture or tradition. At times, they assert that “everything Jewish” is strange to them. Those among them who define themselves as “believers” declare that they belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. Their *Aliyah* potential is almost nonexistent

The members of the second, supra-ethnic, type often define their identity as “cosmopolitan”, or simply do not state their opinion on the matter. They, too, like the representatives of the first group, grew up in the Russian acculturation environment. However, in contrast to them, they do not deny their Judaism, and sometimes even show some kind of interest in Jewish life. They are usually fearful of manifestations of anti-Semitism and of a worsening of

the political situation in Russia. Therefore, to be on the safe side, they view their Jewish roots as a kind of “reserve option”.

The third group consists of people whose identity can be defined as “split” or “transitional”. They say that in different stages of their lives, depending on the specific situation, they sometimes feel Russian and sometimes, Jewish. They grew up in an assimilated environment and their identity has been shaped, on the one hand, by manifestations of political extremity, especially anti-Semitism, and, on the other hand, by their acquaintance with the culture of the people of Israel and its history, to which they are exposed when they participate in activities held by Jewish institutions – as employees, students, visitors, and so forth. This identity type is typical of intellectuals, who display interest in their roots. Their inner struggle sometimes leads to a split in their ethnic identity and also to ambiguous behaviour. That being the case, the identity of the members of the second and third groups is, in many senses, “situational”, even though the situations that determine these identities are not identical in both groups.

Finally, the fourth group consists of people who aspire to return (or who assert they have already returned) to their Jewish identity. They, too, like the respondents in the other groups, were raised in a Russian speaking environment, received no traditional Jewish education and were considerably assimilated, even though they still retain some knowledge of Jewish tradition (mainly thanks to older relatives and acquaintances). In recent years, under the influence of factors such as accessibility to literature on various aspects of the history of the people of Israel and its culture, visits to Israel, manifestations of anti-Zionism, and so forth, their ethnic identity has gradually changed. They want to become acquainted with Jewish culture and tradition, many learn

Hebrew and they frequently participate in activities organized by the different Jewish organizations. Some of them observe certain Jewish religious commandments, although very few of them have a clear idea of their meaning. Some want to emigrate, mainly to Israel. However, many say they want to remain in Russia and participate in local community life.

Nosenko found that some members of the first group are registered as Jews in the nationality clause in official documents, as are their children who have identity cards. There are also cases of people changing their Jewish surname, their Jewish first name or their father's Jewish first name (or even that of his parents) to non-Jewish names. The same holds true for the second and third groups, even though some members are, indeed, registered as Jews. Some respondents changed their nationality clause registration from "Russian" to "Jewish", and in one case, a Russian first name and surname were even changed to Jewish ones.

Nosenko's qualitative analysis does not enable conclusions to be drawn regarding the weight of these groups in the general population. However, certain quantitative conclusions can be drawn on the basis of indirect data.

In December 2001, at the invitation of the Jewish Agency, a team of researchers headed by Prof. Eli Leshem, conducted a survey among students attending Hebrew *Ulpans* in the CIS. While 80% of the Jews by *Halakha* defined their identity as such, only 50% of the second generation offspring of mixed marriages, and only about 25% of the third generation offspring of mixed marriages and of the non-Jewish spouses, defined themselves as Jews (Leshem, 2002). On the other hand, on the basis of Nosenko's findings, and those of several other surveys

conducted among the offspring of mixed marriages planning to make *Aliyah*, they show more interest in their Jewish roots than the other representatives of this group (Nosenko, 2001: 19–21). Eli Leshem's conclusions also match the results of the surveys conducted in 1995 and 2004 by the researcher Ryvkina, of the Jewish population of Moscow (the home of approximately 50% of all Russian Jewry, and of about 25% of all post-Soviet Jewry), showing that 82% of all ethnic Jews, 49% of all "half-Jews", and a mere 20% of people with only one Jewish grandparent, had a Jewish identity (Ryvkin, 2005: 65, 69–70 [in Russian]).

If so, it seems that in spite of the considerable effort and means invested in rebuilding the Jewish communities in the post-Soviet states, the anticipated return of the masses to their Jewish identity did not happen. But, is that not a somewhat hasty conclusion? Do we not see that, among the Jewish and Judaizing communities, processes of developing unconventional identity models, which, for all that, do not constitute complete assimilation, are occurring? And what about processes that have not yet found material frameworks for expression? Should not local and foreign Jewish organizations, which represent the Jewish world and the State of Israel, change their lists of priorities and methods of operation, both among people making *Aliyah* to Israel from the CIS in the framework of a Jewish program, as well as among those remaining behind?

2. Identity and Values in the Extended Jewish Population: Findings of our Sociological Study

In order to answer these questions, a more detailed cultural identity structuring of the extended Jewish community must be made than the simple division based on such categories as “Jewish”, “half-Jewish”, “quarter-Jewish” and “non-Jewish”.

The survey conducted by us in five cities confirmed the hypotheses already published, that Jewish identity in the former Soviet Union is primarily ethnic (Gittelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, 2000-2001 [in Russian]; Khanin, 1998; Ryvkina, 1996, 2005 [in Russian]). This also holds true for that part of CIS Jewry consisting of the offspring of mixed marriages.

Thus, in their answers to the question what, in their opinion, did being Jewish mean (see table 1), the respondents chose, in the first three places, precisely those ethnocultural values connected to national identity – a feeling of belonging to the Jewish people (73.5%), pride in Jewish culture (65%), and observance of Jewish tradition, rites and culture (58.1%). However, only 25% of the respondents said that being Jewish meant keeping the *Mitzvot*²⁹ and going to synagogue, or aspiring to receive, or give children, a Jewish education (places 10 and 11 respectively in the scale of 14 values). Mastery and use of the Jewish languages, Hebrew and Yiddish, received the ninth and fourteenth (last) places respectively in their list of priorities.

29 *Mitzvot* (Hebrew for “commandments” [of Jewish religious Law]): Judaism has 613 *Mitzvot* which, in theory, practicing Jews must observe (The singular form is *Mitzva*, meaning “a commandment”).

Table 1: Symbols of Belonging to the Jewish People

Place	Characteristic Values	N	%
1	Feeling of belonging to the Jewish people	249	73.5
2	Pride in the culture of the Jewish people and its heritage	220	64.9
3	Observance of Jewish tradition, rites and culture	197	58.1
4	Having Jewish parents	145	42.8
5	Helping the members of your people	140	41.3
6	Being a patriot of the Jewish State	136	40.1
7	Fighting anti-Semitism	121	35.7
8	Participation in community life	118	34.8
9	Mastery and use of the Hebrew language	97	28.6
10	Keeping the <i>Mitzvot</i> , attending synagogue	94	27.7
11	Aspiring to receive, and give children, a Jewish education	90	26.5
12	Being married to a Jew/Jewess	79	23.3
13	Living in the Land of Israel	64	18.9
14	Mastery of Jewish languages (Yiddish, Judeo-Bukharan, Judeo-Caucasian, etc)	50	14.7

In other words, the extended population's identity contains a wide gap between the symbolic nature of its ethnocultural and ethnogenetic values and the actual implementation of the latter in everyday life – a situation that has remained practically unchanged since the Soviet era. During the latter period, Jewish identity was preserved in spite of the practical lack of material identification factors, in the setting of what Zvi Gittleman defined as the “imposed national identity”, that was “forced on the Jews by the authorities” (Gittelman, 2003; Gittleman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, 1994 [in Russian]). Of course, this phenomenon was not entirely artificial: It was connected to objective processes that

started occurring among the Jews of Russia already at the end of the nineteenth century. Being connected to the remnants of cultural tradition, this phenomenon ultimately became institutionalized in the form of the model of Soviet Jewish identity described in the previous chapter. There is room to wonder if the remnants of the influence of this phenomenon are strong enough to preserve ethnic Jewish identity in our days, too, now that official anti-Semitism has been abolished and the authorities no longer define or force an identity framework on local Jewry.

Common sense says that Jewish community initiatives must fill the vacuum created. And indeed, communal and national activity values receive second place in our survey: helping the members of your people (41.3%), fighting anti-Semitism (35.7%), and participation in community life (34.8%). These percentages correspond fairly closely to the percentages who said that they regularly participated in activities held by their local community and foreign Jewish organizations. It appears that, precisely within this communal and national activity, new cultural identity processes have been developing among the different ethnic background groups (Jewish, mixed, and non-Jewish) in the extended Jewish population.

These facts confirm our hypothesis that the ethnic core and the ethnically mixed components of the extended Jewish population in the former Soviet Union (and, to a certain extent, also within the new Russian Jewish Diaspora created outside its borders) have been undergoing a more complex process of sociocultural interaction than previously presumed, and that their ethnocultural and identity borders do not pass between these components – rather, they pass through them. It is clear, for example, that the Jewish identity types in the former Soviet Union, described in the

previous chapter, are typical to some extent or other not only of the ethnic core, but also of the total extended Jewish population. Moreover, a more detailed analysis shows that the traditional Jewish identity types are being reinforced and new ones are being shaped in the post-Soviet states within the setting of a more dynamic and more complex division into cultural identity groups, in both the Jewish and non-Jewish components of the extended Jewish population. These boundaries are neither fully identical with the simple models of Jewish identity described above nor with the identity types of the offspring of mixed marriages described by Nosenko.

In the course of our research, we managed to identify at least four such cultural identity groups, all of which come under the influence, to some degree or other, of both the local organized Jewish community (in its wider sense) and of their closer and more distant periphery:

1. *Universal Jews*: People with an overall Jewish identity containing a strong national (and nationalistic) component. Their affiliation with this group stems from the determination that “all Jews are one people”.
2. *Ethnic Jews*: People with a communal (sub-ethnic) identity, who define themselves as “Russian Jews”, “Ukrainian Jews”, etc. A considerable proportion asserted in the course of our survey that “Ukrainian/Russian Jews have more in common with Ukrainians/Russians than with the Jews of other countries”.
3. *Postmodernists*: People with a double identity, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who define themselves as “both Russians/Ukrainians/etc and Jews”.

4. *Non-Jews*: People with a non-Jewish identity, who nevertheless do not deny their connection to the organized Jewish community or to its direct periphery.

Table 2: The Respondents' Opinions on the Nature of Judaism

Agree with these opinions	N	%
The Land of Israel is the spiritual center of all the people of Israel	245	77.3
Israel is the only country where a Jew can feel Jewish	135	43.7
You can be a good Jew in the Diaspora, too	216	69.5
The Jews of the whole world are one people	245	79.3
Ukrainian (Russian, etc) Jews have more in common with Ukrainians (Russians, etc) than with Jews of other countries	97	32.1

The purpose of our survey was to determine the relative and quantitative weight of each of these groups. Consequently, we did not aim at a representative sample, which is methodologically problematic³⁰, since the size of the Jewish population in the former Soviet Union and its demographical structure have not yet been definitively clarified.³¹ We had a different aim: to discover the fundamental differences between these groups with

30 For a debate on the optimal approach to building a sociological sample of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union and in the post-Soviet states, see Brimm and Ryvkina, 1994; Gittelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, 2000-2001 [in Russian].

31 Nevertheless, the main social and demographic characteristics of our sample approximated those appearing in Tolts' estimates (2003: 174; 2004): 49.1% of our sample was male, 50.9%, female. The age distribution was as follows: ages 18 and under, 7.8%; ages 19–25, 14.4%; ages 26–40, 22.2%; ages 41–55, 24%; ages 56 and over, 31.5%. Finally, distribution by education was as follows: high school, 17.1%; professional high school, 18.4%; higher education, 64.5%.

regard to national identity, priorities and assimilation, as well as to sociocultural identity.³² The last finding was found to be significant in the course of our research.

Assimilation and Jewish Continuity

The special nature of the post-Soviet Jewish population and the heterogeneous, mixed ethnic character of its sociocultural criteria have led to significant shifts in its identifying characteristics, including those traditionally considered to be signs of assimilation.

Under these new conditions, one should most probably define as Jewish not only people with one or two Jewish parents, but also people whose children are Jewish, as Jewish educational activists think. And, indeed, the desire to give one's children a Jewish identity is becoming the most important factor in Jewish identity and the clearest sign of its existence.

When we approached this issue, the differences between the four groups of respondents in our survey were the clearest. Thus, over 80% of the "general Jews", nearly 66% of the ethnic Jews, nearly 33% of the postmodernists (with a double, Jewish and a non-Jewish, identity), and not one of the non-Jews who participate to some extent or other in Jewish community life responded

32 If we use the methods of Leshem and Ryvkina for estimating the numerical ratio between the different versions of stable and unstable Jewish identity among "those eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return" (the Jewish community in its widest sense), our sample, too, will show a 60:40 ratio – which is very close to the overall picture. However, the specific, limited character of our sample only allows qualitative conclusions to be drawn, and obliges us to refrain from any sort of quantitative generalizations.

positively to the question, “Do you care whether your children and grandchildren are Jewish?” (see table 3). Accordingly, indifference to whether one’s children and grandchildren are Jewish is inversely related to intensity of Jewish identity. And, indeed, only 2% of the “general Jews” and 50% of the non-Jewish identity type responded that they did not care whether their children and grandchildren were Jewish. The remaining 50% of this last group found it difficult to answer the question. Thus, they apparently demonstrated their contradictory aspiration to preserve their non-Jewish ethnic identity while at the same time remaining part of the organized Jewish community.

Table 3: Is it important for you that your children be Jewish

The Opinion	Yes	No	Don’t Know	Total
I feel like a Jew	82.0%	2.0%	16.0%	100%
I feel like a Russian/Ukrainian Jew	57.6%	10.8%	31.6%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	29.3%	25.9%	44.8%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100%
Total	N=190 59.0%	N=37 11.5%	N=95 29.5%	N=322 100%
Pearson’s Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 6 value = 59.200 significance = p<0.001				

It is typical that the only group where the relative majority (45%) found it difficult to respond to the question about the importance of their children and grandchildren being Jewish was the one with the double identity (both Jewish and non-Jewish). This response

seems only natural for a group whose members view themselves as belonging to two peoples and their cultures.

The situation of the ethnic (Russian or Ukrainian) Jews is more interesting: Almost 33% found it hard to respond to this question. This fact stresses the complex dilemma facing precisely this group regarding real integration into the local post-Soviet states while preserving their Jewish ethnocultural identity. Some of the post-Soviet Jewish elites apparently belong to this cultural identity group, and they view the local Jewish communities merely as cultural communities, not as national groups (This approach was unequivocally expressed by the president of the Jewish Council of Ukraine, Illya Levitas, who declared that “there are no Jews in Ukraine, but there are Ukrainians of Jewish origins” {quoted from Khanin, 2000a}).

Assimilation and the Social Environment

Evidently, one of the most important factors in the reinforcement of Jewish identity in the present and future generations of Jews, and in the acculturation of people of mixed and non-Jewish origins to the Jewish community, is the influence of the social and cultural environment – family, friends, acquaintances, and so forth.

It emerged in the course of our survey that even a partial connection to the activity of the Jewish community considerably increases the chances that a person’s Jewishness will be the key element in his or her social circle. Thus, 30% of the respondents who were in some way involved in the activities of the Jewish community declared that the vast majority of their friends were Jewish – three times as many as those who responded that their friends were mainly non-Jewish (10%) (see table 4). At the same

time, 60% of the respondents in this group said that they had the same number of Jewish and non-Jewish friends.

Incidentally, the differences between the cultural identity groups were found to be highly significant in this case. For example, the number of respondents whose friends were mainly Jewish was twice as high among the “general Jews” than among the respondents as a whole, while the ratio for the ethnic and postmodern Jews was one and a half times and three times lower, respectively, than the sample average. In other words, the more closely connected the respondents’ Jewish and national identity was to an ethnic or postmodern component, the more they were inclined to have a non-Jewish or mixed social circle.

Contemporary scientific literature still has no unequivocal response to the leading question in the matter under discussion: To what extent does the individual’s identity influence his or her choice of friends and acquaintances and, conversely, to what extent does this social circle influence the shaping of the identity that best suits him or her?

Most ethnopsychologists who investigated Soviet and post-Soviet Jewry accept the idea of the reciprocity of these two factors (Sobkin and Grachova, 1998 [in Russian]). It seems that Jewish institutions – youth clubs, community centers, educational institutions, and so forth – are a sufficiently effective environment for determining an individual’s social circle, irrespective of his or her initial identity.

This conclusion is based on the answers of the respondents representing the non-Jewish element of the extended Jewish population in our sample: Even though no one responded that most of his or her friends were Jewish, neither did anyone assert that his or her social relations were limited to people of non-

Jewish origins. In other words, the environment where they have most social contacts is the communal Jewish population, where people of Jewish and non-Jewish origins are equally represented. In turn, this situation is believed to shape the social identity setting, whose influence and stability factors have yet to be identified and defined.

Table 4: **National Identification of Close Friends**

The Opinion	Most are Jewish	Most are non-Jewish	Some are Jewish, some are non-Jewish	Total
I feel like a Jew	59.0%	7.0%	34.0%	100%
I feel like a Russian/Ukrainian Jew	21.6%	9.3%	69.1%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	10.0%	13.3%	76.7%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100%
Total	N=100 30.5%	N=30 9.1%	N=198 60.4%	N=328 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 6 value = 60.934 significance = $p < 0.001$				

The important element in this setting, from the point of view of the fight against assimilation, is the reinforcement of the marriage market within the Jewish community and the shaping of suitable approaches regarding the choice of a spouse. However, here there is a fundamental problem:

Our research shows that even though 40% of the Jews and offspring of mixed marriages answered that, in their opinion,

“a Jew is someone who has Jewish parents” (fourth place in table 1), only 50% of the them, or 23% of all the respondents in this category, thought that it was also proper to marry a Jew/Jewess (twelfth place). This distribution is apparently only meaningful with respect to the respondents’ views on the objective demographic situation, where nearly 50% of those eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return are ethnic Jews, mostly with two Jewish parents. Since the 1980s, however, 74%–82% of this group has married non-Jews (Derzhkomstat, 1997 [in Russian]; Tolts, 1997, 2004) and, according to many researchers, these factors testify to the continued assimilation of post-Soviet Jewry.

Researchers with pessimistic views of these processes repeatedly stress the prevalent trend in the last few years: The indifference of most Jews in the post-Soviet states to the ethnic origins of their spouses (see, for example, Ryvkina, 2005 [in Russian]; Sinel’nikov, 1994: 95 [in Russian]).

However, other studies indicate that the situation is not so clear-cut. Thus, a survey of nine ethnic groups in Ukraine conducted by a group of researchers from the Institute of Sociology in Kiev, in 1993, showed that the number of Jews who preferred a shared ethnic background as a criterion for choosing a spouse was twice as high as the sample average (Out of 13 criteria, the Jews placed this criterion third, after love, and similar views and interests {ISNASU, 1993 [in Russian]}).

In addition, the survey conducted by Gittelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, in Russia and Ukraine, shows that Jews with two Jewish parents (80% of their sample in 1997) were much less inclined to choose a spouse of non-Jewish or mixed origins than were mixed Jews. Based on these findings, the researchers drew pessimistic conclusions regarding “the swift disappearance of Jews

with two Jewish parents” and regarding the “exponential increase in the number of mixed marriages among ethnically mixed Jews”. On the other hand, a large group of respondents was identified in the same survey whose national identity was not inherited (these people defined themselves as Jews, even though their parents did not define themselves as such {Gittleman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, 2000-2001: 74 [in Russian]}). In a certain sense, this conclusion reinforces the position of the experts, who stress the positive trend among the children of mixed marriages to search for spouses within the extended Jewish population, rather than outside it. Although, formally and demographically, such marriages are mixed, researchers believe that they do not further weaken the population’s Jewish identity (Satanovsky, 2002).

Are these contradictory conclusions compatible with the objective data on the high rate of mixed marriages? Apparently, the answer is not to be found in characteristics shared by the total extended Jewish population or even in the differences between the ethnic core of the Jewish population and the other groups eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return. Rather, the answer is to be found in dividing them into the cultural identity groups we defined above.

Like most of the other parameters, a negative attitude towards mixed marriages has an inverse relationship to ranking in Jewish identity, just as indifference to mixed marriages is accompanied by a low rank in Jewish identity (see table 5). The “universal Jews” (“I feel like a Jew”) were the only group with a sizeable core that unequivocally supported uni-ethnic marriages (40%). An almost identical percentage of this group (44%) responded that, in its opinion, uni-ethnic marriages were a desirable requirement, though not a matter of principle. The number of

people in this group who were in favor of, or indifferent towards, mixed marriages was low. The vast majority of ethnic Jews (“I feel like a Russian/Ukrainian Jew”), to whom the expatriatism of nationalist Jews is unfamiliar, advocate, surprisingly enough, the position that “it is desirable that Jews marry within their own people, though it is not a matter of principle”. It seems that precisely this option presents the ideal combination of Jewish ethnic patriotism, and political and social loyalty to the host society (“integration without acculturation”).

Table 5: Attitude towards Mixed Marriages

The Opinion	Positive	Negative	Indifferent	Desirable, but does not really matter	Total
I feel like a Jew	6.0%	40.0%	10.0%	44.0%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	14.9%	10.6%	19.9%	54.7%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	43.3%	5.0%	28.3%	23.3%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100%
Total	N=58 17.7%	N=60 18.3%	N=63 19.3%	N=146 44.6%	N=327 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 9 value = 95.732 significance = p>0.001					

A high level of assimilation was found among people with an ethnonational consciousness (“I feel both like a Jew and as

though I belong to another people”). The percentage in favor of mixed marriages for ideological reasons (43%) was higher than in any other group, and nine times higher than those against mixed marriages within this group. It was also twice as high as those who perceived mixed marriages as fairly desirable, though not a matter of principle, and one and a half times higher than those who were indifferent to the matter. The finding in the non-Jewish identity type group (“I feel as though I belong to another national community”) was not surprising: Sixty six percent were indifferent to mixed marriages. Of more interest is the finding that 33% of the respondents representing this group supported mixed marriages, thus demonstrating the assimilation trend in the extended Jewish population.

It must be remembered, however, that the family is crucial in any negative or positive changes in Jewish identity. In this respect, most researchers agree with the conclusions drawn by Gittelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro: In the older age group, “positive Jewish feelings” are connected with the educational atmosphere in the family; on the other hand, the significance of the family as a factor that shapes Jewish awareness is decreasing among the young.

Most of the respondents (44.6%) chose the option, “It is desirable that Jews marry within their own people, but it is not a matter of principle”. This can be viewed as an opening for positive change. Will post-Soviet society be capable of utilizing this potential? This requires a judicious social policy, the obligation for which is placed on the shoulders of the internal and external Jewish organizations.³³

33 http://www.multitrans.ru/c/m.exe?t=3758428_2_1

Religion, Assimilation and Identity

It is common belief that observance or non-observance of religious Jewish tradition, retreat from religion and/or the adoption of other cults are all external manifestations of ethnocultural continuity processes and of acculturation or assimilative processes (Arnov, 1994; Charmé, 2000; Ibry, 1999; Liebman, 1973; Sarna, 1991). However, under the Soviet and post-Soviet conditions, this scenario was, and is, of significantly different meaning.

It is common knowledge that during practically the whole of the Soviet era, the authorities disrupted religious rites, and severely limited the activity of religious institutions. Soviet society was offered, in exchange, a “civil religion” in the form of communist ideology, a “new Soviet identity” and “socialist internationalism” (all this occurred parallel to the development of “Soviet socialist nationalities”). Judaism, which was perceived by the authorities as the “stronghold of bourgeois Jewish nationalism”, was persecuted more severely than all the other religions, with synagogues and Jewish educational and cultural institutions being frequently targeted.

Eventually, a secular Jewish identity gathered strength in the Soviet Union (see Chapter 1), any external manifestation of which was severely suppressed. This identity was convenient for the regime: It was an ethnic symbol that lacked any actual significance, and was almost totally cut off from the roots of Jewish cultural and religious traditions (see, Chervyakov, Gittelman and Shapiro, 1997; Khanin, 1998; Chlenov, 2002 [in Hebrew]).³⁴

34 In our surveys in East Ukraine in 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994, we found that cultural and religious considerations were of equal weight in the decision

Moreover, in spite of the fact that this, latter, reinforced secular Jewish identity was perceived as conflicting with other ethnic identities, this did not hold true for the “Judaism/Christianity” antithesis. Despite the negative attitude of tradition towards Jews who converted to other religions, neither Jewish nor non-Jewish public opinion regarded them as detached from the Jewish group. Moreover, many Jewish intellectuals who opposed Communism found in Christianity a substitute ideology that helped them in their “search for roots and spirituality”. Indeed, for certain young people living in the large industrial and cultural centers, Christian texts served, paradoxically, as initial sources for knowledge about Judaism (Zanemontz, 2004).

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the scene became complicated due to:

- The revival of dozens of informal religious Jewish organizations, against the background of reinforced nationalism following the victory of the State of Israel in the Six Day War;
- The adoption of new models of religious Jewish identity at the end of the Soviet era and during the post-Soviet era;
- The participation of hundreds of thousands of people of mixed nationality, including people without any Jewish roots, in organized “Jewish” community work (including preparations for making *Aliyah*). These people were not

to make *Aliyah*. From this, it can be concluded that the respondents did not differentiate between symbols in their set of ethnonational values. It is of note that in 1994, the number of respondents who perceived religious considerations as an important factor in their decision to make *Aliyah* was three times higher than this percentage among people who defined themselves as religious (35% and 12% respectively) (Khanin, 1998).

required in this period to distance themselves from their religious, cultural and national consciousness;

- The spread of postmodern attitudes in post-Soviet society, legitimizing differences in religious and ethnocultural identities.

Researchers are deeply divided in this matter. R. Ryvinka, whose research on the religiosity of the Jews of Moscow was cited above, found that between the years 1995–2004, the percentage of people who defined themselves as religious grew by 300% – from 20% to 59%. In 1995, the percentage of people leaning towards the Russian Orthodox Church was 150% higher than the percentage leaning towards Judaism. This trend was reversed in 2004, with 35% defining themselves as believers in Judaism, 24% as believers in the Russian Orthodox Church, and 38% not affiliating themselves with any religion (Ryvinka, 2005, 117–121 [in Russian]). On the other hand, the Muscovite ethno-demographer who investigated the religious affiliation of the residents of Moscow, A. Sinel'nikov, found that among roughly 25% of the Jews of Moscow who responded that they were religious, 50% said that they were Christians and 50% said that they were Jewish. All the other Jewish interviewees defined themselves as “atheists, as believers in other religions or as people who did not believe in any religion”.³⁵ At any rate, both

35 This trend was preserved to some extent in the post-Soviet period, too. Both Boris Berezovsky, who was deputy secretary of the National Security Council of Russia and close to the Yeltsin “family”, and Dimitri Tabachnik, who was the President of Ukraine’s administrative director, were baptized according to the Russian Orthodox Church practice. Yet, public opinion continued to view them as Jews, with all that implies.

sociologists agree that the data attest to the “absorption of the Jews into the Russian culture”.

The data obtained in our research are closer to those of Sinel'nikov. Twenty three percent of the interviewees responded positively, 46.5% responded negatively, and a little over 30% found it difficult to respond to the question, “Do you perceive yourself as a religious person?”. In fact, we were not interested in the level of religiosity of the Jewish community. Rather, we were searching for an indicator that would differentiate between assimilation and acculturation, that is, an indicator of loss or preservation of national identity. An answer to this question would have enabled us to gain an understanding of the religious component in “symbolic ethnicity”, among other things.

Therefore, we formulated another question: “Which religion (regardless of level of religiosity) is perceived by the interviewees as their religion?” (see table 6). Ultimately, some 60% chose Judaism, over 25% chose Christianity or both Judaism and Christianity, while 14.5% (33% of all the “non-religious”, as we will see) declared that they were atheists. Most of the interviewees were aware that they belonged to the Jewish group in one way or another. However, there were significant differences between the ethnic identity groups with regard to this question, too.

Table 6: Religious Affiliation

The Opinion	Judaism	Christianity	Judaism and Christianity	Other	Atheist	Total
I feel like a Jew	84.5%	1.9%	6.8%	1.0%	5.8%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	55.7%	3.2%	28.5%	0.0%	12.7%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	32.8%	6.9%	29.3%	0.0%	31.0%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another people	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100%
Total	N=194 59.7%	N=14 4.3%	N=69 21.2%	N=1 0.3%	N=47 14.5%	N=325 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 12 value = 94.599 significance = p<0.001						

Over 80% of the “general Jews” (“I feel like a Jew”) and over 55% of the ethnic Jews (“I feel like a Russian/Ukrainian Jew”) perceived themselves as Jews by religion. Only 33% of the postmodern respondents (“I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people”) viewed themselves as Jews in this respect. On the other hand, the representatives of the latter group had the highest rate of members who also viewed themselves as both Jewish and Christian from a religious and cultural point of view.

A high ratio of Russian/Ukrainian Jews also split their identity between the religions of Judaism and of the Russian Orthodox Church (28.5%). Non-Jews who participated in the activities of the Jewish communities viewed the question as

purely religious. Consequently, the group was divided equally between Christians and atheists. Some interviewees who viewed themselves as Christians or atheists in other categories had an inverted relationship with regard to the degree of stability of Jewish awareness.

How exactly does this cultural religious identity find expression? Apparently, mainly in participation in religious ceremonies, that is, in the social and ritual aspect of religious life. In order to clarify the degree of observance of the *Mitzvot* in private, we asked interviewees whether they fasted on *Yom Kippur* (see table 7). Unsurprisingly, over 62% of those who viewed themselves as solely Jewish responded positively. In the remaining categories, the ratio was much lower, and no non-Jews responded that they fasted on *Yom Kippur*: Their community identity almost totally lacks a religious element.

Table 7: Fast on Yom Kippur

The Opinion	Yes	No	Total
I feel like a Jew	62.4%	37.6%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	23.0%	77.0%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	21.1%	78.9%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another nationality	0.0%	100.0%	100%
Total	N=112 34.5%	N=213 65.5%	N=325 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 3 value = 51.934 significance = p<0.001			

It is of note that the percentage of people fasting on *Yom Kippur* in the whole sample was 150% higher than those who defined themselves as “religious”. Apparently, those who are not sure

about their religiosity also observe this *Mitzva*: Twenty three percent of the ethnic Jews (“I feel like a Russian/Ukrainian Jew”) and 21% of those with a double identity reported that they fasted on *Yom Kippur*.

These findings contradict the conclusion reached by R. Ryvkina, that people with double identities (“bi-nationals”, as she defines them) (“I feel both like a Jew and that I belong to another people”) constitute a reserve for the Russian Orthodox Church, rather than for Judaism (Ryvkin, 2005 [in Russian]). Our data indicate that the religious element is quite important, perhaps even increasingly so, for communal and national Jewish identity as a whole. Is this a result of the friendly political and social atmosphere, which is helping arouse dormant (latent) Jewish traditions, or the result of the activity of external religious Jewish organizations? We believe that the first factor mainly influences the older generation, while the Jewish organizations primarily influence the younger and intermediate generations.

We can obtain answers to these questions from multi-participant surveys. However, it is already clear that at least three attitude patterns towards religion are competing with one another for acceptance by the Jews in the post-Soviet realm.

The first pattern reflects a classic (neo-traditional) view of Judaism as a union of ethnicity and faith, or of community and faith. Accordingly, Judaism as a religion becomes the core of Jewish identity, and participants in its institutions can not be atheistic, and certainly not believe in other religions.

The second pattern stems from a secular concept shaped in the Soviet era, with Jews being perceived as a national group or ethnic status. In this pattern, the Jewish religion primarily plays a positive ethnic symbolic role, but lacks operational significance

in everyday life. This, indeed, leads to negative feelings towards Jews who believe in other religions, but does not cut them off, *a priori*, from the Jewish community, in the wide sense of the term.

The third, postmodern, pattern, views multiculturalism, mixed ethnicity and diversified religiosity positively. In a certain sense, it even views them as desirable elements of Jewish life, including community life.

All these patterns, together with the trends they represent, can contribute either to the process of ethnic consolidation of post-Soviet Jews, or to the process of their assimilation.

Communal Activism and Identity

As we stated above, from many points of view, the actualization of these various processes and trends will depend on activity on the part of the Jewish community institutions, and on their ability to mobilize the social energy of the various groups in the extended Jewish population. In most cases, Jewish community activity in the CIS covers the following areas (for further details, see, Chernin, 2002; Khanin, 2002d; Satanovsky, 2002; Zissels, 2002):

- Education: For the pre-school age, for those of school age, including also informal and independent education, as well as academic (post secondary school) educational activity.
- Welfare: *Hesed* centers, supported by the Joint (JDC), by the welfare services of other foreign organizations, and by local umbrella organizations.
- Cultural and religious activity: Synagogues, associations for Jewish culture, Jewish media, and so forth.

- Political activity: Lobbying on behalf of Jewish interests at the levels of government and public opinion, fighting anti-Semitism, dealing with missionary organizations, participation in the activity of international Jewish bodies, projects dealing with inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance, and so forth.
- Helping people make *Aliyah* and identification with the State of Israel.

The degree to which the extended Jewish population (both the ethnic core and its penumbra) participates in public and community activities is still disputed. According to Betsy Gidwitz, who examined the revival of organized Jewish life in several cities in the CIS over many years, “The general consensus is that only between 10% and 20% of all post-Soviet Jewry participates in any Jewish activity” (Gidwitz, 1999: 15–16). However, much depends on how one understands the concept, “Jewish activity”.

Most experts are of the opinion that a distinction must be made between formal membership in local Jewish bodies and in branches of foreign Jewish bodies, and between what can be defined as being in the “sphere of influence” of these bodies. As for the latter, approximately 10% of the total Jewish population participates in Jewish activity in this wider sense, in major centers such as Moscow and Saint Petersburg in Russia, and such as Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk and Odessa in Ukraine. In medium sized communities, the ratio of participants in “Jewish life” reaches 30%, even 40%. In smaller communities, the ratio is often even higher. It should be noted that the relation between the two types of participants in “Jewish life” (registered members and sphere of influence) has changed over the course of time.

As for the first aspect, most experts agree that 5% to 10% of the total Jewish population are registered members of at least one of the local Jewish bodies and of the branches of foreign Jewish bodies, both in the cities with a large Jewish population as well as in the small communities (see, Khanin, 2002a). For example, according to the findings of a survey of the Jewish population in Moscow, Minsk and Kiev, conducted in 1992 by R. Brimm and R. Ryvkina, the percentage of people active in Jewish organizations did not exceed 9%. At the same time, nearly 33% of the respondents had participated to some extent in Jewish activity (Brimm, 1994: 27). Similar figures were received in the census of the Jewish populations of Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Yekaterinburg, conducted in 1992–1993 by Zvi Gittelman, Vladimir Chervyakov and Vladimir Shapiro (Chervyakov, Gittelman and Shapiro, 1997: 286). The most recent survey conducted by this same Russian-American team in 1997–1998, in the same Russian cities and in five cities in Ukraine, indicated a drop in participation in Jewish community affairs.

N. Churilov, who investigated the matter in Kiev in the first half of the 1990s, found that only close to 5.5% of the respondents viewed themselves as members of some Jewish organization or other (cultural, religious or political), while another approximate 6% of the respondents participated to some extent or other in their activity (Churilov, 1993: 2 [in Russian]). In the city of Nikopol, 7% to 10% of the Jewish population and their families (estimated according to the Israeli Law of Return at 6,000–8,000 souls) was found to be in the area of influence of the Jewish organizations active there (a Jewish Agency office, a branch of the Israeli Cultural Center's main office in Dnepropetrovsk, a welfare association, a Sunday school, an association for Jewish culture,

and so forth). In the city of Kremenchuk, where the community institutions have a certain prestige, approximately 20% of the local Jewish population, numbering 5,000 souls, participated in their activity (Khanin, 2002d). This figure matches the estimate of the chairman of the Ukrainian Jewish *VA'AD*, Joseph Zissels, according to which approximately 20–30% of all those eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return participate in community activity (Zissels, 2002).

**Table 8: Participation in the Activities Held
by the Jewish Community**

The Opinion	Yes, Always	Sometimes	Do Not Participate	Total
I feel like a Jew	47.5%	35.4%	17.2%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	37.7%	48.1%	14.2%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	25.9%	46.6%	27.6%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	100%
Total	N=124 38.2%	N=143 44.0%	N=58 17.8%	N=325 100%
Significance: $p < 0.005$				

Our survey showed a direct statistical dependence between participation in some kind of Jewish community activity and the respondents' affiliation to one of the four cultural identity groups defined by us (see table 8). Nearly 50% of those identifying as only Jewish participated regularly in community activity, while 50% of the respondents in the other three groups said that

they occasionally participated. Thirty-three percent of the non-Jews and 25% of the postmodernists did not participate in any community activity whatsoever.

Our research showed that the following types of participational activity were typical:

- Regular professional activity in Jewish bodies.
- Regular participation in activities at cultural centers, clubs, associations, and so forth.
- Synagogue attendance and participation in other religious events.
- Attendance at cultural and leisure events held by Jewish organizations (usually on the occasion of Jewish Holidays and Remembrance Days, though not always for ritual or religious reasons).
- Participation in community gatherings, commemoration ceremonies, protest and identification demonstrations, and so forth.
- Passive receipt of welfare, social, and information services, and so forth, from the community's institutions and other Jewish bodies.

In an earlier survey (Khanin, 1999b), we showed that the specific relative weight of each of these activities differs from community to community, although attendance at multi-participant community events receives first place in nearly all communities. Synagogue attendance is also very important, not necessarily in order to pray but rather, as a demonstration of belonging to the "Jewish community". In such cases, the role of the synagogue is that of a community center, rather than of a place of worship. In light of this, the finding that we uncovered in our present survey is of special

importance (see table 9): Nearly 17% of the respondents who defined themselves as non-Jewish attended synagogue from time to time. In the other groups, the character of synagogue attendance matched the identity type. Naturally, the “general Jews” headed the list with regard to frequency of regular or Sabbath synagogue attendance. However, we must here note that people with a double (Jewish and non-Jewish) identity attended synagogue twice as often as ethnic Jews. This fact apparently matches their double sense of (quasi-)religiousness. As for the ethnic Jews, they view the synagogue primarily as a community institute that one visits on Jewish holidays and “from time to time”.

Table 9: Frequency of Synagogue Attendance

The Opinion	Regularly	On the Sabbath	On Jewish Holidays	From time to Time	Never	There is no Synagogue in Town	Total
I feel like a Jew	16.7%	17.6%	31.4%	26.5%	5.9%	2.0%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	4.3%	11.7%	23.9%	35.6%	20.9%	3.7%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	9.8%	4.9%	13.1%	31.1%	39.3%	1.6%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%	100%

Total	N=30 9.0%	N=40 12.0%	N=79 23.8%	N=105 31.6%	N=69 20.8%	N=9 2.7%	N=332 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 15 value = 59.596 significance = p<0.001							

The tendency to be present at multi-participant ceremonies on the Jewish Holidays is correlated with regarding them as purely community social events, and not as religious events. Accordingly, the extent of the respondents' identification with the community is found to match their identity type (see table 10).

**Table 10: Participation in Public Celebration
of Jewish Holidays**

The Opinion	Always	Rarely	Never	Total
I feel like a Jew	82.5%	17.5%	0.0%	100%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	54.0%	40.5%	5.5%	100%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	35.6%	50.8%	13.6%	100%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	100%
Total	N=195 58.9%	N=117 35.3%	N=19 5.7%	N=331 100%
Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation: df = 6 value = 52.752 significance = p<0.001				

Israel, *Aliyah* and Identity

40.1% of the participants noted the need to be a patriot of the Jewish State as one of the signs of belonging to the Jewish people. However, only 18.9% thought it was essential to live in Israel (see table 11).

Table 11: Feeling of solidarity with Israel

The Opinion	Yes	No/ Don't know	Total
I feel like a Jew	96,0%	4,6%	100,0%
I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	90,7%	9,3%	100,0%
I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	81,4%	18,6%	100,0%
I feel as though I belong to another national community	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
Total	89,6%	10,4%	100,0%

3. Preliminary Conclusions of the Study

The findings of our sociological study presented in this chapter enable us to formulate preliminary conclusions regarding behavior and identity in the Russian-Jewish community as a whole:

		I feel like a Jew	I feel like a Russian/ Ukrainian Jew	I feel both like a Jew and as though I belong to another people	I feel as though I belong to another national community
Behavior	In Israel	Full acculturation to Israeli Jewish environment	Integration without acculturation	Moderate isolation	Radical isolation
	In the Diaspora	Moderate isolation ("ex-patriot")	Immigration without assimilation	Full acculturation	Assimilation
Identity	In Israel	Israeli-Russian (Israeli Jews of Russian origin)	Russian Jews	Israeli Russians	Russians in Israel
	In the Diaspora	Universal Jewish (national)	Sub-ethnic (Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish)	Postmodern	Non-Jewish

1. The social and ethnocultural categories defined above were derived from the conditions described in the introduction – in particular, by virtue of mass emigration to Israel and

to other countries (Khanin, 2003c; Markowitz, 1995). The authorities in Israel and the Jewish communities would be ill-advised not to take these categories into consideration when making decisions relating to these Jews or affecting them.

2. An organized Jewish community environment reinforces the Jewish consciousness of those with a stable Jewish identity, has considerable influence on positive changes within those with a mixed or double identity, and has practically no influence on those who identify as having a non-Jewish identity. Therefore, it is very important, from the point of view of the Jewish people, to strengthen the Jewishness of those persons characterized by mixed or double identities. One vehicle towards this end could be, new categorization of sub-ethnic groups – for example, in the CIS, defining categories such as “neither Jews nor Russians” and “people eligible for Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return”, and “non-Arab Israelis” in Israel.

Once aware of the operational significance of these categories, it would be most effective to direct the social and political activities of the existing institutions in the Jewish communities in the CIS in consonance with the goal of strengthening the affiliation of these sub-groups. “Jewish politics” has direct consequences for the operation of the mechanisms of Jewish ethnic self-identity in the post-Soviet states. In order to take full advantage of this, the welfare, organizational, educational and cultural activities of these organizations must be adapted.