Jewish identity will depend on the commitment of the American Jewish community in his behalf.

I think it is important to note that out of nearly 9,000 Soviet Jews who have come to the United States and Canada, no more than four persons have chosen to return to the Soviet Union.

I would like to end this report by sharing part of a letter that was recently received by the Hias country director for Italy postmarked Pittsburgh: . . . . . .

> I don't know what it was that had an effect, but I was offered a job for a very decent salary . . . . . $17,400 a year. A new American friend helped me to find the job . . . . our morale is very high. We are very happy that our fears with regard to crime and with regard to the rumors that Americans live in a "wolf-eat-wolf" world proved groundless. We live among wonderful, cultured people who are not compelled to lie at every step by the world they live in. I found what is in my opinion a very important difference between your country and the Soviet Union. In your country, as a rule, a man is believed on his word, and very often no documents are required from him to prove the truth of his words. On the other hand, in the Soviet Union, as a rule a man is not believed, and all your life you are obliged to prove to one and all that you are not a liar. And generally, everything here is clear as day: black is black and white is white and nobody forces you to think and say the opposite. I constantly feel that I have been reborn, and my greatest fear is that this feeling of 'purification' will pass and that all will seem normal.

The Soviet Refugee: Challenge to the American Jewish Community Resettlement System*

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And so it seems abundantly clear that our ability to adapt and redefine our social services, as well as our attitudes, are as vital and important for the succesful immigration of the Soviet Jew as is his own ability to adapt and modify his value system to our own cultural milieu.

THE sophisticated and comprehensive network of Jewish communal services devised for the resettlement of refugees in American Jewish communities is a unique social service delivery system. It is based on a heritage and experience of 3,000 years in which Jews have fulfilled their traditional mandate to rescue and resettle into their own communities their fellow Jews. Biblical injunctions and Talmudic teachings are replete with detailed discourses on the manner in which this mandate can be fulfilled.

For over 100 years American Jewish communities have combined these traditional communal obligations with the evolving techniques and practice of social work — a professional practice that is special to the Western World's society and cultural milieu. This system, which has been continuously refined during the past four generations links up with the international immigration programs of United HIAS Service and other Jewish refugee organizations to become an effective program for resettlement of refugees. The local Jewish family service agency assumes the major direct service contact role.

Generally, despite the veneer of heterogeneous backgrounds and the extremes of culture, language, and economic differences, the refugee had a deep basic commonality with his fellow Jews — a Jewish identity — a heritage strengthened by a traditional value system. There were obvious differences between the Russian immigrant at the turn of the century, and the German refugee of the Thirties, or the displaced persons of the Forties and Fifties, but, they all basically had a Jewish background and a sense of Jewish community to which they could relate. It is true that the horrors and tragedies of a hostile gentile world frequently strained and tested this identity and for some even resulted in a denial of their Jewishness. Yet even for those, as well as the others, there was always some tie that bound them to the American Jewish communities that were assuming their time-honored mandate of rescue and refuge. Although we have always had to adjust our services, these basic ties of "Jewishness' — religion, heritage, and at times culture and language — helped us to adapt to the challenge each new group of refugees brought, and enabled us to shape and further strengthen an effective system for the reintegration of the Jewish refugee into our community.

Who is the Soviet Jew?

Can the same be said for our current influx (and potentially our largest) of refugees — the Soviet Jew? First, let us try to understand who the Soviet Jewish refugee is. Certainly we must recognize that he is not the preconceived notion of our "shtetl" Russian. He is not the successor to the Eastern European so familiar

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to us — the Russian from the Jewish Pale who had a close tie to every aspect of Jewish communal life. Nor is he the successor of the Russian socialist agnostic, who, although rebelling against some of the Jewish traditions, was nevertheless tied to all of them. Instead he comes to us with little, if any, connection to the Jewish community of the diaspora — not only lacking in cultural and religious ties, but with a value system related to a society vastly different from the western socio-economic culture of his new home — a culture that is more adaptable and akin to our own Jewish heritage of family values and ethics.

The Soviet Jew has at best a limited and highly intellectualized concept of this Western world. He has known only, and has lived only, through a value system that places total and complete reliance on governmental responsibility, and concern for and control of every facet of life. Instead of the individual and familial rights and responsibilities that are fostered in our Judeo-Christian culture (despite our concern of the growing encroachment of a depersonalized governmental influence), the Soviet emerges from a milieu that features bureaucratic paternalism — from the ultimate decisions for career and education, to the complete responsibility for the determination of health and medical needs, social and cultural pursuits; basic sustenance on every level. Under this system, self-determination is frowned upon. How totally frustrating it must be for the Soviet Jew to adapt to our culturally sanctioned values of rugged individualism.

An even greater dilemma relates to his identity. In the USSR the Soviet Jew is not allowed to be a Russian, while at the same time he is not allowed to live as a Jew. All of us are all too familiar with the cruel history of "Mother Russia's" anti-Semitism coupled with the Soviets' systematic destruction of Judaism as a way of life and an entity. We are all familiar with the plight of the Soviet Jew who is deprived of his national origin and required to replace this with the deprecating minority classification as a Jew; an identity that he knows nothing about except that it is cause for constant danger, harassment, and an uncertain future for himself and his family.

In fact, the only practical identity that the Soviet Jew has in common with his fellow Soviet is his work job title, and even this, in a sense, is taken away from him once he leaves the USSR and discovers that his professional work title has little meaning in the Western World

The Voluntary-Sectarian Social Service System— A Unique Experience for the Soviet Jew

Can our structure as a voluntary-sectarian social service system have any meaning to this Soviet Jew who only knows of municipal government services? What sort of trust and faith can he have in this strange and new system? He has survived only by having a cautious lack of faith and trust in the old system — a system that combined the red tape of Soviet bureaucracy and the Eastern European tradition of bribery and manipulation as a way of dealing with that bureaucracy. Subterfuge was the standard and culturally accepted means of survival. Can he shed overnight these basic concepts of life by merely stepping into the western world and the unfamiliar community of the Jewish diaspora?

To him it must be almost incomprehensible that the Jewish family service or any Jewish communal agency is not merely the Jewish sector of a municipal social service system. So he brings to the Jewish communal agency a behavioral pattern that in the past had succeeded, but now only brings for him disappointment and resentment. Understanding this, can we expect him to

understand that the social worker in a voluntary Jewish agency is not a municipal civil service worker, whose allegiance is always to the municipal authorities rather to him? His role with Soviet civil servants has always been as an adversary whom, through discreet subterfuge, he must attempt to manipulate as much as possible. It, therefore, becomes a true test of professional skills for a social worker to demonstrate an effective and meaningful advocate role with his Soviet client, in accordance with the very essence of our social work process — the worker-client relationship. Unless this can happen, the resettlement of the client is jeopardized by lack of trust and mutual respect.

The concept of a free and independent Judaism, disassociated from government, is even more frustrating when he relates his own first contacts with Jewish agencies (Hias, Joint) in Vienna and in Rome, and recalls their close ties with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. When one remembers that lack of trust has been a dominant feature of the Soviet Jew for generations, one can more readily sympathize with his failure immediately to trust or relate to the Jewish community and the concept of diaspora.

The Dilemma of Traditional Social Work Goals & Practice

And so the Soviet Jew, more so than previous refugee groups, is truly a challenge to our resettlement process. Social work practice has as its basic foundation the principles of *self-determination* and *self-dependence*. Social work goals include the development and actualization of the client's individuality in a competitive, profit-motive society. Yet it must be remembered that this helping process is based on a system to which the western world has an allegiance, and which we simply take for granted. The Soviet, whose past experiences are based on a system that we seriously question, can only react with frustration. To take on these goals too soon can only result in a collision in values that leaves everyone — the Soviet Jew, the staff and administration of the agency, and the Jewish community — confused, resentful and angry. Not only must we be sensitive to this dilemma, but we, the agency and the community, must have the patience and the skill to enable the Soviet to overcome these major barriers to self-dependence.

The Conflict of Values

In addition, our social service structure has as its very foundation the familial dynamics inherent in the voluntary democratic structure of our Jewish community, Jewish communal services built from a traditional base of communal responsibility and complementing individual obligations. These are personified through our voluntary communal institutions — hospitals to care for our health, congregational and community schools for our education, child care services, family services, vocational services, etc. At the same time, however, there is the clear and traditional responsibility to support our own individual family obligations. How conflicting these basic values must be to the Soviet, whose community system was so different! For example, the traditional Jewish communal and family obligations to elderly parents conflict sharply with the Soviet policy of full governmental responsibility for and care of the elderly. The Soviet Jew does not see any guilt and is confused by community resentment and response when he refuses to care for his newly arrived elderly parents. He cannot understand why the Jewish community (to him still the government) does not carry out its expected responsibilities. The response on the part of the

social worker, who relates this behavior with family dysfunction, only adds to the confusion.

These family values — obligations and attitudes — seem to run into sharp conflict on practically every aspect of family life: marriage, divorce, expectations of children, parental responsibilities, generational conflicts, etc. And yet the warp and the woof of our social service process is directly related to culturally accepted Jewish family values. It becomes imperative, therefore, that we carefully review, not only our personal attitudes, but our casework techniques and "tools," so that they do not prove more destructive than helpful to our clients.

For example, the basic life supportive services in our resettlement process — the provision of housing and furniture, maintenance, clothing, medical needs — are all geared to the concept that these tangible forms of assistance are time-limited emergency services moving toward casework goals and objectives of independence and self-support. We see the accomplishment of these goals as a sign of health and growth of the individual's adjustment. We have trouble in conveying these goals and are frustrated. How more frustrating it must be for the Soviet whose previous signs of strength related to his success in manipulation — to get as much as he can from the municipal authorities.

Are we prepared as professionals and as a community to carefully review the use of these financial supports, and recognize that as "casework tools" they may have a vastly different meaning and implication for these new clients? What does money from a Jewish agency *really mean* to the Soviet? What does his aggressiveness, (or his submissiveness) his anger (or his cooperation) *really mean* when we, as social workers from a private non-governmental agency, fill out bureaucratic forms and slips that provide for a financial assistance plan?

The ongoing casework process always requires careful scrutiny of every facet of the worker-client relationship, but even more so with the Soviet refugee. The need for a continuous review of our assessment of each family member becomes critical when we recognize the constantly changing effects that our day-to-day realities have on his bewildering and rapidly changing life style. Goals and objectives for each family member are not simply the adjustment to a new way of life. We must take into careful account in our assessment our own, as well as our community expectations and the resulting conflict with each family member's ability to meet these goals.

The Volunteer Image

It is apparent that all social service programs, whether they be delivered in our own Jewish family service setting, or in the community, need to be carefully reviewed for adaptation to these new clients. Nowhere is this more apparent than with the use of the volunteer. Volunteers play an integral role in the resettlement process, not only as adjuncts to the casework process, but also as an important link to the community. They represent the community's interest and concern, and also are in a position to interpret the agency's policies and programs to the community. Under normal circumstances the accomplishment of these goals is no easy task. We are all too familiar with the breakdown in communication and clarification of the volunteer's role and responsibility of the client, the caseworker, the volunteer herself, and certainly the community at large. And so it becomes imperative that we take a careful look at the role of the volunteer whose agency and communal image only serves to highlight the critical position she plays in the Soviet's acceptance and understanding of his community. The caseworker's collaborative

responsibilities with the volunteer must include not only a careful orientation as to the community's and agency's expectations of the Soviet, but the expectations and meaning that the volunteer has for the Soviet who has never even heard of a volunteer who serves as a friend and advocate. Both the professional and volunteer must reckon with the deeper implications and ramifications of the Soviet's total unfamiliarity with our voluntary communal service structure, as well as our concept of the "Jewish community volunteer." No longer can we rely on the commonality of Jewish identity to effectively establish a close bond and working relationship between volunteer and "friend."

Value Conflicts in Other Resettlement Service Settings

Time does not allow a full review of the dilemmas and frustrations these conflicting value systems have on each of the social service components in our resettlement system. A few of the most obvious and basic differences will be highlighted.

Vocational counseling and vocational services are primarily based on the Protestant work ethic which stresses independence in a competitive society and cannot accept the work patterns and expectations that are deeply ingrained in the Soviet Jew; work patterns that meant survival in a Communist world, and now only result in anger and frustration by client, worker and employer. He finds it difficult to accept the concept of job mobility and job referrals, especially during the current economic crisis, which present serious problems for the vocational agency. Yet the need to adapt and reach a meaningful compromise without coddling is essential if vocational service techniques are to be successful.

These same conflicts of individual's rights and responsibilities are found in our health maintenance services. Medical and dental practices under both public and private auspices, as well as our complicated and frustrating out-patient clinics for low income families, are at best confusing and exasperating to even the most highly sophisticated American native. One can sympathize with the confusion faced by the Soviet whose previous medical and health care were simply and clearly controlled, maintained and provided for (if not necessarily in the best quality) by the government.

Our system of English classes for earlier refugee groups does not seem as effective and meaningful for recently arrived Soviets. Whether they be conducted and sponsored by the Jewish community through its JFSA's, JCC's, JVS, or religious schools, or whether they are offered through public school or library systems, there remains the need for refining our approach to the teaching of English.

We must look at our cultural and recreational services, most notably our Jewish community centers, and recognize that extra effort must be made to adapt our group work processes to reach and serve the Soviet Jew. The acculturation programs of the JCC-Settlement Houses, no longer suffice for this Jew who comes without any "Jewishness."

Other Jewish Community Institutions

And what of our other Jewish community structures, especially our religious institutions — our synagogues, temples, and religious schools? Are they ready to adapt their programs, their services, to a very new and different kind of Jew? A Jew whose loss of religiosity is only equalled by his total lack of familiarity with the complex institutions of reform and conservative Jewry. One need not emphasize the dilemma that the newly arrived Soviet faces when he is criticized by the Jewish community for not

being "Jewish," a criticism that certainly is no fault of his own. Why should he be expected to comprehend the religious, social and cultural programs of American Jewish institutions? And the same holds true for our cornucopia of Jewish civic and social groups — our women's organizations, our men's groups, our youth programs, etc. Are they ready to adapt and change their programs for new members and newcomers? Will they be able to reach out and empathize with the *full meaning* of bewilderment and strangeness faced by the Soviet Jew and not merely see this as a rejection of their Jewishness?

The Other Client Group — The Jewish Community

Our initial experiences with the Soviet influx is only serving to reaffirm our basic conviction that with mass immigration there are two client groups that we, as professional communal workers, must cope with — the immigrant and the community. "Immigration consists of two complementary processes: Integration into the community by the immigrating individual or family unit, and absorption of newcomers by the host community." The impact that the Soviet Jew is having on our Jewish community must be reckoned with. The community's expectations of the Soviet Jew is filled with complex and extensive feelings of ambivalence and misunderstanding, ranging from the resentment of his not having gone to Israel or his not being Jewish enough, to a feeling of one's own guilt that not enough is being done for our persecuted brethren.

Will our Jewish community leaders, our decision makers, or fund-raisers, along with the rest of the Jewish community, be able to redefine their expectations of the Soviet refugee? Will segments of the Jewish community be able to overcome their disappointment and displeasure, especially those who react to the subterfuge and manipulation so necessary for the Soviet Jew in the past, feelings that are quickly picked up by the Soviet and result in guilt, confusion and despair. Will the religious segments of our community overcome their criticism of these non-believers and agnostic Jews and not quickly lose their initial expression of warmth? And what of our local Federations, especially our social planning groups, both professional and lay leaders? Will they recognize the full impact of Soviet immigration and play a leading role in the restructuring of effective communal service programs? Our planning departments must recognize that successful reintegration of Soviet Jews will not take place overnight, and will require additional ongoing services and staff, especially for family and vocational services over an extended period of time. Community funding priorities may have to be changed to meet these needs, and community organizers must take the lead in clarifying that resettlement is not the sole responsibility of the Jewish family service, but requires the full commitment of all segments of the Jewish community. The decision to accept a Soviet family must be a community decision, not merely that of the family agency. For eventually every Jewish communal agency will share in this responsibility; even the Jewish home for the aged will eventually be caring for the aged parent already arriving in increasing numbers.

And so it seems abundantly clear that our ability to adapt and redefine our social services, as well as our attitudes, are as vital and important for the successful immigration of the Soviet Jew as is his own ability to adapt and modify his value system to our own cultural milieu. But it is well to remember that these are not

insurmountable obstacles. Our heritage is rich with the tradition of adaptation and it is with this inherent strength that we will eventually see the successful integration of the Soviet Jew into our American Jewish community, and together we will help him rebuild and strengthen, not only his life and his Judaism and that of his children, but that of our own as well.

Erratum

Inadvertently the Chart describing an illustrative range of services for individuals, families, groups and communities was omitted from Joel Carp's article, "The Social Work Function of the Jewish Community Center" which appeared in the Fall 1975 issue of the *Journal*. The Chart expands his comments about the service targets of social work in the Jewish community centers which begin on p. 57 of the article.

JCC SOCIAL WORK SERVICES MATRIX

ENGAGEMENT FOR PURPOSES OF	*SERVICE POPULATION*			
	INDIVIDUALS	FAMILIES	GROUPS	COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES				
ASSESSMENT OF NEED FOR SERVICE				
SOCIAL ACTION				
SOCIALIZATION GROUPS				
COUNSELLING				
FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION				
DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS GROUPS				
GROUP THERAPY				
INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES				
LEADERSHIP SKILL DEVELOPMENT				
VOLUNTEER WORK WITH PEOPLE				
DISCUSSION OF FEELINGS RELATED TO JEWISHNESS				
USE OF STAFF AS CONSULTANTS FOR . . . (a variety of purposes)				
NETWORK/COMMUNITY BUILDING				
CRISIS INTERVENTION: INDIVIDUAL/ COMMUNITY				