RESETTLEMENT OF RUSSIAN SPEAKING JEWS TO CLEVELAND

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Introduction

Jewish refugees from the Former Soviet Union dealt with many common problems of new Americans, along with many unique trials. There had been an earlier wave of Jewish immigrants from Russian and other nations of the future Soviet Bloc at the turn of the 20th century[1], but the Jews who fled the Soviet Union came out of a very different situation. The Soviet government banned all expressions of religious activity, and Jews were often victims of educational and hiring discrimination. All ritual practice had to be done secretly, and people who fought to leave the Soviet Union (who were usually refused, and thus called refusniks) were often in danger of being arrested.[2] The story of Cleveland's involvement in the freedom movement began in 1961 when grassroots activists learned about the plight of Soviet Jewry. By 1974 the Jewish Federation of Cleveland became a key player in the national struggle to open the doors of the USSR, and increasing numbers of immigrants left during the 1970s. The passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was especially lauded for declaring that a nation could only have most favored nation status if it allowed open immigration. During 1979 a large wave of immigration gave hope to many people (see page 24), but the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the United States' subsequent response effectively stopped immigration during the early and mid-1980's.[3] In 1989 the gates were fully unlocked as Mikhail Gorbachev opened the Soviet Union, and huge waves of immigrants flooded into Cleveland.

The families that fled the USSR had suffered under the communist government, and most people had never had the opportunity to learn about Jewish culture and religious life. Many

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[1] Judah Rubenstein and Jane Avner, *Merging Tradtions: Jewish Life in Cleveland* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2004) 29.
[2] Gal Beckerman, *When They Come For Us We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2010) 7-8.

Americans spoke of the "spiritual genocide" that afflicted Jews in the Soviet Union, and felt that the loss of culture was second only to the Holocaust. The Greater Cleveland area was active both in the fight to free Soviet Jewry and in the resettlement process. Cleveland was known for accepting more "free cases" (people without families already in the US) than most other cities, and often had programs for new immigrants that served as a model for other cities. Many leaders of the grassroots movement lived in Cleveland, and helped organize an association with national clout. This effort to free Soviet Jews is covered in Section One, "The Early Fight to Free Soviet Jewry."

Once in The United States, the new immigrants had to become acculturated to both American culture and the American Jewish community. Cleveland organizations, including The Jewish Federation of Cleveland and the Jewish Family Service Association were key to helping Russian speaking Jews learn English, find jobs, and start practicing Judaism. The services and aid given to new immigrants are covered in Section Two, "Resettlement Processes in Cleveland." While there were many systems in place to help the new immigrants, the families still faced many issues in America, from learning a new language to job discrimination. Many immigrants had pursued higher education in the Soviet Union, but because of language barriers and mistrusted educational systems they were only able to get entry level positions. In addition, many people simply wanted to blend into American culture but were regarded as permanent outsiders. These challenges are discussed in Section Three, "Troubles in America."

There was a constant question throughout the fight to free Jews of the USSR of where refugees should settle. Many people were proponents of sending all refugees to Israel, while others advocated for freedom of choice. In Section Four, "The Relationship With Israel," this

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[3] Irene Shaland, "Soviet Immigration" The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society.*

conflict is discussed. Unfortunately, no matter how much Americans pushed the Soviet Government to free Soviet Jews, there were national and international politics that often decided how many Jews could leave. The fight to free Soviet Jewry was enmeshed with the Cold War, and tension between the US and the USSR often decided the fate of Soviet Jews. Once people arrived in the United States, the Cleveland community was actively involved in introducing Hebrew language and culture to the new arrivals. Some Soviet Jews had secretly practiced certain holidays and learned about Hebrew language and culture, but most people had no Jewish education at all. In America there was a push to integrate the new arrivals into the Jewish community. In addition, while many Soviet Jews wanted to forget the USSR entirely, some wanted to keep Russian culture alive in America. These cultural activities are described in Section Six, "Russian and Jewish Culture in Cleveland." Today Russian speaking Jews and their families are an integral part of Cleveland's Jewish community, and their stories continue in an evolving history.

Last modified July 1, 1998. Accessed June 15, 2013. http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=SI2.

The Early Fight to Free Soviet Jewry

In 1961 a few men at Beth Israel-The West Temple began Cleveland's fight to free Soviet Jewry. These men formed a social action committee after the urgings of their rabbi, Dan Litt, who felt they should reach out into the broader Jewish world. There were six original members including Herb Caron and Louis Rosenblum, who became notable leaders of the national and local movement. The men were primarily scientists who were interested in helping Jews around the world. The committee members were haunted by the lack of response to the Holocaust, and felt that they must prevent the destruction of Jewish people from happening again.[4] The grassroots movement that these men started not only mobilized Cleveland, but led much of America in the long battle to allow free and open immigration for Jews in the Soviet Union.[5] By 1964 group had formed the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism (CCSA), and began distributing publications about the situation of Soviet Jews. The group was connected to more established Jewish organizations such as a subcommittee on Soviet Jewry of the Community Relations Committee at the Jewish Federation of Cleveland (JFC), but the men felt that these organizations were not moving quickly enough, or pushing hard enough.[6]

On March 7th, 1965 there was a community wide rally held in the auditorium of Cleveland Heights High School attended by approximately 2200 people (see Photograph 2. in the Appendix). The CCSA's membership dramatically expanded, and they began planning actions to raise awareness. One such action was creating a petition that was circulated at a performance of

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[4] Louis Rosenblum, "Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement; From These Beginings," *ClevelandJewishHistory.net*, last modified April 2008, accessed June 22, 2013, http://www.clevelandjewishhistory.net/sj/lr-beginnings.htm.

[5] "Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism," The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society* ,last modified July 1, 2008, accessed June 15, 2013, http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=CCOSA.

[6] Louis Rosenblum, "Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement; Launching the Cleveland Committee on Soviet Anti-Semitism," *ClevelandJewishHistory.net*, last modified April 2008, accessed June 22, 2013, http://www.clevelandjewishhistory.net/sj/lr-firstcontact.htm.

dancers from the USSR. This petition urged Ohio's lawmakers to push for sanctions against the Soviet Union until open immigration was allowed. The CCSA also published a newsletter, resource books, and a movie. They went on to lead a conference, made greeting cards to send to Soviet Jews, reached out to summer camps, and brought books on Hebrew culture to the Soviet Union. [7]

By 1970 six councils from across the nation decided to form a national committee, named the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ). Cleveland's own Lou Rosenblum was elected chair of this organization, which rapidly grew to include 16 councils by 1972, and 32 by 1985.[8] The UCSJ was frustrated by organizations like the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry and the National Conference for Soviet Jews, and felt they were not willing to push government officials enough. The division between the organizations was highlighted in the lobby to pass the Jackson-Vanik Bill through congress. This bill required all nations to allow free emigration in order to be given Most Favored Nation status for trade with the United States.[9] The bill was sponsored in the House by Ohio's Charles Vanik, and was viewed as a threat to Détente by the Nixon administration. The other more established councils initially felt that the bill violated their principles of quiet negations and formally opposed the passage of the legislation.[10] They later supported the bill, which passed in 1974.

While the passage of the bill was a cause for celebration, it obviously did not immediately free the Soviet Jews. Between 1974 and 1979 a steady flow of immigrants left the Soviet Union,

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[7] Louis Rosenblum, "Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement; Projects of the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism," *ClevelandJewishHistory.net,* last modified April 2008, accessed June 22, 2013, http://www.clevelandjewishhistory.net/sj/lr-projects.htm.

[8] "Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism," The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society* ,last modified July 1, 2008, accessed June 15, 2013, http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=CCOSA.

[9] Yaacov Ro'i, "Jackson=Vanik Amendment," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* accessed June 22, 2013, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Jackson-Vanik_Amendment.

with a large spike in 1979. By 1982, emigration had slowed to a trickle, with only a few thousand leaving each year (see page 24.). The fight to free Soviet Jews successfully spread information that was direly needed, and pressured the American government to do what it could, but had little control over the Soviet government. Projects like bar/bat mitzvah "twinnings" were conducted, in which a bar/bat mitzvah student completed a ceremony on behalf of themselves and their twin in the Soviet Union. While these projects had great emotional value, increased knowledge and understanding, they did not necessarily affect people in the Soviet Union.

By the early 1973 the JFC had formed a "Task Force on Russian Refugees" that began to coordinate care for incoming refugees, and advocate for immigration rights.[11] Once the JFC became involved in the process of freeing Soviet Jews, they became a powerful force that could lobby the government, educate citizens, and help incoming refugees.[12] The JFC Board of Trustees members and task force members pushed for legislation that would put sanctions in place when the USSR granted few exit visas, and pushed for refugee visas to be granted by the US.[13] The leaders ran supplemental campaigns to raise funds for incoming immigrants, the board frequently received on the situation in the USSR. After 1989 when the Soviet Union allowed free immigration the board discussed the situation of Jews from the USSR (and later the Former Soviet Union) at nearly every board meeting.[14] Operation Exodus was launched by the national Council of Jewish Federations as a supplemental three year campaign to raise money for the large

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[10] Sidney Vincent, "Letter to Jordan Band and Ed Rosenthal" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 37, Folder 864, 1970).
[11] James Reich, "Letter to Executive Directors of Jewish Organizations" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2943, 1973).
[12] "Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism," The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society.* Last modified July 1, 2008. Accessed June 15, 2013. http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=CCOSA.
[13] James Reich, "Memorandum Of Notes From First Meeting" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2943, 1973).

influx of immigrants.[15] The fight to free Soviet Jewry had finally been won, and Jews were allowed to live openly in the country of their choice.

[14] Stephen Hoffman "Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes" (Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Archives, 1989-92).

Resettlement Processes in Cleveland

Resettlement processes for Jews in Cleveland have existed for as long as Jews have immigrated to America, but during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s they were especially focused on helping refugees from the Soviet Union. Soviet Jews often had little knowledge about Judaism, since the communist government banned all religious activity. People had also often faced tremendous ethnic discrimination, and suffered under the repressive bureaucratic systems of the Communist government. Many had a distrust of governmental organizations and associated communal settings with the forced values of the Soviet Union. These Jews needed aid for basic immigration needs like all new Americans, but also had to become used to the differences between the USSR and the United Sates and had to learn about Jewish heritage and culture.

The Jewish Family Service Association (JFSA) was the primary body that aided recent immigrants from the Soviet Union. JFSA coordinated between different agencies through its resettlement office, and provided help finding housing, becoming acculturated and finding government assistance. JFSA aided recent arrivals find apartments, loaned money for the first few months rent, provided family counseling, introduced governmental programs like SNAP (food stamps) and Supplemental Security Income, and served as an all purpose resource.[16] In addition, JFSA was in frequent contact with the primary national resettlement organization, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), which helped Jews from the Soviet Union who wanted to go to places other than Israel.[17] The organization would connect the settled family members to their incoming family, so that the sponsoring family could act as an anchor for the incoming

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[15] Stephen Hoffman "Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes" (Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Archives, September 1989).

[16] "JFSA Presentation to the JFC Task Force on Refugee Resettlement" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1975).

immigrants. If the refugees had no anchor family JFSA acted as the sponsor.[18] Children who arrived without parents were generally placed with extended family, unless the family was deemed unsuitable. [19]

Other organizations were also key, including the Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), which aided immigrants in finding jobs and trained recent arrivals in American professional skills. It also counseled high school students from the Soviet Union on vocational skills, and discusses their options for future plans.[20] This agency was later incorporated into JFSA. The Jewish Community Center (JCC) provided English classes, Jewish cultural programming, and free membership for recent immigrants. The JCC also often sponsored Russian cultural events that connected recent immigrants to each other, and gave them a place to feel at home. Another key agency was the Hebrew Free Loan Association, which gave interest free loans to recent immigrants and anchor families. Other organizations like the Jewish Day Nursery, the Jewish day schools, nursing homes, synagogues, and Mount Sinai Hospital retained specialized staff to work with recent refugees, although they were less directly involved in the resettlement process.[21]

Many of these services were offered for free during the early years of immigration from the Soviet Union, but were later offered as loans or at discounted prices as more immigrants entered the country. Until 1977 JFSA provided entirely free services, but they then switched

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[17] HIAS, "Letter to Dr. Leon Jick," (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1976).
[18] "JFSA Refugee Resettlement Services," (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 4, 1990).
[19] InterAction, "Guidelines for unaccompanied minors" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 4, 1990).
[20] James Reich, "Regionalization Process" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977).
[21] James Reich, "Regionalization Process" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977).

some of their services, including the first few months of rent, over to loans. [22] By 1982 the JFC and JFSA began discussing when an immigrant family from the Soviet Union should become part of JFSA's regular caseload, rather than being given special refugee status.[23] This discussion tied into frequent conversations about how refugees should be integrated into the American Jewish Community, and how much support they should be given. The JFC task force decided to stop special programs after two years, despite the reservations of JVS, the Jewish Children's Bureau, and the JCC. Two years did appear to be long enough for most immigrants to settle in to American life, and special care was still given to the elderly and families with unusual circumstances.

Most incoming immigrants were connecting with a first degree relative, someone within their immediate family. In many cases these were the only people allowed out of the Soviet Union, although others were allowed to go to Israel. Cleveland was among a few cities that agreed to take "free cases," or people without family already here, who would need additional financial and lifestyle support.[24] Incoming individuals were categorized by the US Immigration and Naturalization services as refugees, parolees, and immigrants. Refugees were those with a recorded legitimate fear of personal or group based discrimination,[25] regular immigrants were those who followed regular immigration procedures (though there were a negligible amount of non-refugee immigrants), and parolees were immigrants who weren't guaranteed citizenship.[26]

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[22] "JFSA Policy for Resettlement Services," (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977).
[23] Task Force on Resettlement, "Chairman's Notes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2950, 1982).
[24] JFSA "Acceptance of Local Sponsorship" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 1, 1992).
[25] Karl Zukerman, "Memorandum to Cooperating Agencies" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 2, 1991).
[26] "JCF Policy on Soviet Jewish Parolees" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 2, 1989).

At first immigrants were settled in Cleveland Heights, especially in the Coventry area, although later immigrants often settled in Mayfield Heights. Over time many younger families moved into the Eastern suburbs, while older adults stayed in Cleveland Heights and Mayfield Heights.[27] In addition, starting in 1976 a few families were resettled into smaller Jewish communities, such as those in Elyria and Lorain. This was a part of a nation-wide effort to lessen the burden on large cities, and provide potentially more comfortable environments for immigrants from small towns.[28]

Volunteers were also an important part of the resettlement process. JFSA listed many ways that people could help, including transportation to and from the airport or appointments, tutoring, telephone talks for oral skills, visiting nursing home patients, computer consultation, and administrative help. Speaking Yiddish or Russian was helpful for these roles, but was not required. Many people donated furniture, clothing, and money to agencies and JFC. Volunteers who wanted a more in depth relationship could become "host families," who would meet up with an immigrant family periodically for social visits and consultation about American life. Interpreters and translators were also in high demand, and were especially needed for doctor and dentist appointments. A few doctors and dentists provided free or discounted first visits, with only a list of useful Russian phrases to help them communicate with a patient. JFSA also set up a Jewish Big Brother/Big Sister program for kids in need of a mentor. Area congregations were involved in a Community Ties Program that was meant to help all immigrants integrate into

[27] Irene Shaland, "Soviet Immigration" The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society.* Last modified July 1, 1998. Accessed June 15, 2013. http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=SI2.
[28] James Reich, "Regionalization Process" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977)

Cleveland life, and acted to help anchor families without sponsoring family members.[29] Between volunteer's generosity, the Jewish community's mobilization, and well established organizational systems, most immigrants were able to successfully integrate into the United States.

[29] JFSA, "Volunteer Opportunities" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of

Troubles in America

While many people left the USSR to find a better life in America, the new land was not always easy. Many people fled the Soviet Union to escape anti-Semitism and to find better opportunities, but faced xenophobia and unemployment in Cleveland. One of the challenges facing both resettlement agencies and immigrants was finding the right jobs for the refugees. Many individuals had received professional degrees in the Soviet Union, often in field such as engineering. Resettlement officials did not always trust people's credentials, given that school in the Soviet Union was different from the United States, and even the most qualified person often did not have enough English for job they wanted. Individuals who were in charge of medical facilities in the Soviet Union would become technicians in the United States, and engineers would become office workers. JFSA generally could not fund higher education so that people could become recertified, and encouraged people to take whatever job was given to them. If a person did not accept the job JFSA offered them after two months, all services would be terminated.[30] [31] This left many people employed, but not in a completely fulfilling job.

Jewish community did its best to integrate new immigrants, but some members of the general community were not as friendly to the refugees. With the large influx of immigrants after 1989 came a wave of xenophobia. The Jews who left the Soviet Union had to learn a new language and set of customs, while supporting their families and finding work. Many had psychological or family troubles that JFSA attributed to the immigration process.[32] One man,

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Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 3, 1992).

[30] "JFSA Statement on Employment" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1974).

[31] "Presentation to JCF on Vocational Adjustment" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1974).

[32] " JFSA Presentation to JCF Task Force" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1974).

Earl Leiken, was referred to the American Jewish Congress for legal counseling after experiencing perceived hiring discrimination.[33] After a few Jews from the Soviet Union were interviewed in the newspaper the Plain Dealer, they received anti-Semitic hate mail.[34] Many families did not expect this after leaving the USSR, but were able to move on and continue life in America. One couple wrote a letter to JFSA stating that the large number of Soviet Jewish families in their neighborhood and building were being disruptive and loud.[35] JFSA responded by pointing out the new creative energy recent immigrants could bring to an area, and mentioned that the people had met terrible circumstances in the Soviet Union. While these examples of anti-Semitism and xenophobia are notable, they are extreme and not the norm. Immigrants may have experienced more mild forms of alienation and negativity, but most were still able to become a part of the Cleveland community without too much trouble.

[33] "Memorandum from Susan Tanur to the Task Force on Resettlement" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2952, 1983).
[34] "Soviet Jews Receive Hate Mail" *Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, Ohio) 1983.
[35] "Letter From Stephen and Joyce Rajki"(Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 7, 1991).

The Relationship with Israel

Beginning in the mid-1970's there was an active debate surrounding where Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union should go and how actively they should be encouraged to go to Israel. Israel was in need of population growth and the land itself was created to be a safe haven for Jews. Many argued that sending refugees from the Soviet Union to Israel was the best choice for the refugees and the nation, since Israel was naturally the home of the Jews and would guarantee their Jewish heritage survived. Other key players in the movement felt that while refugees should be encouraged to go to Israel, they should also be allowed to go other places and have freedom of choice. Many sought to immigrate to the United States or other nations to be reunited with family, or because they felt they had the best opportunities there. Everyone felt the urgency of getting as many Jews out of the Soviet Union as possible, but there were tensions around the best way to do this. [36]

HIAS tended to be right in the middle of this battle and officially affirmed encouraging immigrants to go to Israel but also supported reunification of families and freedom of choice. Many Jews in the Soviet Union chose make to aliyah and tried to obtain visas to Israel. Other Jews sought out visas to Israel, which were easier to get than visas to other nations, and would then change their destination at the resettlement services in Rome and Venice. The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) handled all cases in Vienna and Rome that were in transit to Israel, while HIAS took all other cases. If an individual had an Israeli visa, but chose to go elsewhere, JAFI would refer the person to HIAS. All refugees were highly encouraged at every step of the immigration process to go to Israel but many still wanted to go other places. Individuals who "dropped out" of the immigration process to Israel either in Rome and Vienna, or once they were

already in Israel, were known as "noshrim" and were often scorned. HIAS was encouraged by local Cleveland individuals and organizations such as The Workmen's Circle to not stop serving immigrants coming to the United States.[37] Other individuals pushed HIAS to stop services to noshrim, and HIAS was forced to defend its decision to serve these immigrants.

In 1981 JAFI made the decision to stop aiding immigrants who chose to go to places other than Israel, unless they were joining a first degree relative. This decision was made in response to the tightening restrictions on immigration by the Soviet government. The JAFI officers felt that the Soviet Union was issuing fewer visas because of the noshrim, and that refusing aid to them would allow more visas to be issued.[38] HIAS responded by taking referrals from agencies other than JAFI.[39] The Jewish community in Cleveland erred on the side of not stirring up trouble by responding in either direction, and instead urged the Reagan administration to grant more visas to the US.[40] The Soviet Union continued to restrict exit visas until immigration slowed to a trickle, and it is unclear whether the drop out rate affected their decision or not.

Throughout the mid 1980's very few Jews were able to leave the Soviet Union, but the issue of where these few immigrants should go remained a point of contention. In 1982 a number of elderly Jews originally from the Soviet Union illegally emigrated from Israel to Cleveland, where the federal government would not aid them with health problems or resettlement. The JFC

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[36] HIAS, "Letter to Dr. Leon Jick," (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1976).
[37] The Workman's Circle "Letter to Mort Mandel" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2944, 1976).
[38] Stanley Horowitz, "Memorandum" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2946, 1981).
[39] Stanley Horowitz, "Memorandum" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2946, 1981).
[40] Stanley Horowitz, "Memorandum" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2946, 1981).

chose to help these individuals, and felt that they were still the Jewish community's responsibility.[41] In addition, a Satmar Chassidic organization called Rav Tov aided immigrants from the Soviet Union, and discouraged immigration to Israel. Since these immigrants did not go through HIAS they did not have the governmental assistance and sanctions that most immigrants had upon arrival in Cleveland, and the Jewish community had to assist them more.[42] By the time immigration was fully opened in 1989 individuals were still encouraged to go to Israel, but people were generally taken wherever they had family, and wherever could take more immigrants at that time.

[41] Peter Glickman, "Letter to Stephen Hoffman" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2951, 1982).

Russian and Jewish Culture in the United States

While Russian speaking Jews were often pushed to fit into American culture, there were also efforts to bring them Jewish culture they hadn't been exposed to before, and to preserve Russian culture. Often volunteers would help new immigrants learn about Judaism, and many long-time refusniks celebrated their ability to openly practice Judaism in the United States. The Soviet government effectively wiped out most Jewish cultural and religious heritage, but Soviet Jews were encouraged to become more involved with Judaism in the United States.[43] Many wanted to leave memories of the USSR behind, but others wanted to remember the parts of Russian culture that they valued. In addition, social groups and Russian cultural activities gave New Americans a space to feel comfortable together and to share their experiences.

Many families were encouraged to send their children to Jewish day schools that provided English classes and Judaic/Hebrew culture.[44] The Hebrew Academy of Cleveland and the Agnon School began taking Russian speaking students in the 1970's, while Fuchs Mizrachi Day School and Gross Schechter Day School reached out to immigrants once they opened. By 1989 75% of Russian speaking students were enrolled in one of the Jewish day schools.[45] There were scholarships available for all new immigrants from the Soviet Union, although some students had trouble integrating into the day schools.[46] Many students did not know conversational English, and had very little experience with Jewish life. These difficulties highlighted how important it

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[42] Joel Fox , "Letter to Burton Rubin" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2951, 1982).
[43] Irene Shaland, "Soviet Immigration" The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society.* Last modified July 1, 1998. Accessed June 15, 2013. http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=SI2.
[44] "Proposal for Bilingual Education" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977).
[45] March Speigel, "75% of Soviet Students Opt for Jewish Day School" *Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, Ohio) November 3, 1989.
[46] "Task Force on Soviet Resettlement Minutes, 1977" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2945, 1981).

was for newly arrived children to be welcomed into the community, and the importance Jewish education in a supportive environment. Teens and children were also invited to special holiday programming, such as a Seder at Brith Emeth Temple in 1980.[47]

In 1982 the Bureau of Jewish Education started a special program called the Soviet Jewish Identity Program, which was meant to bring Jewish culture to new immigrants in ways specially designed for individuals from the Soviet Union. The program brought holiday materials to English classes; taught Judaic classes in Russian; and encouraged teens to join youth groups, go to Jewish summer camps, and travel to Israel. In one notable event, the program brought a Reform movement rabbinic student who emigrated from the USSR to speak about his Jewish and Russian identity.[48] The program was very successful, and was later transferred to the JCC. Host families were integral to the process of introducing Jewish culture to immigrants from the Soviet Union. They were able to provide a taste of how Judaism was practiced within the home, and how a whole family could be involved.[49] In addition, free copies of the Cleveland Jewish News were given for one year to new immigrants. The Jewish News started a bilingual Russian-English column in 1977 that was meant to highlight the lives of Soviet Jews and facilitate the integration of new Americans into the general Jewish community.[50]

There was less of a focus on preserving or celebrating Russian culture since many new immigrants wanted to integrate into American culture as quickly as possible. Nonetheless, there were periodic efforts to provide space for Soviet Jews to meet up and discuss their common

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[47] "Soviet Teens At Model Seder" *The Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, OH) March 28, 1980.
[48] "BJE Summary of the Soviet Jewish Identity Program" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2951, 1982).
[49] JFSA, "Volunteer Opportunities" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folder 3, 1992).
[50] "Proposal for a Column in the Jewish News Geared to Soviet Immigrants" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1977).

heritage. Many events were centered out of the JCC, including a club that published a bi-monthly newspaper called *Za Novoe Zhizn* (*For the New Life*) and a monthly magazine called *Ritmy Klivlenda* (*Rhythms of Cleveland*).[51] In 1983, the JCC circulated *Rhythms of Cleveland* to 800 people in North East Ohio and put on a play titled *Goodbye Moscow* about a newly arrived Soviet family.[52] Additionally, in 1984 the JCC held a "reunion" party for Soviet Jews, with a Russian band and comedy show.[53] In 2004, a Russian language literary magazine title *Luch*, or *Ray*, was published in Cleveland to share Russian culture and the experiences of Soviet Jews. The book included poetry, prose, essays, and social journalism, with many of the pieces focused on the escape from the Soviet Union. These are notable examples of how Russian culture was celebrated, but are not the norm. In general there was much more of an effort to introduce Jewish culture than there was to preserve Russian culture.

[51] Irene Shaland, "Soviet Immigration" The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, *Western Reserve Historical Society.* Last modified July 1, 1998. Accessed June 15, 2013. http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=SI2.
[52] "Task Force on Resettlement Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2953, 1983).
[53] "Reunion of Soviet Jews to Highlight Music, Fun" *Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, Ohio) May 4th, 1984.

Epilogue

The history of Jews from the Former Soviet Union in Cleveland reaches back into the 1960's, and while the waves of immigration have slowed the story of Russian speaking Jews continues. Today there are approximately 5000 Jews in Cleveland that were born in the Soviet Union, although there are many more children with Russian heritage.[54] As first generation and second generation Americans are born to families from the Soviet Union, the parents are faced with questions that many immigrants have dealt with: how to be Jewish in America, whether to teach their children about their Russian heritage, and what decisions will help their children succeed. These families and individuals came with a history that was unique to Jews of the Soviet Union, which differed significantly from the first wave of Russian Jews at the turn of the century. These Jews had been victims of cultural and religious annihilation, and had to reclaim Judaism as new arrivals in Cleveland. The Cleveland Jewish community was actively involved in both the fight to help Soviet Jews escape and in the resettlement process once people had arrived. Many new immigrants chose to become a part of the established community through synagogues and other Jewish organizations, but some also felt distanced from all organized communal life. Anything that felt too much like the Soviet Union could feel alienating, and many people had little interest in learning about Judaism after living without it. As the 21st century continues, the American Jewish community must continue to integrate Jews of Russian heritage, or the fight for freedom will have been for nothing.

Number of Immigrants Entering Per Year

Year	Number of Soviet Jews to Cleveland	Comments	Range
1970	25	Estimate	0-50
1971	25	Estimate	0-50
1972	20	According to James Reich, head of Task Force on Russian Refugees for the Federation, 1974[55]	20-75
1973	63	According to James Reich, head of Task Force on Russian Refugees for the Federation 1974[56]	50-70
1974	124+	According to HIAS records, more came in w/o assistance from HIAS or JFSA[57]	124-150
1975	115+	According to JFSA, 115 by October through JFSA, more later in year and/or not through JFSA[58]	115-150
1976	156+	According to JFSA, 176 by October, more are "in the pipeline" and/or did not go through JFSA[59]	156-180
1977	147+	According to Task Force on Soviet Resettlement, by July[60]	147-200
1978	153+	According to Task Force on Soviet Resettlement, by June, many more were expected[61]	153-300
1979	631+	Biggest wave before 1989, according to Federation[62]	631-800
1980	225+	Reduction from the previous year due to invasion of	225-

[54] Jewish Federation of Ceveland, *2011 Greater Cleveland Jewish Population Study*, (Cleveland, OH: Jewish Federation of Cleveland, 2011), 9.
[55] James Reich, "The Cleveland Jewish Community's Efforts in the Resettlement of Russian Jews" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2943, 1974).
[56] James Reich, "The Cleveland Jewish Community's Efforts in the Resettlement of Russian Jews" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2943, 1974).
[57] "United HIAS Service Papers" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1974
[58] "JFSA Presentation to the JFC Task Force on Refugee Resettlement" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1975).

[59] "JFSA Report to Stephen Hoffman" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1975.
[60] "Task Force on Resettlement Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2945, 1977).
[61] "Task Force on Resettlement Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2945, 1978).
[62] "JCF Proposal to the United Way" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Container 100, Folder 2940, 1979.

		Afghanistan, also reduction of visa granted to people in Ukraine (according to HIAS[63]) 225 according to JCF Task Force on Resettlement minutes[64]	250
1981	163+	According to JCF Task Force on Resettlement minutes, by through November, none in pipeline for Cleveland, but more may have come, most came in the first half of 1981[65]	163-180
1982	39+	Had virtually ground to a halt, by September, according to HIAS[66]	39-50
1983	19+	According to Task Force on Resettlement[67]	19-50
1984	10	Estimate	0-25
1985	10	Estimate	0-25
1986	10	Estimate	0-25
1987	10	Estimate	0-25
1988	500	Estimate	0-100
1989	1063+	Gorbachev opened up the USSR, according to JFSA[68]	1060
1990	500	Estimate	500-1200
1991	300	Estimate, Turmoil in immediate lead up to collapse stifles emigration	300-500
1992	890	According to JFSA[69]	890-1100
1993	600	Estimate	300-800
1994	400	Estimate	300-700
1995	300	Estimate	300-700
1996	300	Estimate	300-700
1997	300	Estimate	300-700

[63] Bruce Leimsidor "Report from HIAS to JCF" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2946, 1980

[64] "Task Force on Resettlement Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2949, 1981)

[65] "Task Force on Resettlement Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2949, 1981)

[66] "HIAS Statistical Abstract" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2950, 1982)

[67] "Agenda for the Task Force on Resettlement" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4835, Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Series II, Container 101, Folder 2953, 1983)

[68] "Board of Trustees Minutes" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Service Association, Series III, Container 1, Folder 1, 1989)

[69] James Spira "Letter to Zachary Paris on JFSA Funding" (Western Reserve Historical Society, MS 4695, Jewish Family Service Association, Series III, Container 1, Folder 3, 1992)

1998	300	Estimate	100-700
1999	200	Estimate	100-700
2000	150	Estimate	0-500
2001	100	Estimate	0-500
2002	100	Estimate	0-500
2003	100	Estimate	0-500
Total:	10,000	Estimate	9000-13000

Appendix

1. Author's Note

While this paper highlights many key aspects of resettlement of Jews from the Former Soviet Union to Cleveland, there are still many areas of research that can be expanded on, or are currently incomplete. Much of the research for this paper came out of the archived papers at the Western Reserve Historical Society, from the papers of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland and the Jewish Family Service Agency. There are a series of JFC's unprocessed documents that may contain more relevant information, especially for the years after 1982. It is highly probable that there are records of how many immigrants came in from the Former Soviet Union each year after 1982 in those documents, and Sean Martin at WRHS can direct interested parties to the right areas. It is recommended that future researchers start with these boxes to find out how many refugees came in each year.

2. For Further Reading

- The fight to free Soviet Jewry, and the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism
    - Wertheim, Sally H., Alan D. Bennet, and Judah Rubenstein, eds. *Remembering; Cleveland's Jewish Voices*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2011. Print. Voices of Diversity
    - Clevelandjewishhistory.net
    - Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism Records, Series II, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio
    - Beckerman, Gal. *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2010. Print.
- Jews in The USSR

- Weinberg, Julius. An Introduction to the History of Soviet Jewry,[Container 101, Folder 2943] MS 4835 The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Records, Series II, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

- General:

  - Rubenstein, Judah, and Jane Avner. *Merging Traditions: Jewish Life in Cleveland*. 2nd ed. Kent, Ohio: The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and The Western Reserve Historical Society, 2004. Print.

  - Gert, Yuriy, and Yakov Lipkovich, eds. *Luch (Ray); A Collection of Literary Works*. Cleveland, OH: The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, 2003. Print.

- For Resources Given to Immigrants

  - Entering A New Culture, David A. Harris, 1989, HIAS and Liberty Publishing House, New York

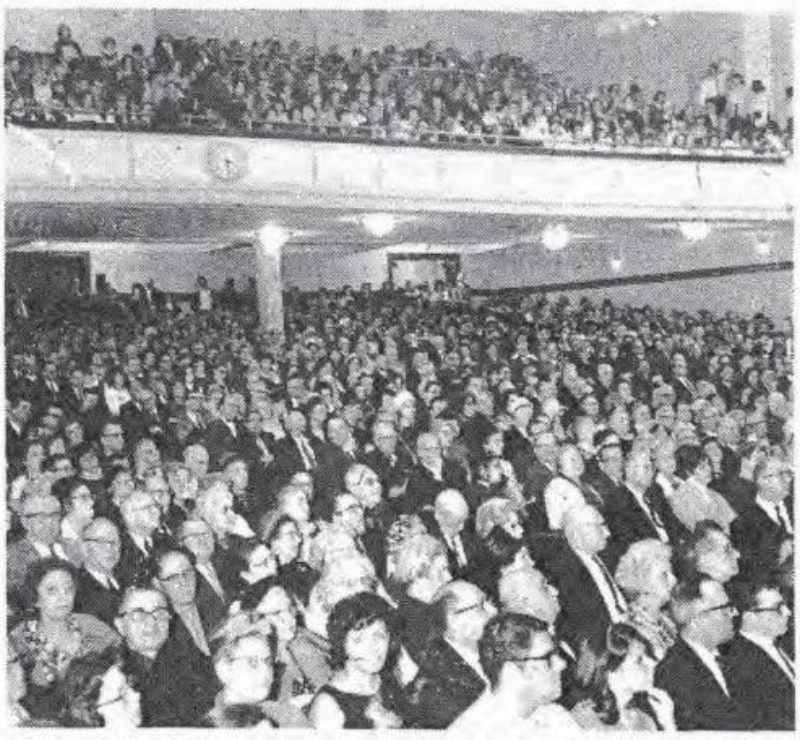
  - MS 4695, Jewish Family Association of Cleveland, Series III, Container 1, Folders 5 and 6

3. Photographs

Photograph 1.

"Each Person Has a Story: Soviet Jews in New Life and New Beginnings Here." *Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, OH), October 6th, 1989.

Photograph 2.



"Rally for Soviet Jewry At Cleveland Heights High School" *Cleveland Jewish News* (Cleveland, OH) March 12, 1965.