

# Jews and Jewish Education in Germany Today

Eliezer Ben-Rafael,  
Olaf Glöckner and  
Yitzhak Sternberg

BRILL



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# Jewish Identities in a Changing World

*General Editors*

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and Judit Bokser Liwerant

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*By*

Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Olaf Glöckner  
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## PREFACE

This book is about a major recent development in the Jewish world, namely the formation of a new and numerically significant Jewry in Germany. As a segment of the exodus of the vast majority of Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) after its disintegration, tens of thousands settled in Germany in the 1990s, creating a brand-new Jewish population.

This development, that was by no means expected a few decades ago, is in fact an aspect of a genuine transformation of the Jewish world taking place in the wake of the insertion of millions of Russian-speaking Jews (RSJs) throughout the globe. In Israel, they now comprise nearly one-fifth of the Jewish population, in the USA they constitute close to one-tenth of all Jews, and in Germany, where they have strongly contributed to creating a new Jewish population, they are now about 90% of Germany's Jews. The overall picture shows that Russian-speaking Jews have become active players in the Jewish scene, and comprise close to 20% of the world's entire Jewish population.

Whatever the current numerical importance of Russian-speaking Jews in major centers of world Jewry, their role in Germany is in fact unique. It is only in Germany that they both emigrated to a new setting from the FSU and became the vast majority of a longstanding Jewry, whose rich traditions find thousands of expressions across the country. Building on the ashes of the infamous Nazi years that decimated Europe's Jewish population two generations ago, they have made Germany the renewed home of a significant Jewish community. As a community, it has become a significant component of contemporary European Jewry, a Jewry that also comprises the Jews who decided to remain in Russia, Belarus or Ukraine, and are now allowed to set up communities openly, with their own agendas. This new situation has led commentators to define this European Jewry as a "third pillar" of the Jewish world, joining the USA and Israel (see Pinto 1996).

However, this new development has evoked acute questions, the more general ones deriving from the sociology of contemporary immigration. From this viewpoint, and in the context of scholarly discussions of present-day transnational diasporas, we want to learn whether Germany's Jewry is another example of what is defined in the literature



as a “transnational diaspora,” so characteristic of this era, that is designated by the notion of globalization. In other words, is it the case that Jews in Germany—veteran residents, Russian-speaking newcomers or both—exhibit what is commonly referred to as “dual homeness?” Or, on the contrary, do they match, *grosso modo*, the classic sociological paradigm that links in successive phases, immigration, acculturation and assimilation?

Another related set of questions concerns the sociology of Jewry. In this respect, our aim is to learn about the paradoxical condition of this Jewish population where the overwhelming majority of individuals lost their Jewish heritage during decades of a Marxist-Leninist regime, yet have kept a Jewish identification (sustained by official labeling policies) (Gittelman ed. 2003). Has this group managed to take up the banner of German Jewry’s rich legacy of previous centuries? How does this cohort of newcomers find ways to cooperate productively with the tiny but very active veteran Jewish population in Germany? Does the process of stabilizing a new Jewish reality lead to a greater focus on local and practical interests? Or does it result in strengthening community perspectives—in terms of the Jewish world at large, the Jewish state of Israel and, last but not least, the new Russian-speaking worldwide diaspora?

Whenever and wherever one discusses Jewish community life, the issue of Jewish education cannot be ignored. It has always and everywhere been the essence of the Jewish experience: in the way communities organize their educational institutions, one recognizes their basic orientations toward Jewishness. Hence, we found it of the greatest importance to particularly explore this area, as part of our comprehensive investigation into Germany’s new Jewry. Our questions in this respect are no less acute than in others, at a time when Jewish pluralism is growing and branching out across the Jewish world raising challenges to the coexistence of its numerous and ever-diverging orientations and trends.

With these issues in mind, this work presents the threefold research that we conducted over 2008–2009 with a large representative sample of respondents, a series of in-depth interviews of leading figures in Germany’s Jewish population, and a thorough survey of Jewish educational institutions throughout the country.

### *The Research Project*

This research investigated the Jewish population now living in Germany—the population of recent arrivals from the FSU as well as the country’s veteran Jewry. The first category, we call them RSJs or Russian-speaking Jews, and they include all immigrants from the FSU (and for a small minority, Eastern Europe) who settled in Germany and who were at least eight years old on arrival. The second category consists of those, we call them Veterans or Vets, who were either born in Germany or arrived here under the age of eight. The research was conducted between 2008 and 2009, and focused on collective identities, involvement in community life, and Jewish educational practices and frameworks. The research also examined such questions as how far is that population bound by rituals and collective memory, and what is its allegiance to and interaction with its environment—the non-Jewish population? Regarding RSJs, in particular, the research also studied their relations with non-Jewish Germans and Russian-German ethnics, as well as their aspirations to ultimately remain a distinct entity. In addition to all these aspects, the research considered respondents’ aspirations in the realm of Jewish education, and their reactions to the possibilities they discover in their new country in that respect. In accordance with these goals, the research comprised three facets, each requiring its own methodology.

### *The Survey*

In a first step, the researchers performed a survey of close to 1,200 subjects, forming a random sample of Germany’s Jewish population as a whole (see Figures 1 and 2). The survey was conducted in Germany’s largest Jewish communities, as well as in several small ones. We divided the Jewish communities into several categories, according to size.

<i>Large communities:</i> more than 1,500 registered members	Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Düsseldorf, Munich
<i>Middle-sized communities</i> numbering 500–1,500	Bremen, Leipzig, Hanover
<i>Small communities</i> with fewer than 500	Potsdam, Rostock, Frankfurt (East), Chemnitz

Figure 1: Communities according to size (examples)

The respondents were primarily members of or involved in a variety of Jewish frameworks—parents of schoolchildren, university students, members of cultural circles, local Jewish communities, or of specific associations. In fact, in the absence of any central list of Jews in Germany, we used any available clues that would help us to get in touch with Jews. This procedure might be seen as harming the sample’s randomness, but since we made sure to have as large a number of respondents as possible—about 1200—and seeing the diversity of our sources, we believe that we obtained a sample that was close to a faithful representation of the population investigated. The only sampling problem that we were unable to avoid concerns the Vets. Bearing in mind that they form only about 10% of the target population and since we did not have any general list, we had to rely on channels of access to potential respondents that resulted in an overrepresentation of the younger adult stratum in this group (–40). At the stage of systematic comparison between RSJs and Vets, it constrained us to make do with this stratum in both groups. The interviews were conducted by people involved in the various research-sites, and they included students, social workers, and activists in Jewish organizations. In the absence of any central institutional support, we worked directly with people active in local organizations—after receiving approval from local Jewish councils. In some cases, we operated with freelancers outside any Jewish formal framework.

A. Length of stay of respondents	
1. Immigrated to Germany after the age of 8, resided for less than 10 years	49.9
2. Immigrated to Germany after the age of 8, resided for 11–15 years	25.6
3. Immigrated to Germany after the age of 8, have resided for over 15 years	9.3
4. Were born in Germany or arrived there when they were less than 8	15.2
B. Origins of respondents	
1. Born in the FSU or Eastern Europe	88.7
2. Born in Germany	9.4
3. Born in other countries	1.9

Figure 2: The survey sample according to length of stay in Germany and origin (N=1,185; %)

Respondents were asked to answer a questionnaire. Originally written in English, it was then translated into German and Russian. Each respondent chose the language of the interview. As for the questionnaire itself, our context variables included, among others, age, gender, education, occupation, religiosity, family status, place of residence, qualification for Halakhic versus non-Halakhic Jewish status, length of stay in Germany, and origins.

The data show the recent character of the transformation of German Jewry (Figure 2). Moreover, it is also noteworthy that 31.5% of the respondents are under 40 years of age, 26.4% are aged 41–60 and 42.1% are over 60. As is usually the case with surveys (since men are more often outside the home), 45.5% of our respondents are males. In addition, 60% live with a spouse (which we replace by “partner” in the following); two-thirds (66.3%) have children, and close to that share (63%) have an academic degree. In other words, our respondents are people drawn from middle-class milieus.

In the realm of Jewish pluralism (or religiosity), we distinguished four categories: *Orthodox*, which includes here the ultra-orthodox and designates people attached to the Halakhic commandments in a religious spirit; *Liberal* defines religious people who identify with a Judaism free from some Halakhic constraints; *Traditional* designates those who adhere to some religious norms out of respect for tradition, but do not consider themselves religious; and lastly, *Secular* refers to people who present themselves as non-believers and non-traditional (even if they do respect some markers of Judaism).

Only a minority—13.2% of the respondents—feel close to Orthodox Jewishness. One-fifth (22.3%) feel closer to non-Halakhic liberal (Conservative or Reform) Judaism while one-third (32.2%) define themselves as traditional, and another third (32.3%) as secular. Hence, one cannot speak of polarization between religious and non-religious Jews but rather of pluralism, with a diversity of orientations toward the Jewish religion. Clearly, the vast majority refuses to consider themselves religious. In the background of these data, it must be taken into account that three-quarters (73.8%) of all respondents originate from families where both parents are or were Jews, leaving a quarter (26.2%) who originate from families where one parent is not Jewish. This substantial rate is still larger when it comes to the question of the partners our respondents live with (when relevant): among all those who live with a partner, less than two-thirds (62%) live with a Jewish one. Hence, independent of their feelings and how they identify

vis-à-vis Jewishness, it is a population where belonging to mixed families is by no means exceptional—though not yet the prevailing norm.

The greatest number of respondents (71.2%), like Jews everywhere, live in big cities whereas the rest live in towns of medium and small size. More specifically, one-fifth (19.3%) live in Berlin while another fifth (20.7%) reside in places in former East Germany, and the majority (60%) in cities that were previously West Germany. In a word, Jews in Germany are city-dwellers but are not necessarily concentrated in the country's capital.

Regarding occupation, one-fifth (18.6%) are students while a smaller contingent (12.6%) consists of workers or employees, and another contingent (9.7%) is composed of professionals or business persons. The salient trait here is that over one-third (34.1%) are unemployed and living on social welfare, and another quarter (24.9%) are retired. This rate of nearly 60% of people outside the labor market is rather an unusual situation—especially for a Jewish population. It reflects the age of the population, and its difficulties in converting its human capital (see the high rate of academics) into relevant qualifications for the local range of available jobs. As a corollary, a majority (59.1%) of all respondents also evaluate their income as being below the German national average, which again is in blunt contradiction with the condition of Jews in most other countries.

Another outstanding—and related—feature of this population is the fact that only a quarter (25.5%) of respondents hold German citizenship, with the overwhelming majority holding Russian (22.7%) or Ukrainian (35.3%) citizenship. The weight of immigrants in the sample (as in Germany's Jewry altogether) receives its most accurate expression here.

Beyond these background aspects, respondents were asked about the major issues implied by insertion in their new society, of the kind investigated by research works in the fields of immigration and integration. Among other issues, we inquired about personal experiences of migration and social life; collective identity and identification; perspectives on the environment; allegiances; and expectations in the realm of education. The interviews generally lasted around 20–25 minutes. Some were conducted on a face-to-face basis; others by asking respondents to fill out the questionnaire by themselves. The data were codified and analyzed according to appropriate statistical methods. Our major statistical test is Pearson's *chi-square* ( $\chi^2$ ) which tests the dependence versus independence of variables taken into consideration in the statistical analysis. The closer the test value to 0, the stronger the correlation between variables.

*Interviews of Leading Public Figures*

Another facet of the research was aimed at obtaining testimonies from prominent personalities in the Jewish community (24 individuals—see list and personal details in Appendix One) on what they consider to be particularly important issues on the Jewish agenda, and how they see the development of Jewry in the country—especially in terms of education. This aspect of the research seemed essential to us, because, as well as the attitudes of the general population as reflected in the survey, we also wanted to consider the perspectives of people intensively involved in working with and shaping that Jewry. A major question here was the extent to which the two aspects converge or diverge.

These personalities included both veterans and newcomers. One third were RSJs and one-third were women; they included residents of Berlin and other cities, members of the older generation, and of the younger. They included leading public figures who are well-known in the Jewish communities and media, rabbis, and renowned intellectuals and academics. Among the interviewees were professionals and lay leaders from the main congregations (Orthodox, Masorti/Conservative, and Liberal) as well as the heads of two newly established orthodox movements—Chabad, and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation.

Among others, we interviewed the presidents of communities in Berlin, Munich and Leipzig, as well as the Rector of the University of Jewish Studies (*Hochschule für Jüdische Studien*) in Heidelberg, the leading academic school of German Jewry for 30 years. Additionally, we interviewed the leader of an outstandingly successful educational project in North-Rhine Westphalia (Gesher—Integration by Education and Culture), the coordinator of the Limmud Learning Festival, and the Director of the Berlin Office of the World Congress of Russian-Speaking Jews (WCRJ).

*Mapping Educational Frameworks*

The third facet of the research consisted of a comprehensive overview of Jewish educational frameworks active on German soil at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century—as far as our means of communication and links could reach. This aspect of our investigation took place when we already knew that this country's Jewry is evolving toward a pluralism of its own which, among other consequences, encourages the development of Jewish educational institutions and projects under the initiative of several organizations—some

community-based, others part of international networks, and still others from independent local projects.

We were aware that Jewry in Germany is dispersed among a large range of community types, and that the problems and challenges are not necessarily identical everywhere. Our research was aimed at updating the general picture of the dynamism of Jewish educational life in Germany, by mapping educational institutions. We gathered information from dozens of sources across the country; wherever possible we did not suffice with official information, and interviewed principals of schools or sponsors. We included frameworks depending on the Haredi Chabad and the Lauder Foundation as well as institutions run by Jewish councils and secular circles. This overview allows a general look at endeavors in the field of education, the people involved in them, and their public.

Generally speaking, we consider successively (1) the insertion of Jews in Germany in wider society; (2) the inclusion of RSJs in the Jewish community; (3) the collective identities prevailing among Jews; (4) their attitudes toward Jewish education and their expectations from it; (5) the institutions of Jewish education operating in Germany. In each of the first four steps, we contrast the testimonies of our interviewees and the data that the survey elicited. In the fifth step, we principally focus on our investigation of educational institutions in Germany. The work is preceded by a theoretical debate about present-day immigration, and a presentation of the historical-sociological background of Germany's Jewry. It is concluded with a few generalizations outlining what we learn from the case. In the two appendix, moreover, we bring first texts of the interviews of leading figures and in second, the list of educational institutions operating among Jews in Germany in 2010. It is hoped that because of their intrinsic interest, both appendixes may serve as material for further research.

Our overarching ambition has been to present a description and analysis of the Jewish population of Germany, its attitudes, activities, expectations, identity formulations, and existential dilemmas.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

#### *Migration and Transnationalism*

Let us recall that migration has always implied crossing the boundary of a political or administrative unit, for a certain minimum period of time. As Massey and colleagues (2005) have shown, it is often theorized by social scientists in terms of “push” and “pull” factors explaining the movement of people outward from their original settings. The models that investigators use have drawn on world system perspectives, segmented labor-market theory, and neoclassical economics. Today, as Castles (2002) indicates, migration is more often studied in relation to the formation of multicultural societies. This kind of setting is marked by circumstances in which “integration”—once very popular among analysts of ethnicity and pluralism, has grown outdated. This notion (see Glazer and Moynihan, eds. 1975) was based on the assumption that society constitutes a more or less coherent and cohesive whole that absorbs groups of newcomers through acculturation and assimilation. Since the 1990s, scholars have tended to speak instead of “insertion,” which is much less assertive than “integration.” It means that groups become part of their new society but may do so in very diverse manners that can include declining to abandon their allegiance to their original language, culture, and even their motherland. In such circumstances, linguistic elements may be retained as markers of a cultural allegiance, or as a vernacular used among fellow-ethnics (Pieterse 2000).

From this perspective, acculturation and assimilation can vary greatly from one group to another in the same society: some groups may be more willing than others to remain attached to their legacies and less eager to “disappear in the crowd.” Religious communities often belong to these more “militant” groups, where religiosity endows a special transcendental significance to their particularism. As Peter Beyer (1994) emphasizes, religion may offer a solid ground for pluralism in society and a strong axis of transnational links.

Scholars underscore the tendency of contemporary migrant groups in this era of globalization, to retain worldwide interconnectedness of individuals, organizations, collectives, and societies that transcend the guidance of central or official bodies (Bauman 1998; Albrow 1996; Beck 2006). Never before has the world itself been the theater of those countless links between actors, that escape the state authorities' control.

This reality, as Arjun Appadurai (1996) explains, is given shape by "global flows" of financial resources, population movements, ideas and ideals, media, and technological knowledge, assuming different contours in different spaces. In these circumstances, direct communication between countries and throughout the world has become widespread, as are the possibilities for travelling from one end of the world to another. And the same applies, of course, to information about everything important happening anywhere. Migrants are able to remain strongly attached to and in contact with friends and relatives who stayed "behind" or relocated elsewhere; languages of origin may thus retain not only symbolic importance but also some practical communicative utility. This is the very definition of the notion of "transnational diaspora" (Soysal 2000) which points to the possibility that groups insert themselves in new societies without disengaging emotionally, culturally, or even socially, from their societies of origin.

It should be added that Western democracies, that migrants tend to choose as their target societies, are welfare states and liberal regimes where diverse groups are entitled to participate in public life. This includes ethnocultural entities which help to shape society's multicultural character. Such circumstances invite immigrants to both acquire the skills, language and culture they need in order to insert themselves in their new setting, and to retain, if they wish, forms of allegiance to symbols marking what they "used to be." Hence, due both to global and local conditions, transnational diasporas should be able to create a space of community life which simultaneously turns them toward their target society, and their countries or regions of origin.

So while our era is typified at the global level by a strong tendency for cultural uniformity under the predominant influence of the West over the "Rest" (the "non-West") (Bauman 1998), the latter, i.e. the Rest now constitutes a major factor of the West's increasing heterogeneity. See, for instance, how New York, Paris, Berlin and London are sharing the hosting of Chinese, Middle-Eastern, and African communities. This cultural transformation of Western societies is coupled with the

parallel cultural heterogenization of the transnational diasporas themselves; their various communities are also unavoidably influenced by their new environments, while still retaining symbols that link them to their fellow diasporans elsewhere (Ben-Rafael and Sternberg 2001).

In sum, diasporic communities are simultaneously agents of pluralization of their present societies, and of their transnational diasporas. This dual pluralization, that radiates from transnational diasporas, assumes immense importance in the context of their contemporary multiplication throughout the world, and shows how far they represent a genuine makeover of our notion of “one world.” Such developments, however, are bound to spark off identity self-questioning.

### *Identity and its Facets*

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the concept of collective identity can more than ever serve as the basis for understanding how collectives evolve in society. The enhanced importance of identity today is linked to the development of (post)-modern society (Lash and Friedman 1992), that spurred the “search for identity.” Values, symbols, legacies, and commitments, brought together in some sort of “canonized libraries,” turn collective identity into the foundation of a historical culture (Denzin 1991). Researchers, however, also emphasize that the importance and formulation of identity fluctuate with circumstances, and individual and collective considerations of cost and benefit. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) go as far as to speak of “invented traditions.” Clearly, then, as Barth (1998) confirms, collective identity should be seen as a dynamic social process, a kind of group project that emerges through participation in a culture, moral codes and practical experience. This may explain why the concept of collective identity serves as the heading for studies of self-perception, the way in which people distinguish themselves from each other, and how they interpret the fact that they consider themselves distinct social entities.

It is our own contention (Ben-Rafael 2002) that by definition a collective identity implies three different facets. These distinct yet related aspects are associated with various basic principles. The first concerns the way in which people describe their link to the collective and their obligations to it; that is, the practical implications of their self-definition as members of the collective. The second relates to how individuals describe the collective’s social, cultural, moral, normative, religious,

historical, or linguistic singularity. The third aspect focuses on the way individuals perceive the place of the collective in relation to “others,” both near and far (Lash and Friedman 1992). These three features of collective identity are not necessarily perceived similarly by all sectors or individuals. Different formulations within the same group of people may emerge as a result of circumstances, influences, or personal biographies and preferences. Analyzing collective identity in terms of these three major aspects also enables us to ask which one is emphasized more strongly in each formulation. Accordingly, we should be able to demonstrate how different conceptions, some quite remote from one another, may be encompassed within the space of formulations referring to the same collective identity.

Here, a complementary and inseparable question derives from the fact that in most cases, individuals do not carry one distinctive identity only. We are generally conscious of belonging to different circles of reference that impact in one way or another on our interests and behaviors. The issue that then arises with respect to every single identity that we articulate, concerns the relative importance we grant it in comparison to the other identities that we share—all-national, professional, familial or other—and more generally, how important that identity is to us. Phrased differently, this query raises the question of how far we “identify,” so to speak, with the specific identity. People may feel they “belong” to a given group but at the same time may be quite indifferent to that perception, when compared to other interests they are conscious of. Such individuals strongly contrast with others who feel almost wholly enlisted on behalf of a particular identity.

Various factors, both circumstantial and endemic, may account for this disparity of degrees of identification. Underprivileged people may identify more with a collective identity that safeguards their dignity despite their condition, than do the affluent—who more easily develop new interests, networks and allegiances. On the other hand, because of its transcendental essence, whenever religion lies at the root of a collective identity it can sustain stronger identification from members than when it concerns a group sharing less demanding features—such as a mere geographical or linguistic origin. In such cases, there seems to be some linkage between identity and identification, but this kind of relation should not be considered necessarily obvious and overwhelming, for it may be influenced by situational or other circumstances. Seeing this eventual autonomy of the two concepts, one may conceive of groups that share a clear vision of their collective identity but iden-

tify with it weakly; they aspire to assimilate into their environment, even at the cost of disregarding their legacy. On the other hand, it is not improbable that people lacking a clear shared perception of their collective identity cling to it when, for instance, they feel harshly discriminated against because of that very identity.

### *The Jewish Case*

For some groups, the question of identity and identification may represent a quite complex matter, due to particular historical and far-reaching cultural givens. Contemporary Jews are an example that illustrates the complexity of this issue of identity. The old traditional model of identity that persisted among them for centuries defined Jewishness by evincing dedication to the God and *Torah* of Israel. It demanded of them total commitment to a people that, according to the simplest form of the myth, originated from the Land of Israel and would return there with the coming of the Messiah, in recompense for their devotion to God—a process described by the Scriptures as “Redemption.” This allegiance to the “God and Torah of Israel” was dominant in traditional Judaism, giving all its meaning and legitimacy to the existence of the Jewish People as bearers of a holy mission. According to the same narrative, the Land of Israel, the Promised Land, is the only place where Jews are “at home,” rendering any other location “exile” and any other people, “Gentile,” i.e. a population that is not “us.” Yet while this identity stresses the singularity of the collective, it also develops a universal calling. Indeed, it is by its own redemption that this nation will redeem the whole world, substantiating the portrayal of the Jewish nation as the “Chosen People.” Although God is One and universal, His words obligate a particular group with the crucial role of saving the world by observing the commandments “within and among itself.”

Stemming from this traditional caste-like definition of Jewry—through numerous transformations—are all modern formulations of Jewishness found throughout the Jewish world ever since Jews gradually left their closed societies, entered the modern era, and were given the opportunity to belong to non-Jewish nations. We can distinguish two major dimensions of this trend for differentiation among Jewish identities. The transnational dimension refers to clusters of different approaches to the contents of Judaism that find their way to many, if

not all, Jewish communities throughout the world. The spatial dimension draws spaces within the Jewish world that are influenced by specific contingencies. The respective influences of these dimensions are analytically distinct, but combine to produce both divergences and convergences of empirical syndromes of Jewish identities that can be grouped in three large clusters of formulations.

### *The Transnational Dimension*

The transnational dimension starts from the codes of traditional Judaism, i.e. commitment to the Jewish People, the perception of singularity embodied in the Torah, and a reference to the Land of Israel. With modernity, that model became outdated for a large majority of Jews across the world, and only the ultra-orthodox minority—who themselves are divided into a large diversity of secondary models—make immense efforts to retain it. However, two other clusters of formulations grew larger, what we call the ethnocultural formulations, and the national formulations. In brief:

- (a) Ultra-orthodox formulations aspire to continue the community's past. Viewing the Torah as the heart of Jewishness, they emphasize Halakhic bigotry, and abundantly use markers underlining their "mobilization" on behalf of the Jews' "holy mission." Having become a minority among the Jews, they see themselves as a kind of "vanguard" of the Jewish People.
- (b) The ethno-cultural formulations share a universalism associated with "Jewish peoplehood," its history, and the culture that it carried for centuries. Some of those formulations do adhere to the Jewish faith, but most have selective attitudes toward the requirements of the Talmudic law (the "halakha"); there are "modern religious Jews" and non-Halakhic Judaisms. Others are frankly secular and place more emphasis on the cultural contents of Judaism as the Jews' contribution to human civilization; they express their allegiance to the Jewish world by limited adherence to given customs.
- (c) The national formulations emphasize the preoccupation with the Jewish collective as an entity of its own among the nations of the world. It defines Israel as the Jews' homeland, and Hebrew as the cradle of the new Jewish-national culture. Again, this cluster is divided into the religious and the non-religious, the cultural space sought for expressing particular historical-cultural legacies or ideo-

logical approaches toward the significance of Jewish sovereignty. All its components, however, have in common the importance granted to the territorializing of Jewry as conditioning nationhood.

To this we may add a pattern that has recently taken shape, on the basis of American surveys, namely the notion of “belonging-without-believing.” Particularly relevant among Jews, that pattern has also been found in the USA as pertinent to quite a few Christians. A survey performed in 2008 and analyzed by Steven Cohen and Lauren Blitzer (2008) finds that religious affiliation in the USA is highly diverse and extremely fluid. A majority of Americans who are affiliated with a religion, for instance, do not believe their religion is the only way to salvation. Nearly 30% have left the faith in which they were raised. Factoring in changes in affiliation from one form of Protestantism to another, one obtains nearly half of all respondents. At the same time, over half of all Americans rank religion as highly important in their lives, attend religious services regularly, and pray daily. The survey also elicits that more than nine out of ten Americans (92%) believe in the existence of God or a universal spirit: nearly two-thirds take the view that their faith’s sacred texts are the word of God. Among Jews, while there are far fewer believers, at the same time they are affiliated with congregations and show high levels of congregation membership. Moreover, the extent to which Jews provide their children with religious schooling—be it full-time or part-time—equals, if not surpasses, that of their Christian counterparts. In other words, Jews’ patterns of religious belief and religious behavior more closely resemble those of the religiously unaffiliated. But matters are different for their expressions of group belonging, as measured by congregation-membership and sending children to religious schools, as well as many other forms of group belonging. In this area, Jews’ relatively high scores stand in sharp contrast with their low levels of conventional religious belief.

In any event, each cluster considered above emphasizes different facets, and formulates them in its own way (see Ben-Rafael 2002a), and as a result, each one finds itself in a variety of relations to the others. To cite just a few examples, for the ultra-orthodox faith in “the God and Torah of Israel” remains, as it traditionally was, the supreme tenet of Judaism. For the Enlightenment movement, followed by the Reform and Conservative Movements, “the Jewish People” came first, as carriers of a legacy interpreted in a culturalist perspective of “the God and Torah of Israel.” Zionism, for its part, viewed “the Land of



Israel”—the Jews’ national territory—as the primary aspect of Judaism where a Jewish culture and nation would develop as an alternative to diasporic Judaism. Needless to say, these divergences are foci of conflict in the frame of an entity where “togetherness” has always been a major codifier and existential axiom.

Furthermore, the numerous formulations attached to each cluster foment inner tensions. Among the ultra-orthodox, Lithuanian Judaism opposes Hassidic Judaism and, within the latter, a variety of groups compete with each other. In recent decades a Sephardic ultra-orthodoxy has joined this cluster and represents an additional cleavage. From outward-oriented Secular and Reform Judaism to inward-oriented Modern Orthodoxy, the ethnocultural cluster is also primarily characterized by inner debates, and all share a flexible approach to the boundaries of Jewishness. For them, Jewishness is in fact secondary to local national identities, in contrast to both the ultra-orthodox and the national cluster. The latter cluster is dominated by pragmatic forces confronting extremists of the right and the left, and still others who stand for multiculturalism. All, however, share the adoption of Hebrew as the national language.

Each cluster is also signaled by contrasting markers. The profusion of ultra-orthodox markers is well known—from the black suit and long beard of men, to women’s wigs and loose clothing—and makes them strikingly singular. The ethnocultural cluster emphasizes learning the languages of the environment, and adapting Jewish symbols to contemporary contexts. The national cluster is powerfully marked by territorial concentration, the nationalization of biblical symbols, and the cultural impacts of specific life-conditions. These contrasts reflect genuine tensions and leadership rivalry. Jewishness is sovereign for the national cluster, and institutions attached to safeguarding Judaism are at the center. It is obvious to the ultra-orthodox that they are the guardians of Jews’ true faith, and should be considered Jewry’s leading force. The ethnocultural cluster maintains that it best embodies Jew’s universalism and contribution to the world. All these clusters are diversely present, in a variety of forms, in the various loci of world Jewry.

This perspective converges with Daniel Elazar’s analysis (1999) which underlines that nowadays we find—according to circumstances of time and place—religious, ethnic and national aspects of Judaism emphasized to varying degrees by different Jewish identity formulations. It is a differentiation process anchored in the fact that Jewry

has become an essentially subjective phenomenon: it is by no means a definitive given of the Jewish condition any more, as it was in traditional settings. In turn, this understanding is close to that of Liebman and Cohen (1990), who insist that Jewishness is now a “personalist,” “voluntarist” matter. On this ground, the authors contend, Jewish identification and identity assume very diverse contours according to circumstances. In itself, as Birnbaum and Katzenelson (1995) maintain, it does not contradict the fact that a continuity of cultural orientations is discernible among Jews, beyond the range of reactions to modernity. This perspective finds support in the work of Shmuel Eisenstadt (1992) who speaks of a “Jewish civilization,” whose roots lie in Jewish traditions that have been preserved throughout Judaism’s transformations over the centuries. Currently at the center of this civilization is the notion of cultural-historical community, most often labeled “peoplehood.” It does not, however, prevent the intra-Jewish cleavages that are abundantly documented in the work of Jonathan Sacks (1993), who maintains that the most important cleavages are those dividing the religious from the secular, the orthodox from the liberal, and Israel from the Diaspora.

While all these differences confirm the reality of centrifugal tendencies among the various formulations, there is evidence of centripetal forces as well. A telling fact is that the validity of Halakhic criteria is universally accepted as criteria for membership. None of these formulations questions the axiom that a person who is born to a Jewish mother (and has no other religion) or undergoes Halakhic conversion is a Jew. Since the overwhelming majority of Jews world-wide meet these requirements, regardless of their perception of Judaism, all versions may be said to relate *grosso modo* to the same people. The differences in each version’s charting the collective leave only a more or less narrow margin outside the overlapping area. This margin consists principally of two categories of individuals: those converted Jews who underwent a Reform or Conservative conversion and are not recognized by the orthodox and the communities that follow their leadership in this matter; those whose fathers are Jews but not their mothers and who are Jewish only in the eyes of Reform Judaism and secular Jews who disregard Halakhic criteria. The relative importance of these categories is difficult to assess, but as far as the main bulk of Jews is considered, i.e. those whose mothers are Jewish or converted according to the orthodox rite, they are referred to by all schools as pertaining, in any case, to what they understand as the “Jewish People”. As such,

one cannot deny the reality of only one Jewish People—even if the boundaries of this entity are not unambiguously defined by everyone in the same terms.

Moreover, all formulations draw many of their symbols from the same repertoire of traditions, rituals, and narratives. The differences primarily concern their interpretation, understanding, or definition. Similarly, all versions attribute special significance to Israel as the concretization of sovereign Jewish life in “the land of the forefathers,” albeit their approach to this entity and the degree of importance they ascribe to it vary widely from one milieu to another. Consequently, the symbols of each flow are familiar to the others, and all of them participate in the same discourse. Almost all relate to “the Land of Israel,” or at least the State of Israel, as well as to Jewish communities worldwide, with a sense of solidarity. Last but not least, the dynamism of Israeli society as a compact Jewish setting excelling in the creation of cultural symbols accounts for its impact on Jewish communities worldwide. Israeli Hebrew—originally created to distinguish the Jewish population in Israel from the diaspora—is now migrating to New York, Paris or Moscow where it enters Jewish schools and is taught as the contemporary first Jewish language. The same is true of Israeli folklore, rock music, and forms of secular ritual that become part of the distinctive markers of the Jewish diaspora vis-à-vis the non-Jewish environments. All in all, these common denominators tend to counter-balance the tensions prevailing between the three clusters.

### *The Spatial Dimension*

There is also room here to consider the spatial dimension of the differentiation between Jewish identities and collectives, related to the specific and historical circumstances in the formation of communities. This aspect is particularly underlined by numerous contemporary researchers who speak in this context of the impact of “contingency” (see Covers and Vermeulen, eds. 1997). In terms of the Jewish world, and limiting our attention to three major contemporary arenas of Jewish life, we may distinguish from each other the Jewries of Israel, the US and Europe. These three arenas represent marked differences that are relevant to our present focus. In Israel, as in the other arenas, one finds all three transnational clusters (Ben-Rafael and Peres 2005). Most versions, however, belong to the national syndrome and are imbued with allegiance to Israel as a primary element of Jewish identity. This

firstly applies to secular mainstream Israelis, who represent an updated form of Zionism. The local ultra-orthodox take issue with this trend, primarily referring to their own cluster but still making Halakhic demands on the state to assert its “Jewish character,” and thus also situating themselves within the state. The National orthodox, for their part, are mostly fervent nationalists who, spurred by their reading of the Scriptures, populate the settlements in Judea and Samaria and propound an unyielding political credo.

Israeli Jewishness also branches out into ethnic formulations. Communities populated by Mizrahi Jews retain the traditionalism from which ultra-orthodox Shas emerged, under the banner of the Sephardic legacy. Antithetical to Shas, RSJ immigrants are mostly secular and consider Russian culture and language as the markers of their “culturedness.” Though they have acquired Hebrew and become progressively familiar with Jewish-Israeli culture, after about three generations under a hostile regime in the FSU they start from a weak initial position in this respect. Intellectuals calling today for the “de-Zionization” of Israel constitute another factor. They contend that Jews in Israel, like anywhere, comprise an ethnic entity that should not prevail in definitions of the state. In this context, and unlike the situation in other loci, this Israeli version of Jewish ethnoculturalism constitutes a radical protest against Israel’s definition as a Jewish state.

American Jewry also encompasses a profusion of formulations (Wertheimer 1993). There are the ultra-orthodox who see in their yeshivot (plural of yeshiva, i.e. religious academy) the “jewel” of Judaism, but are beset by controversies of their own. At the other end of the spectrum, Zionist movements encourage *aliya* (immigration to Israel) and see themselves as full-fledged participants in the national project. However, the ethnocultural cluster is the prevailing one. The Modern Orthodox belong to this cluster, seeing themselves as part of the modern world and aspiring to reconcile its demands with community life. They are not too far from, but still hostile to, non-Halakhic Judaisms that are not committed with the same rigor to Jewish precepts. The Reform movement has excelled in this direction, but secular humanistic Judaism has gone still further by completely rejecting the theistic principle’s relevance in world affairs. Despite these disagreements, all clusters still share the reference to Judaism as a culture and a historical experience conveyed by Jewish “peoplehood,” thus grounding their solidarity with the Jewish world. Their sociocultural dynamism is expressed in the multiple institutions found in the USA,

and, above all, the structuring of community life along congregational lines. Nearly every group has its own synagogue or temple; its rabbis or leading personalities; its styles of ingathering, including praying; and its proceedings on matters of circumcision, bar-mitzvah, marriage, and burial.

European Jewry is also mostly ethnocultural, but the picture it offers is quite different than that in the USA (Sacks 1993; Birnbaum 2003; Meyer 1999). The turning-point in recent years was the fall of the Soviet Bloc, the democratization of most of its previous components and, eventually, several countries' joining the European Union (EU). However dramatic those changes, they were far more so for the Jews. Between two and three million Jews of the FSU were suddenly reconnected to the Jewish world after decades of isolation. The large majority of this tribe left *en masse* their countries and reconfigured world Jewry. As a result, European Jewry became more heterogeneous and divided than ever, not only by the internal diversity of communities but also, unlike Israel and the USA, by its dispersion throughout national societies, languages and cultures. At a time when large parts of Europe are becoming integrated into the EU, questions come to mind in the Jewish context about the relations that could develop among the various components of this newly numerically significant Jewry, and between it and the rest of the Jewish world, principally Israel and American Jewry. In other words, can we expect that the Jewish world will benefit from a third pillar that might strengthen its solidity?

While this Jewry also encompasses all three clusters of Judaism—as in the USA and Israel—here the ultra-orthodox and the national clusters represent only very small minorities. The major tendencies of European Jewry place them in the ethnocultural cluster, quite close to the secular end. Nonetheless, intensive activism unfolds across European Jewry, with numberless community publications, websites, clubs, museums, university programs of Jewish studies, orthodox and Liberal synagogues. It is noteworthy that, unlike American Jews and with the exception of French Jews of North African origin, European Jews are mostly secular, and do not adopt the congregational model. Jewishness is for them primarily a matter of individual choice. From Leo Strauss to Emmanuel Levinas and André Neher, important scholars of Judaism have flourished in Europe, but individualism and voluntarism prevail in Jews' identification. It is often the case that Jews show reluctance to systematically declare their Jewishness to non-Jews. Even among the more assertive, Jewishness is often associated with sparse knowledge of Judaism.

It is also to note that European Jewry has two significant characteristics that are entirely its own. First, there is the fact that (again with the exception of French Jews of North African origin and unlike Israeli or American Jews in general) the Jews now living in Europe are part of their continent's longstanding history. In many cities, old Jewish quarters and many other sites have been present for centuries, the backdrop to a rich history of events that encourage the sense of belonging. They were also the setting for a martyrology that culminated in the Shoa and confronted Europe's Jews with the harshest challenge—as Jews. Shoa survivors and their offspring who continue to live on European soil must somehow come to terms with these memories, and their non-Jewish surroundings.

Another element has recently been added to this predicament. European Jews are witnessing in their immediate environment the rapid growth of a Moslem population (Bowen 2004; Mernissi 1992; Salih 2004). Mosques dominate new underprivileged constituencies, that tend to generalize to Jews their animosity toward Israel, nourishing what Pierre-André Taguieff (2002) describes as neo-Judeophobia. In the context of Europe's "political correctness" norms, this anti-Semitism is not always strongly condemned, as long as it falls short of physical violence. Moreover, tensions around Jews are also nurtured by negative attitudes toward Israel on the part of major media and political circles. One—not unprecedented—outcome is that more than a few Jews adopt the "good Jew" syndrome, i.e. admitting to Jewish origin, but coupling the admission with extreme criticism of Israel. In a similar vein, scholars of Jewish origin maintain that Judaism is diasporic in essence, and Jewish statehood can only have an adverse effect.

In all these respects, European Jews indeed represent a unique Jewish experience. Despite their particularism and contradictions, European Jews unmistakably belong to the Jewish world. As in other Jewish arenas, they are targeted by all versions of Judaism, aspiring to gain influence over Jews. Thus in Berlin, London, Moscow and Paris, like in Jerusalem and New York, one finds B'nai B'rith lodges, Zionist movements, Chabad centers, Liberal as well as orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox synagogues. Strong interest is shown for the Middle-Eastern drama, where 40% of the world's Jews confront, as most of them see it, the unfolding of Jewish history.

Similar to the situation in all other Jewish arenas, in Europe too this diversity of phenomena expresses both the solidarity of the Jewish world and its deep divisions; a diversity that indicates both how uncompromising the Jews' endemic conflicts are, and what nevertheless binds

them together. A diversity declaring that while many Jews throughout the world have different ideas about Jewishness, they still attach importance to having their views shared by Jews worldwide. Hence, though we may speak of many ways of being Jewish, but not yet of different “Jewish Peoples.”

What we find is a relative and uneven proximity and resemblance exhibited by the different formulations, as well as the different arenas of the Jewish world vis-à-vis each other. This picture is best described by the Wittgensteinian notion of “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1961), a concept he developed when analyzing the structure of languages. Like his analyses of “word games” that make up distinct codes, within the space of formulations constituted by Jewish identities we find some very different ones that still show a certain resemblance. The diversity is manifest in a plethora of dissimilarities as well as points of resemblance that are inconsistent and clearly asymmetric, though they all derive from the same sources, are dressed in the same symbols, and drawn from the same origins and narratives. In other words, the different phrasings of Jewish identity resemble each other in the complex sense that a family is composed of closer and more distant relatives, who resemble each other in various ways and to varying degrees. The distances we have discerned among Jewish identities indicate how those formulations converge into clusters, as well as how distinct they are from each other. All relate to the same social entity and contend with the same basic questions, and it is as such that their differences and similarities can be grouped under the heading “family resemblance.” Only in these terms can we find any commonality between Shas in Israel, Secular Humanistic Judaism in the U.S., and the Bund in Europe. In the “family” of Jewish identities, these formulations are indeed “cousins,” if very remote ones. Like the members of an extended family, these formulations are likely to develop a differential or asymmetric sense of solidarity with their many “relations.” But as long as they ask the same questions, these different formulations cannot be entirely estranged from one another, even if they do not provide the same answers.

To sum up, we have enlarged on three clusters pertaining to the transnational dimension of differentiation of Jewishness, and on the ways they appear along the spatial dimension, in the three main arenas of Jewry. In this discussion we were able to evince the intermingling of these dimensions and how they all contribute to a pandemonium of Jewish identities. We also found that beyond the chaos, we can trace out

paths and lines that organize this space in a manner that makes sense and highlights aspects of convergence, while simultaneously pointing out the divergence and the ramifications.

What still needs underlining at this point, is that not only do the diverse clusters exhibit different tendencies and emphases which distinguish them from each other, but that they also exhibit different degrees of crystallization. This aspect relates to the fact that not all three clusters are equally subject to each of the two dimensions of differentiation of Jewish identity discussed previously—the transnational and spatial dimensions. As noted, the ultra-orthodox are the leading cluster in terms of internal cohesion. Whether ultra-orthodox Jews live in Israel, the USA or Europe, it is certainly expressed in a range of differences between communities, but as a whole they submit to the guidance of their worldwide spiritual leaders. As such, the ultra-orthodox assert themselves with markers that everywhere inevitably set them apart from “others”—Jews and non-Jews alike. Secondly, under the combined effect of all-Jewish nationalism and the multi-faceted impacts of clear-cut and particular spatial circumstances, Israeli Jewry is also prominent, with its territorial attachment, notion of citizenship in a sovereign Jewish state, and the generalized use of Hebrew for both daily and cultural uses. All these create a uniformity that is not yet as dense as that of the ultra-orthodox, but which is clearly more demanding than the ethnocultural cluster.

This latter cluster, which is by far the predominant one throughout the Jewish diaspora, is strongly influenced by contingencies. As a whole, and within the spatial dimension, its components display the greatest diversity in crucial aspects of their endeavors: each community shares the language and culture of its particular environment; its members are citizens of another nation and involved in another national agenda; and it evolves in contexts where Jewishness encounters another dominant culture and finds itself in a different configuration of social, cultural and political cleavages. On the other hand, the anchors of Jewishness for these communities are neither strict religious obedience, as for the ultra-orthodox, nor clear-cut territorial-political realities, as for the Israeli-national Jews. Jewishness is grounded here above all in the subjective self-understandings of Jews, as Jews. They attach these personal self-perceptions to sets of values, symbols, and interpretations of history that fluctuate from community to community, if not from milieu to milieu, or individual to individual. Often superficially understood, it is a form of Judaism that intermingles with



other interests—even though it may provide a fruitful field for intellectual, professional, or artistic creativity. It is in this cluster that one finds the lowest level of cohesion in the transnational dimension, and the highest degree of heterogeneity in the spatial dimension. It is here that people who reflect on Jewry's future in the world ponder the viability of Jewishness in the present-day world where numerous members of communities of religious origin are often aptly described by the phrase “belonging without believing.”

This issue, we believe, is acutely significant for the new Jews of Germany where many people lacking any baggage of Jewish education and culture have recently settled and are now the flag-bearers of historical German Jewry. It is a situation that raises many questions, for it represents an illustrative case of ethnocultural Judaism today, and may well be most instructive regarding options for developing contemporary ethnocultural Judaism as a whole. This aspect, however, is just one of a whole series of questions concerning the dilemmas and propositions considered above.

### *German Jewry: The Contradictory Drives*

This work indeed addresses the characterization and analysis of Germany's new Jewry from this combined general-theoretical and Jewish-studies perspective. We want to learn whether it is a new local, mostly non-orthodox, community that tends to root itself in its present-day diasporic environment, to discover the ways it responds to the practical, endemic challenges of settling there, the extent to which it displays traits characteristic of transnational diasporas, and the manner in which it crystallizes new collective identities, if at all. We will also consider issues that attract Jews in Germany to Jewishness.

In Germany today, the notion of transnational diaspora may be of particular relevance, even of major relevance regarding its new Jewish population. With the creation of the State of Israel, the veteran Jewish community's strong allegiance to Israel took shape, and adopted it as its “territorialized origin.” This, however, did not preclude the community from anchoring itself in the German post-war reality. As for the new Russian-speaking immigrants, who now form the vast majority of Jewry in Germany, they find themselves with two different “territorialized origins”—Israel, and their original country in the FSU.

This population can now openly express its Jewishness and some allegiance to Israel, where the largest part of their fellow-Jews have chosen to settle and now form the largest concentration of RSJs in the world. On the other hand, this population is also attached to Russian culture and their country of origin. RSJs in Germany therefore share, so to speak, a double transnational-diaspora condition; though, their settling in Germany certainly brings up as well the question of their anchorage in their new environment that may sooner or later become a homeland—and, eventually, the prime homeland. It is in this context that a question of general theoretical interest to a study of Germany's Jewry is relevant—it should illustrate how, in this case at least, contradictory principles of “homeness” can coexist or confront each other.

Several works have applied a diaspora-building perspective in studying the dispersion of Russian-speaking Jews across the world since the late 1980s. These emigrants indeed created new communities in many places, and maintain ongoing contacts with each other. Each such community evolves, however, in different circumstances and cultures, and the diaspora entity as a whole tends to develop into a multicultural entity. It is from this angle that we analyze RSJs in Germany.

This case is particularly intriguing: it consists of Jews—many of them non-Halakhic Jews—who were originally remote from Judaism but with their overwhelming numerical importance in the local Jewish population have become, *volens nolens*, the inheritors of Germany's historical Jewry. Awareness to the Shoa, which has a highly complex significance for Jews' horizon there, does not facilitate their situation. Moreover, the largest number of RSJ emigrants emigrated to Israel, which is a pole of reference everywhere in the Jewish world and for the RSJs in Germany as well. At the same time, RSJs are still interested in their countries of origin where their friends and relatives still reside. As Russian-speaking Jews, they also tend to crystallize their own transnational diaspora. All these factors create an intricate set of factors in RSJs' visions of collective identities, social boundaries, and the tenets that singularize them as a distinct entity. In all these respects, contemporary Jewry in Germany almost constitutes an ideal-type situation, whose investigation can help answer questions that are today endemic to the study of the Jewish world as well as to the more general interests of contemporary transnational diasporas.

These topics were investigated in the 2008–2010 research, conducted with a sample of almost 1200 respondents from diverse Jewish milieus;

interviews with 24 leading figures of German Jews; and an investigation of Jewish educational frameworks in Germany. We focused on identity, social images, and commitments, and their relation to factors like length of stay in Germany, education level and socioeconomic status, attitude vis-à-vis Jewishness, and place of residence in Germany. All in all, we asked whether RSJs in Germany are becoming German Jews, Russian-speaking Jews living in Germany, Jews primarily attached to the Jewish world and Israel, or to the RSJ diaspora, just Germans, or just Russian émigrés. Our data indicate a syndrome that can be broadly defined as “transnational ethnocultural diaspora,” and they allow us to put forward another question: “what are the codes and dynamics of this type of diaspora?”

## CHAPTER TWO

### JEWRY IN GERMANY: PAST AND PRESENT

Whether or not consciously, that new Jewry in Germany is getting into the path of a community that was for long one of the most outstanding components of the Jewish world. Whether or not consciously, they follow up in the path of their predecessors.

#### *From Far Past to Shoa*

Germany has long played a key role in European-Jewish history. Jews probably arrived together with Roman legions in the Rhineland and the Danube valley and signs of the presence of Jews in 321 have been found in Cologne (Herzig and Rademacher 2007: 25). In later stages, when Christianity spread, Jews remained the only group that retained its original faith; for a few centuries, the relations with the Christians were quite peaceful. Affluent communities existed in Cologne, Mainz, Speyer, and Worms. Synagogues and *yeshivot* were built and Jewish scholarship developed. Gerschom ben Jehuda (960–1028), one of the first prominent scholars on German soil, opened an academy in Mainz. Salomon ben Izhak (1040–1105)—the illustrious Rashi—studied in Mainz and Worms. At that period, Jewish merchants enjoyed special protection rights that ensured their safety. Jews from Italy and Byzantium arrived in the eleventh century, bringing to 20,000 the number of Jews living in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

A reversal of the situation occurred with the start of the Crusades at the end of the eleventh century. The First Crusade set the pattern of destroying Jewish quarters on the way to liberating Jerusalem from the Muslims. It is reported that 1,300 Jews were killed in Mainz, and about 800 in Worms. New massacres followed with other Crusades and the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, headed by Pope Innocent III, passed draconic anti-Jewish regulations—Jews were now banned from public offices, obliged to wear special clothes such as the “Jew’s hat” and a “Yellow mark.” They were no longer allowed to attend

Christian taverns and baths, or to employ Christian workers. It also became forbidden for Jews to acquire property, and Christian craftsmen's guilds remained closed to them. Jews were to earn their living from a narrow spectrum of jobs, and many were forced to work as rag dealers, pawnbrokers, money changers, peddlers and vagrants. Hostility toward Jews within the non-Jewish population increased dramatically and reached a peak during the European plague of 1347–1353, which killed one-third of the continent's population. Many considered the epidemic to be "the work of the Jews." Jews were assassinated in 85 European cities, and expelled from many others.

From time to time, more peaceful episodes occurred, such as when in 1236, Frederick II (1194–1250) granted the Jews the status of "serfs of the chamber" (*Kammerknechte*) which ensured the community a certain autonomy—at the cost of high taxes. Nevertheless, throughout the fifteenth century, massacres and persecutions continued, including expulsions in the Rhine area, Munich and Upper Bavaria (1442). Under a variety of accusations, Jews were burnt in Breslau, Sternberg, and, in 1510, in Berlin as well. By 1520, Jews had been almost completely expelled from the larger cities in the German-speaking region, and by the mid-sixteenth century only two relatively large Jewish communities remained—in Frankfurt-am-Main and Worms. Many Jews emigrated to Poland and Bohemia at that time.

The Protestant Reform movement emanating from Germany in the early sixteenth century was not substantially different in its hostility towards the Jews than the Catholics. In Luther's infamous pamphlet "About the Jews and their Lies" written in 1543, he recommended burning down synagogues, destroying Jewish houses, confiscating prayer books, and forbidding rabbis to teach. In 1544, Emperor Karl V reintroduced for a certain time the protected status of the Jews in German states and prohibited the closure of synagogues and schools, as well as the expulsion of Jews.

Greater stability returned after the Thirty-Years War, in 1648 (the Peace of Westphalia) with the strengthening of the secular authority. Emperors hired individual Jews as Court Jews, to serve their purposes as consultants, money-lenders, tax collectors, or providers of military troops. These Jews often served as buffers for their communities and helped them obtain rights and permissions for special projects. At the end of the seventeenth century, Jews expelled from Vienna were allowed to settle in the principality of Brandenburg, and later in Berlin—in limited numbers. The first synagogue in Berlin opened

its gates in 1714. It marked the beginning of a dynamic Jewish life. Berlin gradually witnessed intellectual debates, the blossoming of new arts and scholarship. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Jewish Salons of Berlin became famous.

The Prussian Jews' Edict of 1812 granted Jews further rights, but it was only in 1869 that the North German Union (*Norddeutscher Bund*) passed a law granting citizenship rights, and the Constitution of the newly founded German Empire (*Kaiserreich*) in 1871, finally conferred full citizenship rights on Germany's Jews (Elon 2002).

Nevertheless, anti-Semitism was deeply entrenched in German society, and constantly manifested itself. Jews were regularly accused of every social ill, and campaigns were launched from all social strata for the abolition of Jews' citizenship rights. More than 250,000 Germans signed an anti-Semitic petition, which was sent to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, demanding the revocation of Jews' emancipation. In response, in 1890, an Association for the Defense against anti-Semitism (*Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*) was founded, where non-Jews like the historian Theodor Mommsen and the writer Heinrich Mann took an active part. In 1893, liberal Jews, mainly from Berlin, founded the Central Association of German citizens of the Jewish Faith (*Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*).

Despite continuing social hostility, most German Jews welcomed and enjoyed the emancipation with its new opportunities for self-realization. Many of them moved to the cities, and more than a few achieved professional and financial success. At that time, young educated Jews became lawyers, physicians, artists, publicists, scientists, and some high-ranking politicians. Though they encountered career barriers, some highly talented Jews who rejected conversion to Christianity nevertheless managed to become deputies in the National Parliament (*Reichstag*) and in the senates of provincial towns. Parts of the Jewish elites were now also tremendously successful in banking, publishing, large-scale industry, and international trading, and many enjoyed shared networks with non-Jewish Germans. A good example of such a social network was the Berlin based Society of Friends (*Gesellschaft der Freunde*) which was founded in 1792. Originally a club formed by young, politically aware devotees of the Haskala, the society later became closely connected with Berlin's Jewish community and was led by successful businessmen. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Society of Friends had become a meeting place for the heads of banks, publishing houses, and major industrial firms. On the other

hand, many Jews converted to Christianity at this epoch. As Heinrich Heine ironically said, converting to Christianity could be an “entrance ticket to European culture,” and some even spoke of an “epidemic of baptism” among Jews in the nineteenth century (Elon 2002).

In the political crisis that preceded World War I, the vast majority of Germany’s Jews were patriotic Germans. But when the war ended in defeat for the German Empire, anti-Jewish voices again multiplied in search of the “traitors.” The 1918 revolution, that brought about the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II, fueled anti-Semitic claims. Those voices, however, did not prevent Jews from flocking to the new political forces of the Weimar Republic (in Germany’s first parliamentary democracy, 24 deputies of the first Weimar Assembly had Jewish backgrounds). The difficulty of the new conditions, however, was revealed with the assassination of the Jewish Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau by extremist rightists. In November 1923, there was a spontaneous pogrom in an area of Berlin where Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe (*Ostjuden*) lived in wretched conditions. At the same time, in late 1923, there were state supported evictions of *Ostjuden* who lived in Munich’s *Isarvorstadt* quarter. Some *Ostjuden* were even taken to an internment camp in the Bavarian city of Ingolstadt, and similar camps for them were established in the Prussian cities of Stargard and Cottbus.

Even then, Jews were important contributors to the artistic and scientific flourishing of that era. Five of the fifteen German Nobel Prize laureates during the Weimar period were Jews, among them Albert Einstein and Gustav Hertz, for Physics. Outstanding Jewish scholars were appointed as chair professors, like the philosopher Ernst Cassirer in Hamburg, and the Berlin University for the Science of Judaism became a magnet for future scholars.

### *A Pluralistic Judaism*

Jews on German soil did not form a homogeneous population. As early as the eighteenth century, some scholars and rabbis had started preaching new attitudes toward Judaism. The so-called “Haskala,” the Jewish movement of Enlightenment, developed in Berlin between 1770 and 1815. The Haskala movement sparked off deep tensions within the community, with reformers opposed to orthodoxy (Gidal 1998).

Moses Mendelssohn was the most prominent pioneer of the Haskala movement in Central Europe. A practicing orthodox Jew, he regarded himself as a German philosopher. Mendelssohn campaigned for full citizenship rights for the Jews, and his ideas were picked up by like-minded friends who launched practical initiatives for modernizing Jewish community life. David Friedländer and Daniel Itzig founded the first Jewish Free School for boys (*Chevrat Chinuch Ne'arim*) in Berlin in 1778, while in 1806 David Fränkel and Joseph Wolf published the first Jewish periodical in German, *Shulamit*, which campaigned on behalf of modern education for rabbis and the radical reform of synagogue services (Gidal 1998). In the early nineteenth century, the first Reform communities took shape, such as the *Neuer Israelitischer Tempelverein* in Hamburg, founded in 1817.

Another central figure in the reform movement of Judaism was Abraham Geiger, who served as rabbi in Wiesbaden, Breslau and Frankfurt/Main, and was a founder of the Higher School for the Science of Judaism (*Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*) (Berlin 1870). Geiger and his followers aspired to combat the assimilation of intellectual Jews who were dissatisfied with traditional Judaism, by taking a new approach to the Talmudic Halakha.

In opposition to this reformism, figures like Samson Raphael Hirsch and Zecharias Frankel fought to apply a less flexible approach to traditional Judaism, and created what was to become "Conservative Judaism," midway between Reform Judaism and Orthodoxy. In Germany, the latter option was concretized by people like Esriel Hildesheimer who in 1873 established an orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin. In the wake of the disputes that embroiled the Jewish population of Germany, competing communities existed side by side in several German cities (Frankfurt, Berlin, Karlsruhe, Mainz, Nuremberg and Munich) (Elon 2002).

It was not by accident then, that in the 1920s the secular-based "Jewish Teaching Houses" (*Jüdische Lehrhäuser*) became particularly popular among German Jews. Franz Rosenzweig headed the most renowned of them in Frankfurt am Main, that had over 1,000 visitors in 1922 alone, thus becoming the most important Jewish adult education center at the time. The Lehrhaus also became a forum for casual discussions between Jews of different opinions and backgrounds. The success of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus provided an incentive for establishing similar centers in many other cities.



Zionism was arguably the trend in Judaism that was less able to assert itself in Germany. The impressive upward social mobility of Germany's Jews that got underway in the late nineteenth-century explains the limits of the Zionists' success. Many distrustful German Jews were afraid that support for Zionism would weaken their status in Germany's civil society. Hence, when Zionist leaders planned to hold the First Zionist Congress in Munich, the local *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* vehemently opposed the project, and the congress was ultimately held in Basel in 1897. Nonetheless, some prominent individuals made significant contributions to the Zionist enterprises, especially among Jews originating from the East (Ostjuden). Some of them—like Max Bodenheimer and David Wolffsohn—played a central role in the Zionist establishment, not to speak of intellectuals like Martin Buber and Otto Warburg.

In the meantime, another cleavage forming within Germany's Jews was assuming more and more importance—the rift between Jews of local origin and the Ostjuden—a term coined by the writer Nathan Birnbaum around 1900, and soon widely adopted. Since the 1880s, many Jews from Russia, Poland and Ukraine had immigrated to Germany, fleeing from poverty and pogroms. Though the Ostjuden themselves were far from being a homogenous group they still in general formed a marked contrast to “Germanized” native Jewry. Yiddish was the mother-tongue of most Ostjuden, and they were familiar with Eastern European orthodoxy. When large numbers of Ostjuden joined local Jewish communities, conflicts arose between them and the local Jews who felt contempt for those “barbarians” whose origins were far from the refinements of Western civilization. Yet even then, many German Jews helped to start up projects to fight poverty and promote professional education among the newcomers, and engaged in political lobbying to prevent the expulsion of Ostjuden back to their countries of origin. These Jews, however, were still ignorant of the complex and twisting path that would lead them, together with European Jewry as a whole, to the worst catastrophe in Jewish history—the Shoa.

### *The Shoa*

The Shoa cannot be compared to any other genocide in human history: it was the deliberate policy of a murder-state determined to exterminate all Jews in the world without any motive other than their

demonization (Berenbaum 1993): every arm of the country's sophisticated bureaucracy was involved in the killing process, from parish churches to universities and the Transport Ministry. Saul Friedländer (2007) describes how no social group, religious community, scholarly institution or professional association in Germany declared its solidarity with the Jews in face of their persecution by the Nazis. Friedländer argues that this makes the Holocaust distinctive because anti-Semitic policies could unfold without the interference of countervailing forces. Bauer and Wiese (2001) argue that the basic motivation of the Holocaust was based completely on myths, hallucinations, and abstract, non-pragmatic ideology—that was then executed by highly rational, pragmatic means. The slaughter was systematically conducted in virtually all areas of Nazi-occupied territory in what are today 35 separate European countries. Anyone with a Jewish grandparent was to be exterminated, without exception. Raul Hilberg (1973) and Lucy Dawidowicz (1986) maintain that German society and culture were suffused with anti-Semitism, and that a direct link ran from medieval pogroms to the Nazi death-camps of the 1940s.

The Nazi Party came to power in Germany on 30 January 1933, and the persecution and flight of Germany's 525,000 Jews began almost immediately. Throughout the 1930s, the legal, economic, and social rights of Jews became steadily more and more restricted. In defining "who is a Jew," the Nazis included even the descendents of converts who apostatized after 18 January 1871, (the founding of the German Empire). In 1933, a series of laws excluded Jews from key areas—from civil service to agriculture. Jews were banned from schools and universities, from membership in the Journalists' Association, and from being owners or editors of newspapers. In 1935, the Nazis introduced the Nuremberg Laws, which prohibited Jews from marrying Aryans, annulled existing marriages between Jews and Aryans, stripped German Jews of their citizenship, and deprived them of all civil rights.

The "Night of Broken Glass" (1938) witnessed the destruction of over 7,000 Jewish shops and 1,668 synagogues. This was the signal of the start of deportation. Thirty thousand Jews were sent to the concentration camps of Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, and Oranienburg, where they were held for several weeks, and released when they could prove either that they would emigrate in the near future, or transfer their property to the Nazis. After these tragic events, Jewish

emigration from Nazi Germany accelerated, while public Jewish life in Germany ceased to exist.

After the outbreak of WWII, the anti-Jewish policy was extended and applied in all territories occupied by Germans. After the invasion of Poland, the German Nazis established ghettos where Jews were confined until they were deported to extermination camps. The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest, with 380,000 people, and the Lodz Ghetto the second largest, holding 160,000. Though the Warsaw Ghetto contained 30% of the population of Warsaw, it occupied only 2.4% of the city's area. By 1941 anti-Jewish rulings were in force everywhere, from Norway to Greece. Jews were first removed from economic and cultural life, and physical deportation started in most places in 1942. During 1940 and 1941, large numbers of Jews in German-occupied Poland were already murdered, while large extermination camps were established in Poland. The ghettos where Jews were initially concentrated were soon depopulated. Uprisings in ghettos and in camps were crushed while in many places, the local population cooperated with the Nazis.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 opened a new phase. The Holocaust intensified after the Nazis occupied Lithuania, where close to 80 percent of Lithuanian Jews were exterminated. Similar massacres of Jews took place in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, and Moldova and most Russian territory west of the Leningrad-Moscow-Rostov line—with the eventual participation of locals.

To speed up the extermination of the Jews, the Wannsee Conference (20 January 1942) was to organize the “Final Solution” (called *Aktion Reinhard*—Operation Reinhard). The plan established a routine of extermination by train transport to the gas chambers. During 1943 and 1944, the extermination camps exterminated hundreds of thousands of people shipped by rail from almost every country within the German sphere of influence. By the Spring of 1944, up to 8,000 people were being gassed every day at Auschwitz.

In the meantime, individuals who had witnessed the killing or escaped from it were able to transmit the information to outside politicians and high-ranking officials in England and the USA, but without any impact on the side of the Allies. By mid-1944, the Jewish communities which had been in the reach of the Nazi regime had been decimated. At this time, as the Soviet armed forces approached, the camps in Eastern Poland were closed down, and surviving inmates were taken

west to camps closer to Germany, first to Auschwitz and later to Gross Rosen in Silesia. Auschwitz itself was closed as the Soviets advanced through Poland. Seeing the Nazis' desperate military situation, great efforts were now made to conceal the evidence. Gas chambers were dismantled, the crematoria dynamited, mass graves dug up, and the corpses cremated.

In Germany itself, about 500,000 Jews had lived there before 1933. Around two-thirds ultimately managed to leave the country before 1939 (half of them to Palestine/Israel). But 170,000 German Jews were deported and murdered by the Nazis. Only about 15,000 Jews remained in Germany when the Nazis capitulated in May 1945 (Gay 2001: 10).

### *After the Holocaust*

In December 1945, Reform Rabbi Leo Baeck (Gidal 1998), a leading figure of Progressive Judaism and a survivor of Theresienstadt concentration camp, was convinced that the era of Jews in Germany was over for good. The ripple effects of the Shoa spread everywhere. In 1948 the World Jewish Congress (WJC) urged that no Jew should ever set foot on German territory. Indeed, in the eyes of many Jews in the world, it was unimaginable that Germany could gain any kind of legitimization as a home for Jews. Close to 250,000 displaced survivors, most from Eastern Europe, were still living in the regions of Germany ruled by American, British and French military administrations. A small group of about 15,000 Jews remained on German soil when the Displaced Persons camps were closed. Many of them were old or ill, or, on the contrary, experiencing early economic success. A handful of Jews settled in the East with the aim of helping to build a new socialist society. In efforts that began in late 1945, damaged synagogues in several German cities were restored, and hosted regular services by foreign rabbis—mainly for Jews in the Allied forces. In 1950, a Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*) was founded as the umbrella organization of the Jewish communities and institutions active in the Western part of the country. A year later, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (*Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland*) began operations, with the mission of caring for Holocaust survivors. Over time, the ranks of the Jewish communities increased slightly as a few thousand refugees

arrived from the Eastern Bloc and from Iran. According to official statistics, about 40,000 Jews immigrated to West Germany between 1958 and 1988 (Brumlik et al. 1988). Thousands of Jews also left Germany for other destinations, including Israel. Ultimately, the number of registered members in West German Jewish communities ranged from 26,000 to 28,000, between 1960 and 1989 (Schoeps 1998). Some Jewish leaders emerged, such as Heinz Galinski (Berlin) and Fritz Bauer (Frankfurt); they adopted a kind of watchdog function, combating new trends of anti-Semitism, racism or xenophobia.

However, professional success and upward social mobility brought many Jews closer to non-Jewish milieus, when their children entered university and later professional strata. Jews started getting involved in public life in the early 1970s. As Michael Wolffsohn remarks (1997), this new generation of Jews emphasized more their community endeavor than religiosity. However, increasingly negative attitudes within the non-Jewish population toward Israel especially after the Six-Day-War in 1967 and the Lebanon War in 1982, were reminders to the Jewish population that they were living in anything but a warm home country.

Inwardly, the Jewish community of West Germany became concerned with the challenge of stabilization and offered Jewish education to children. In 1979, with the support of the German government and the state government of Baden-Württemberg, a University of Jewish Studies (*Hochschule für Jüdische Studien*) was founded in Heidelberg. In 1962, a Jewish adult education center opened its doors in West Berlin; similar centers opened in Munich in 1983 and in Frankfurt am Main in 1988.

This new Jewish community was quite different from pre-1933 German Jewry, since its overwhelming majority consisted of Holocaust survivors from Poland and a minority of German Jewish families. This explains why orthodox Jewish rites predominated in the newly-attended synagogues. The community received generous support from the Federal Republic (West Germany) that was now a part of the Western bloc. In East Germany, in contrast, the few hundreds who created Jewish community centers here and there, became targets of police harassment. In January 1953—the year of the repression of an uprising in Berlin, the anti-“Zionist” Slansky Trial in Prague, and the denunciation of the Jewish doctors’ “plot” in Moscow—about 500 East German Jews fled to West Berlin (Gay 2001). All in all, by the end of the 1980s there were no more than 400 registered members

in East Germany's Jewish organizations (Wolffsohn 1997)—though, according to Ruth Gay (2001), the number of East German citizens who felt Jewish but did not belong to an official Jewish community was about ten times higher.

Thus, at the eve of the regime's collapse, most of the Jewish communities in East Germany were in dire straits. Moreover, "next door" in West Germany, Jewish life also seemed stagnant. Due to poor demographic prognosis, a shortfall of personnel in the community organs, the lack of Jewish kindergartens and schools, and a high intermarriage rate of 70% percent (Wolffsohn 1997), the future of the Jewish communities looked very bleak indeed.

Jewish families began sending their children to Israel for a year for study, for army service, or just kibbutz stay, aware that their sons and daughters could easily decide to build their future there. Some of these children grew attached to Israel, got married there and remained in the country. Living in the "country of the Nazi thugs" was uncomfortable for both parents and children. Those who were organized in the Jewish communities (in West Germany) tended to compensate for some of their discomfort by showing strong solidarity with Israel (Kauders 2007).

However, the completely unexpected mass immigration of Russian-speaking Jews (RSJs) that started in the late 1980s and continued through the 1990s would again transform what was meant until then by the notion of Germany's Jewry.

### *The Arrival of RSJs*

The crumbling and disintegration of the USSR in the late 1980s suddenly set Jews free to emigrate; there were several reasons why many of them did so. They had often been the object of anti-Semitism, both from governing bodies and the population; the fall of Communism reanimated nationalistic feelings all over the region, accompanied by exacerbated anti-Semitism; the economic situation was becoming chaotic, and the middle-class—that included many Jews—found themselves in precarious condition; and the political reality left little room for a tiny group like the Jews to achieve any influence over events.

In these circumstances, it took only a decade, from the late 1980s to the late 1990s, for 60–70% of the Jews of the FSU to move out and attempt to settle elsewhere (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). In 2005, it

was estimated that about 800,000 to 1,000,000 Jews were still living in the countries that formed the USSR before its disintegration, while most of the emigrants are now located in three countries: Israel, the USA and Germany. In Israel, the number of Russian-speaking Jews is between 1,000,000 and 1,100,000; in the USA, their number is probably around 400,000; and in Germany, it stands at 160,000. In total, around 35% of Russian-speaking Jews are living in formerly Soviet countries, around 40%–45% live in Israel, 10%–12% in the USA and 7%–8% in Germany. Smaller groups of Russian-speaking Jews have settled in Australia, Canada, and other countries. In other words, over that decade, the majority of Russian-speaking Jews experienced migration and dispersal around the globe; they were following in the footsteps of their ancestors who at the turn of the previous century had laid the foundations of North American Jewry and constituted the principal contingent of pioneers who founded the new Jewish community in Palestine (later to become Israel). Once again, the Russian Jews who had remained in what would become the USSR and lived for decades under a Marxist-Leninist regime, were embarking for new horizons. Over those decades, however, they had lost much of the rich Jewish culture and education of their ancestors. When they encounter now other Jews throughout the world, who illustrate very different kinds of Jewishness, communication difficulties are inevitable, nay even feelings of alienation.

In Israel, Russian-speaking Jews find a predominantly Jewish society, where Jewishness is a national identity; those who settle in the USA or Germany join minority groups that enjoy a degree of rights and options for expression that they never had in the USSR. While in the USA, Jewry is a strong, successful and influential group, in Germany, it is more heterogeneous and far less prominent in public life. There are also obvious differences in historical, cultural and political backgrounds.

Russian-speaking Jews necessarily undergo very different dynamics in these varying environments—even though, in each one, they may well encounter specific challenges as “Russian-speaking Jews” and thus be willing to create local, national and possibly transnational institutions and organizations of their own, that might provide them with support and confidence. The legal basis that brought most RSJs to Germany was the *Contingency Refugee Act* initiated by the Conference of the State Ministers of Interior in unified Germany in February 1991. This Act opened the country to RSJs in an unrestrictive manner throughout the 1990s. About half of the RSJ immigrants who arrived

there joined the Jewish communities. For some years at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Germany absorbed even more RSJs than either Israel or the United States. All in all, Germany now has close to 130 Jewish communities linked directly to the Central Council or to the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (UPJ). They are found throughout Germany and comprise close to 107,000 members. Germany's Jewish community as a whole is now Europe's third largest, immediately following France and the UK.

Today, the largest Jewish community in Germany is in Berlin (about 11,000 members); there are other relatively strong communities in Frankfurt/Main, Munich, Düsseldorf, Hanover and Cologne, each with over 4,000 members. In the former East Germany, some new Jewish communities have emerged, and existing small ones are stabilizing.

In a relatively short time, budgets were sought from the public authorities for creating new synagogues, kindergartens, schools, retirement homes, and cultural institutions. The German state responded quite positively to these demands, as did the state governments. Thanks to the attendance of RSJ newcomers, clubs and centers burgeoned. Concomitantly, Jewish life in Germany became remarkably heterogeneous and vibrant. In larger cities, this also led to more contacts with the non-Jewish population through inter-religious workshops, Jewish arts, film and klezmer festivals, street parties, and joint artistic projects. Associations such as the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and groups like the German-Israeli Society have been created. Jews and non-Jews may also meet in Jewish adult education centers, departments of Jewish Studies at German universities, or Hebrew and Yiddish language courses. Many RSJs have become visible to a broad non-Jewish audience as prominent artists, pianists, singers, and writers.

Table 2.1: The largest Jewish communities in Germany by membership (over 18 years old)

Communities	1989	2007
Berlin	6,411	10,915
Frankfurt	4,842	6,953
Munich	4,050	9,587
Düsseldorf	1,510	7,226
Hanover	379	4,617
Cologne	1,358	4,576

Source: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWST)



Yet in tandem with these achievements, throughout the 1990s many RSJs failed to enter the labor market or did not find jobs and positions appropriate to their qualifications. Other uncertainties are due to new waves of nationalist extremism targeting “visible” foreigners and minorities. Graves are desecrated, and arson attacks conducted against synagogues. In some cases rabbis are attacked on the street. From time to time, right-wing extremism encounters civil protest across Germany. At the same time, the public discourse on World War II, Nazi crimes, the Shoa and its later impacts is intensifying—in 2001, a Jewish Museum opened its doors in Berlin, and a Memorial to the Shoa was inaugurated near the German Reichstag, in 2005.

More recently, the favorable legal circumstances for RSJs’ immigration to Germany have started deteriorating, with the replacing of the Contingency Refugee Act (2005)—mainly for economic reasons—by new regulations imposing substantial restrictions on the rights of RSJs to immigrate to Germany. Under the new rules, clear preference is given to young, educated Jewish immigrants who are fluent in German.

### *Present-Day Pluralism of Germany’s Jewry*

From a socio-demographic point of view, a major characteristic of the current Jewish population of Germany is its dispersal into many communities, mostly middle-size or small. It is connected to the weakness of local Jewish institutions, especially when relatively high age-average and socioeconomic weakness are present (see Schoeps et al., eds. 1996; 1999). Many RSJs are indeed middle-aged or older people who encounter difficulties in entering the labor market, despite being highly qualified. Many young people aged over eighteen leave for big cities, seeking appropriate paths of study and jobs. Initial euphoria about the local Jewish revival in small Jewish communities has often died down.

Relations between RSJs and Vets, moreover, do not always proceed smoothly. Different political interests, the language barrier, and the fact that each side feels it is the bearer of a world culture—German versus Russian—often generate a degree of animosity. Vets still comprise the majority in most community institutions, since newcomers are primarily concerned with problems of adjusting to their new environment, and Vet leaders are experienced public activists. This situation has caused some instability in community structures—in Berlin

three community heads succeeded each other within three years and several elected boards resigned, resulting in a drop in membership.

On the other hand, in the wake of RSJ immigration, the Central Council and the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWST) faced huge and unexpected challenges in terms of adapting to the new circumstances and providing newcomers with initial support. The Central Welfare Board was urged to develop new programs for children and the elderly, while social services required urgent recruitment efforts. At the same time, the Board also tried to create mechanisms to help RSJs in the job market (such as seminars for professionals, and language courses).

Many RSJ immigrants were grateful for that initial support by Jewish organizations and communities, in addition to which they also enjoyed support from their own frameworks. The best-known is the World Congress of Russian Speaking Jews (WCRJ), a transnational RSJ initiative established in 2002 by businesspeople and leaders. The Berlin office of the WCRJ coordinates European projects and activities in various fields, aimed at RSJs. Beyond those sorts of activity, it also organizes political actions in support of Israel and against anti-Semitism and terror, hosts international cultural events like the artists' competition, runs youth camps, and engages with the problems of non-Halakhic Jews in Germany.

Wherever the Jewish population numbers in the hundreds and thousands, additional forms of Jewish pluralism are also discernible. Berlin, the capital of unified Germany, has the largest Jewish community in Germany today, and its population is an example of Jewish pluralism. There are seven synagogues in the city—ultra-orthodox and orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Sephardic. Another example is the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover (LJG), which numbers close to 600 members. Over the years the LJG raised funds from political institutions, attracted Jews in the city, and plays a leading role in the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany. Although it has less than 1,000 members, Jews from very different nationalities and countries have joined the LJG. Its success is based on the close cooperation of both veterans and newcomers, and on solid contacts with local politicians. In January 2009, the LJG opened a new community center (Etz Chaim) and hired its first full-time rabbi. The LJG Hanover is also the first community of the UPJ that has opened a Jewish kindergarten.

This dynamism takes different forms from one place to another. Hence, the United Jewish Community in Frankfurt am Main (with

nearly 7,000 members) manages to keep all Jewish-religious denominations under one roof while in contrast, in Munich (nearly 10,000 members) and Cologne (nearly 5,000 members), Liberals have separate communities from the orthodox. Furthermore, in Hanover, there are four distinct Jewish communities: aside from the Liberal Jewish community (described above) and the United Community (Central Council), there is a Bukharan Jewish community, and recently Chabad Lubavitch opened its own center there.

Regarding Liberal Judaism, we note that since the 1990s it has had a strong presence in Germany. The Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (UPJ) was founded in 2002 as a branch of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and managed to create 21 communities with a total of 4,500 members. The communities are mostly located in Western Germany and their leadership tends to consist of veteran Jews in Germany (Vets), though RSJs have joined UPJ communities in large numbers. In some places, one finds American Jews residing in Germany, who are continuing the Reform tradition. In 2000, the UPJ established a rabbinical college in Potsdam—the Abraham Geiger College—and a cantorial school in 2008. Also affiliated to the UPJ are the Zionist *Arzenu* association and the Young and Jewish (*Jung und Jüdisch*) movement. Some regional branches of the UPJ have become members of the Central Council, but others remain autonomous. On the periphery of the Union of Progressive Jews, several Egalitarian Minyanim and Liberal associations have been founded, that operate in close contact with the UPJ. Such groups are, for example, *Beit Gesher* in Heidelberg, *Bustan Shalom* in Tübingen, and *Etz Ami* in Gelsenkirchen.

Friction between the UPJ and the Central Council of Jews in Germany, which leans toward the orthodox, has not been avoided, especially over each one's respective share in state allocations to Jewish institutions. However, in 2005 an agreement was reached confirming that the UPJ and its communities are also entitled to receive financial support from the German government. That agreement was an important step toward smoother cooperation between the UPJ and the Central Council and also, between the Orthodox Rabbinical Conference (ORK) and the liberal-oriented General Rabbinical Conference (ARK) of Germany.

It was probably the success of Liberal Judaism that spurred orthodox streams to increase their own militancy. Noteworthy are the Chabad movement and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, both of which

arrived from the USA. In 2010, Chabad operates thirteen centers across Germany. Its emissaries (*shlichim*) do not request contributions from the public, nor are they government-funded; their projects are mainly sustained by private donors. In Berlin, Chabad has established programs for almost all ages and its volunteers are also active in caring organizations. In September 2007, Chabad opened a modern “Jewish Center for Family and Education” in Berlin which is the largest of its kind in Europe. It comprises a synagogue, a *mikveh* (a ritual purification bath), rooms for study and recreation, a library, a computer lab, an event hall, a restaurant and a tourist shop. A yeshiva and a college for male teenagers are also attached to this center. Chabad also has a presence in general Jewish activities in Germany, and it regularly contacts local city leaders at Chanukah and light *menorahs* in the main squares (in Berlin at the Brandenburg Gate) together with them.

Private donations also sustain the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation (LF). In Germany, LF operates centers in large cities like Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt and Würzburg. LF is present in Berlin since 1996, and in 1999 it inaugurated a *Jüdisches Lehrhaus*. The *Lehrhaus* comprised a Teacher Resource Center, an Adult Education Institute, and a *Beit Midrash* Program for students engaged in both intensive study and outreach projects. Since then, LF has opened a yeshiva (2000), a rabbinical seminary, and a *Midrasha* (religious study center for young women) in Berlin. In Frankfurt/Main, LF has established an Educational Center for adults affiliated with Religious-Zionism, as well as a diversity of institutions elsewhere. Leipzig’s Torah Center is of particular importance due to its location in the eastern part of Germany, where religious life had almost come to a standstill. Lauder’s Yeshurun Center in Berlin is also notable: it numbers about 30 young observant families interested in studying Judaism as a group. Most of the families live in the same quarter.

Both Chabad and LF are particularly active among RSJs; they are almost completely independent of federal or state support as well as the Central Council. This does not contradict the fact that both movements seek close relations with the Central Council and present themselves as allies rather than competitors.

A brand of non-Halakhic Judaism is the *Masorti* movement, which represents in Germany the American Conservative trend. This stream of Judaism emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in Germany itself, with the founding of the Breslau Jewish-Theological Seminary by Zecharias Frankel. The first step in Masorti’s return to its country of

origin was the appointment of Bea Wyler as the rabbi of the Oldenburg community in 1995. In Berlin, Masorti Judaism had its start with the inauguration of a *Beit Midrash* in 2003, and a kindergarten in 2004. Though a small movement, and rather concentrated in Berlin, Masorti Judaism can be considered an almost ideal link between the Orthodox and Liberal movements and institutions.

Some associations, however, aspire to fill the organizational void where one finds secular Jews who are interested in Judaism but not in religious studies. The most prominent example was the Berlin Jewish Cultural Association, that was founded by intellectuals in 1989 but disbanded twenty years later after initiating many inter-religious and inter-cultural activities (Bachmann und Runge eds. 2009). Other associations of the same kind have operated successfully in other cities.

However, these foci of pluralism—dependent on origin, length of stay in the country and forms or degrees of religiosity—do not find adequate expressions in the media. The major outlet of Germany's Jews is the weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine*, published by the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The *Jüdische Allgemeine* offers a wide range of information on the Jewish world in Germany, the Diaspora, and Israel, as well as Jewish arts, history and new trends in German politics and society. It is also read by interested non-Jewish academics, theologians or journalists. On the “Russian-speaking side” a monthly named *Evreyskaya Gazeta* (Jewish Newspaper), founded in 2002, has become very popular among RSJ immigrants.

A number of Jewish periodicals are published in German in Frankfurt am Main. As early as the 1980s, Jewish intellectuals launched the sophisticated *Babylon* that joined publications like *Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart*, the *Frankfurter Jüdische Nachrichten* and *Tribüne, Zeitschrift zum Verständnis des Judentums*. Particularly noteworthy is the small periodical called *Jüdisches Europa*, that reports and discusses general developments in communities in German-speaking countries (including Austria and Switzerland).

Last but not least, the growing importance of Jewish web portals and blogs must be underscored. Highly frequented Jewish websites are nowadays the Vet-oriented *Ha-Galil* and the RSJ-oriented *Zametki po evreyskoj istorii* (Notes on Jewish History). The latter is actually an engine of RSJ transnationalism, due to its international orientation and the interest it arouses among RSJs in Israel and the USA.

*In Conclusion*

Throughout all historical periods, the entrance of Jews into German society can be characterized as a pendulum moving between inclusionary and exclusionary tendencies. In all historical periods, moreover, German Jewry was characterized by divisions and pluralisms. From the emergence of the *Haskala* movement until the beginning of the immigration wave of the *Ostjuden*, the major division within German Jewry was the religious one. After the influx of the *Ostjuden*, the major division became the cultural division between *Westjuden* and *Ostjuden*. Later on, the regional-ideological and religious-cultural divisions gained prominence. Today, the cultural division sets in opposition Vets and RSJs, while the religious division remains powerful.

In this tendency to inner divisiveness, this population—in all its manifestations—illustrates how deeply it is a part of Jewish history, although the present-day divisions of Jewry in Germany cannot be seen as continuations of the former German Jewry. With the Shoa, the past was definitely uprooted. The question is, to what extent can the new Jews of Germany enter the void and participate effectively in society? Could they be just a kind of niche group that happens to be situated in this territory?

As we have seen previously, it is unquestionable that Jews in Germany have long considered themselves as German Jews. Are the members of today's German Jewry entering the mold of their predecessors—who were not their ancestors? In brief, this case of Jews is most singular within the Jewish world, and not only because many of them are non-Halakhic Jews, or were unfamiliar with their own legacy that was almost eradicated during the long Marxist-Leninist regime. The interest of this case also lies in the fact that they suddenly received the role of heirs to a heritage, Germany's historical Jewry, that is not really theirs, even though historical German Judaism was not too alien from Eastern European Judaism at the time.

At the heart of the difficulty, moreover, is the associative merging of Germany with the Shoa which did not only target Jews in Germany but all Jewries where the German Army could reach—initially, wide areas of Eastern Europe. So the RSJs who settled in Germany were coming to live in the country of Jews' persecutors. To all these, it is to add that many of the people who currently compose Germany's Jewry have affinities to at least two other countries. Many have relatives and friends in Israel, which is now home to the largest numbers of the

Jewish population of the FSU, and with whom they have some affinity. Moreover, many RSJs have also friends and relatives who remained in the Eastern European countries.

All these factors help to shape Jewry in Germany—the RSJs and Veteran Jews as a whole—as an intricate collage of visions of collective identities, social boundaries, and tenets that singularize it as a distinct entity. In other words, they constitute something of an ideal-type entity, whose investigation may elicit answers to questions integral to the study of the Jewish world, as well as to the more general interests of contemporary transnational diasporas.

We first discuss this question on the basis of our survey, that was conducted among close to 1200 respondents, and the testimonies we gathered from the leading community figures during in-depth interviews (Chapters 3–6). Chapter 7 describes what is offered by Jewish education in Germany today, and provides an overall panorama of the sphere. Chapter 8 provides the general conclusions of the research. Appendix One presents texts from the interviews of the 24 leaders we approached and these interviews reveal the latter's perceptions of the “burning” issues on this Jewry's agenda. Appendix Two offers a comprehensive list of Jewish educational institutions existing in Germany (2010).

## CHAPTER THREE

### INSERTION IN SOCIETY

This work engages with present-day Germany's Jewry. Perhaps the most critical issue involved in this endeavor is the question of Jews' insertion in German society, which is the topic of this chapter. This issue involves how Jews perceive themselves in their present-day environment, and how they see German society, the state authority and the media.

#### *Germany and the Jews: The View of Jewish Leaders*

Our interviews with leading figures of Germany's Jewry tackled this question of Germany's basic attitude toward the insertion of Jews in society. Our interviewees made important remarks and offered elements of analysis. The main questions that they discussed concerned the relations of Jewish bodies with the authorities, and the manner in which the media cover and debate Jewish affairs—including Israeli topics.

Most interviewees describe as fundamentally positive the orientation of the German authorities regarding the contemporary presence of Jews in society. David Gall, for instance, asserts that "the Jewish Community and the German authorities work well together." Christian Böhme goes as far as to say that:

...by and large, the working together is productive... My impression is that the states and the localities are prepared to help, there's no general attitude of refusal; concessions are made to support Jewish life. All states have by now concluded state contracts with the Jewish community and have even improved to go further.

Yehuda Teichtal refers to Berlin more specifically, and contends that:

Here in Berlin we have a very positive relationship on a local, borough level, on a city level, on a national level. We have very good cooperation on all levels... It doesn't mean to say that there's always cooperation that works well... But generally speaking I can say, on the political level



there's a general interest, a general preparation to work together and that's the way in Berlin.

This of course is not always the situation, everywhere. David Gall also hints that not everything is positive in the way authorities function with regard to Jews in Germany:

No German authority wants to have it said that they do not also take good care of the delicate flower that is Judaism in Germany at the present. They might treat individual Jews badly, but not the officially defined representatives.

Gall draws a distinction here between the authorities' treatment of official Jewish representatives, which is generally positive, and of individual Jews, which can be sometimes problematic.

We add to this picture the legal provisions mentioned in the previous chapter that encourage the settling of Jews in Germany—even after the new restrictions were adopted. One can conclude that Germany's policy is friendly to Jews, and does not impose any conditions on their integration in society. This tolerance gratifies the communities and does not make generosity contingent on requests for outright assimilation.

This picture, however, is not completely consistent with the way the media cover Jewish matters, and Israeli matters, in particular. Several interviewees criticized the unsympathetic tone frequently heard from major media. One criticism is that the media tend to focus on past events, and are less interested in contemporary reality. For example, Toby Axelrod complains that

in the German media coverage there's an abundance of reports on the past, including local Jewish history...but it's a pity when current Jewish topics and issues are overshadowed by coverage of 'dead Jews'. Of course, there is media coverage when new synagogues are opened or big Jewish cultural events are held. But in general, the amount of reports on current developments is relatively small.

Christian Böhme also emphasizes this point:

Remembrance events are well-covered. But everyday life has been suppressed more and more over the last few years. You read almost nothing about it...I think that reports can be made beyond the days of remembrance, beyond the memorial culture...Let's show everyone that there's a living Jewry and how it expresses itself!

In a similar vein, Mikhail Goldberg argues that the general media coverage of Jewish matters is "very one-sided." He maintains that

either they report about the holidays and high holy days or if someone's involved in a scandal... Only very rarely will there be any correct research when reporting about the content of community life.

Charlotte Knobloch also maintains that

developments in Jewish life worldwide do not receive much attention [in the general media], with the exception of the threat to Jewish life by anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism.

On the other hand, we hear from another interviewee, Lala Süsskind, that "the non-Jewish German interest in Jewish people and issues is nowadays disproportionately large, and this is reflected in the established media as well." Her impression is "that TV and print media cover Jewish issues much more than they do in comparison with other minorities or religions." However, she also complains by saying:

What makes me nervous sometimes are these kinds of subtle searches for sensationalism. If a Jew in Germany is convicted of a major crime, let's say robbery or bribery, then there's a huge big bane of coverage in the media. The media would not specifically report on a Catholic fraud or a Protestant Mafioso, so why do they do it with the Jews?

Another criticism pointed at the general media, that is connected to insertion in German society, addresses the coverage of Israeli issues and the Middle-East conflict. Charlotte Knobloch believes that

German media reports very one-sidedly about Israel and the Middle East conflict. Through emphasis and the choice of content it's subtly suggested that the state of Israel is solely at fault for the Middle East conflict. Inner-Palestinian conflicts, anti-Semitism in the Arab world, and the fact that the Israeli population is constantly vulnerable to a terrorist attack are all largely ignored. Positive news from Israel is generally found in small print on the margin. Negative headlines are on the front page in bold print. The one-sided and often tendentious or ideologically colored coverage by German and Western media plays a major role in the one-sided picture of Israel found in German society.

Yehuda Teichtal and Evgueni Berkovitch cite the same issue. However, Evgueni Berkovitch also noted that

during the Gaza conflict in December 2008 and January 2009, I had the impression that German media showed a lot of understanding for the Israeli military operations and for the background and causes that led to the Israeli military actions.

Several people address other problems facing Jews in Germany, which derive from the insertion issue. Adriana Stern, for example, mentions a problem liable to confront Jews who would like to become active in German left-wing political groups:

I've tried several times to become active in a political group, but the problem is that in leftist groups everything falls apart when it comes to Israel... The leftist anti-Semitism is really horrible. When you go to a demonstration and you see all the Palestinian scarves and the slogans against Israel, I just can't take it.

Dmitri Belkin mentions two other possible problems confronting Jews in German society. Firstly, he comments that certain Jews have a problem with publicly showing or expressing their Jewishness because "they fear discrimination, and because they don't want people staring at them at work or wherever." Secondly, he maintains that there is also a unique atmosphere in Germany because of the problematic and traumatic historical past between Germans and Jews that makes the insertion of Jews into German society quite difficult. In this respect, Belkin argues:

There's often a mixture that's atypical for other countries. There is a constant interest here [in Jewish issues] but you also often see the feelings of guilt and that can also be traumatic to experience. Then many are somewhat inhibited regarding Judaism. There's no free discussion. There are no possibilities, there's no place to talk about things. The topic remains traumatic. That's the way it's like in Germany.

These brief testimonies reveal the complexity of the issue of official and non-official Germany's approach to the insertion of Jewry. What we see is an official staunchly positive attitude toward the existence and development of the Jewish community as a distinct component of society. At the same time, at least as far as the leading figures' testimonies go, it is also clear that remembrance of the past casts some shadows on the ability to have a straightforward approach toward Jews today. This is further aggravated by the Middle-Eastern conflict, which involves harsh debates in the German public.

It is in this context that we now turn to Germany's Jews and their own attitudes, and examine how they perceive their insertion in society and what their ambitions are, in this respect. We focused on several parameters: knowledge and use of languages; social relations; and attitudes toward Germany and German society. We set those parameters in relation to factual aspects including, among others, citi-

zenship, employment and self-perceived income level. We first present the general picture that relates to the sample as a whole in those respects, and then move to diverse divisions that significantly relate to the various parameters considered. We focus more particularly on RSJs—the overwhelming part of the sample (close to 90% of the respondents).

### *The Survey Data*

We presented in the Preface the major features of the sample which served for our survey. Keeping these features in mind, we now turn to the attitudes of respondents toward the diverse topics that the questionnaire addresses, and which refer in a variety of ways to issues of insertion in society.

#### *Language Use and Knowledge*

When it comes to the languages used by our respondents, the numerical importance of RSJs in the sample and in Germany's Jewish population is obvious, as well as the recentness of their arrival in the country. Table 3.1.1 shows that Russian is the language most widely used by the majority of respondents. It holds the first place for reading, communicating with partners, talking with children, and children's talking with each other. The only area where Russian achieves parity with the German language concerns watching television. This may be explained by the attractiveness of German television programs, in comparison with the available Russian channels.

Besides the importance of Russian, Table 3.1.1 also shows that the use of German is progressing: when adding the categories "German" and "German and Russian," one obtains majorities or large minorities not only for TV-watching, but also for reading and speech among children. Hence, despite the dominance of Russian, one does observe the progress of additive bilingualism. This is also shown in Table 3.1.2: Russian is, of course, the language that is best known by RSJs, but a good third of RSJs assess their German as being at least quite fluent. At the same time, and by their own evaluation, respondents' knowledge of Jewish languages is minimal regarding both Yiddish and Hebrew.

*Social Relations*

Jews in Germany are not an isolated entity: even recently arrived immigrants learn German and use it in given areas of activity. However, does this mean that they tend to insert themselves in social relations? Table 3.1.3 focuses on the respondents' closest friends in Germany as an index of their mode of social insertion. It shows that the closest friends of most respondents are both Jewish and non-Jewish, while for about one-third they are exclusively Jewish. For more than half of our respondents, their closest friends are drawn from Russian-speakers—both Jewish and non-Jewish—while for nearly half of them, these friends are exclusively Jewish. In other words, it appears that while Jews in Germany do not tend to form an enclave or a ghetto, for quite a few social life involves Jews exclusively.

Finally, what is also striking in Table 3.1.3 is the very small percentage of respondents who report that their closest friends consist exclusively of non-Jews.

*Attitudes Toward German Society*

A slight majority of all respondents (52%) describe their insertion in German society as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Moreover, an even larger majority (54.8%) argue that living as a Jew in Germany is not problematic for them. A majority also mention that they attach importance to their children's adopting German culture: for 44.2% it is moderately important and for 29.3% very important. By comparison, for 23.8% of the respondents their children's acquisition of a Jewish education is moderately important, and for 28.1% very important. Hence, at first glance, respondents tend to see acquisition of German culture as somehow being of greater importance than acquiring Jewish culture. Concomitantly, half (49.4%) of the RSJ respondents who settled in Germany after the age of eight emphasized that they feel more at home in Germany than in their country of origin, while a small minority (11.3%) said the contrary, and a quarter (26.5%) reported that they feel the same in Germany and in their former country.

Table 3.1: Insertion in German society (whole sample—n in brackets)

3.1.1. Main language used in different areas (%)

	Reading (1180)	TV (1158)	Partner (890)	Children (771)	By children (696)
German	18.1	33.0	10.6	3.91	16.8
Russian	47.2	32.7	80.1	85.2	59.1
Both	33.2	32.7	7.6	9.1	22.4
Other	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.1.2. Knowledge of languages (%)

	Hebrew (n=1049)	Yiddish (n=1058)	German (n=964)*	Russian (n=958)*
Poor	81.4	80.4	31.6	0.4
Somewhat	11.3	14.4	34.3	1.4
Quite good	4.5	3.8	19.8	13.2
Good	2.8	1.4	14.2	85.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.1.3. Your closest friends are mostly (%)

	Closest friends (1174)	Russian-speaking friends (1167)
Jewish	35.9	43.8
Non-Jewish	3.1	1.4
Both	61.1	54.8
Total	100.0	100.0

3.1.4. Positive aspects of life in Germany (%)

	Political (1140)	Economic (1108)	Perspectives for children (815)	Social security (1129)	Quality of life (1136)
Not at all	7.1	3.7	3.9	2.1	2.4
A little	13.9	11.5	4.2	4.9	4.3
Moderately	29.9	30.7	16.0	20.6	23.1
Very much so	49.1	54.2	76.0	72.4	70.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.1.5. Unpleasant aspects of life in Germany (%)

	Difficulties in finding a suitable job (1045)	Barriers from non-Jews (1096)	Memory of the Shoa (1129)	Anti-Semitism in Germany (1123)	Experience of anti-Semitism (1064)
Not at all	28.8	30.6	12.0	14.2	38.0
A little	12.9	20.8	21.1	24.2	23.8
Moderately	17.3	25.0	26.6	25.4	19.1
Very much so	41.0	23.6	40.3	36.2	19.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* RSJs who arrived in Germany after the age of 8

This tendency receives support from various directions. As indicated in Table 3.1.4, respondents assess the German reality in positive terms; it is much appreciated for the political regime, economic situation, perspectives for children's future, the social security system, and the quality of life. On the other hand, Table 3.1.5 shows that respondents also perceive difficulties and hardships. They complain about difficulties in finding appropriate jobs, discrimination by non-Jews, and forms of anti-Semitism. They also admit that the memory of the Shoa is disturbing.

All in all, however, one notices that the highest rates (the category "very much so") that the respondents award to unpleasant aspects in Germany, are substantially lower than those given to positive aspects. It is thus clear that the prevailing orientation toward Germany and German society is positive—even though this does not preclude respondents from being aware of problematic aspects.

### *The Russian-Speaking Jewish Population*

When we isolate the RSJs in the sample where they comprise the overwhelming majority, we find that slightly less than half of the respondents (45.3%) describe their insertion in German society as satisfactory or very satisfactory; a slight majority (54.5%) feel that living as a Jew in Germany is not problematic for them. Hence, half of our RSJ respondents (49.4%) say they feel more at home in Germany than in their former country; a quarter (26.5%) that they feel the same in both.

As expected, in comparison with the data of the whole sample, when examined alone RSJs show a somewhat lower percentage of citizenship of Germany (24.8%); less fluency in the German language; greater use of Russian; a higher self-rating (64.6%) as belonging to low-income strata; a higher percentage who do not work in their area of professional competence (46.1%), who do not work at all (41.6%) or who live on social welfare (39.8%). Because of RSJs' numerical importance, the differences between them and the whole sample are minimal. In order to evince this basic aspect of the reality of Jewry in this country, we pursued only with RSJs further discussions of background parameters and attitude differentials among respondents—unless otherwise indicated.

*What Difference does Religiosity Make?*

We obtained a whole set of statistically significant data that differentiate respondents by their religiosity—Orthodox/Ultra-Orthodox; Liberal Judaism, Traditional, and Secular. As a general rule, correlations between religiosity and attitudes were gradual, while the end-categories of religiosity, i.e. orthodox/ultra-orthodox and secular, are also at the opposed extremes of the continuum of attitudes. So while the tables present the whole set of data, in our analysis we make do with contrasting end-categories.

*Language and Socializing*

When we look at the linguistic dimension, paradoxically enough, one sees that orthodox respondents' self-rated knowledge of German is higher than the seculars'—with intermediary religiosity categories also in an intermediate position, in this respect (Table 3.2.1). These tendencies are also illustrated by the reports about languages that children of the same families speak among themselves (Table 3.2.2.), and respondents' contentions that they experience fewer difficulties in acquiring German (Table 3.2.3). The differences between these two end-categories regarding the use of German and Russian are mainly influenced by the age-structure. The percentages of the two younger age groups (–40 and 41–60) among the orthodox are higher than those of the secular (36.1% and 34% as against 19.1% and 28.8%, respectively). Moreover, the percentage of the older age group (61+) among the secular is higher than among the orthodox (52.1% as against 29.9%) (Table 3.2.12). Interestingly enough, though, orthodox respondents evaluate their knowledge of Hebrew and of Yiddish as better than the secular do. In a similar vein, we find that over three-quarters of the secular respondents' Jewish friends in Germany are Russian-speaking, while the equivalent figure for the orthodox is around half (Table 3.2.4).

*Insertion in, and Attitudes toward, Germany and German Society*

In contrast with the findings for language use, the attachment of the secular respondents to Germany and German society appears to be stronger than among the orthodox. This difference is indicated by data that refer to several relevant issues: how problematic is it for a Jew



to live in Germany (Table 3.2.5); how important is it for respondents that their children adopt German culture (Table 3.2.6); how promising are the perspectives to their children in Germany (Table 3.2.7); how beneficial is the German system of social security (Table 3.2.8); to what extent do they appreciate the quality of life in this society (Table 3.2.9); and where they feel more at home in comparison to their country of origin.

Table 3.2: Insertion in German society (RSJs)

3.2.1. Knowledge of German (861; %; $\chi^2=0.001$ )				
	Orth/Ultra Orth	Liberal Judaism	Traditional	Secular
Poor	18.3	30.1	29.6	36.9
Somewhat	29.8	37.7	36.5	32.2
Quite good	32.7	21.3	19.6	14.3
Good	19.2	10.9	14.2	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.2.2. Language spoken by children among themselves (600; %; $\chi^2=0.089$ )				
German	24.6	15.9	13.0	14.0
Russian	47.8	60.6	62.5	64.2
German & Russian	24.6	23.5	24.5	20.5
Other	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.2.3. Experiencing difficulties in acquiring German (863; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Not at all	16.7	11.4	13.3	12.7
A little	44.1	23.4	18.6	25.8
Moderately	25.5	37.5	38.8	27.7
Very much so	13.7	27.7	29.3	33.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.2.4. Closest Jewish friends in Germany (mostly) (876; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Russian- speaking	55.6	72.7	77.7	77.6
Non-Russian-speaking	2.8	0.5	0.4	0.3
Both	41.7	26.7	22.0	22.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.2.5. Living as a Jew in Germany (878; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Very problematic	9.1	5.9	3.4	10.5
Problematic	50.0	39.4	44.5	31.4
Not problematic	40.9	54.8	52.1	58.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.2 (*cont.*)3.2.6. Importance that one's children adopt German culture (718; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	27.9	11.5	10.2	11.5
A little	20.9	9.1	14.4	6.7
Moderately	27.9	46.1	49.3	49.6
Very much so	23.3	33.3	26.0	32.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.7. Positive aspects in Germany: Promising perspectives for children (660; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	4.9	7.8	0.5	2.6
A little	4.9	1.3	0.5	0.4
Moderately	24.4	10.4	14.5	13.4
Very much so	65.9	80.5	84.5	83.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.8. Positive aspects in Germany: Social security (849; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	1.9	2.2	1.1	3.0
A little	8.7	2.2	0.8	2.7
Moderately	22.3	15.2	19.2	10.0
Very much so	67.0	80.4	78.9	84.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.9. Positive aspects of life in Germany: Quality of life (855; %;  $\chi^2=0.001$ )

Not at all	4.8	2.7	1.1	3.0
A little	3.8	1.6	1.9	2.6
Moderately	29.5	18.3	20.3	10.9
Very much so	61.9	77.4	76.6	83.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.10. Feeling part of former country's nation (850; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	50.5	30.9	25.1	22.8
A little	27.2	22.7	30.2	26.4
Moderately	15.5	33.1	36.5	36.0
Very much so	6.8	13.3	8.2	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.11. Feeling part of the Russian-speaking community in Germany (779; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	36.7	17.9	16.7	21.1
A little	29.6	27.4	23.6	19.6
Moderately	27.6	41.1	41.2	37.9
Very much so	6.1	13.7	18.5	21.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.2 (*cont.*)

3.2.12. Variation of religiosity according to age (846; %; $\chi^2=0.004$ )				
–40	36.1	21.1	20.8	19.1
41–60	34.0	28.6	28.6	28.8
61+	29.9	50.3	50.6	52.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Thus, living as Jews in Germany is not at all problematic for 58.1% of the secular, whereas the equivalent figure for the orthodox is 40.9% (Table 3.2.5). Moreover, 84.4% of the secular see social security in Germany in a very positive light, while the figure for the orthodox is 67% (Table 3.2.8). On the other hand, the secular also display stronger attachment to their former country and to the Russian-speaking community in Germany than do the orthodox. For example, 50.5% of the orthodox respondents do not feel at all part of the nation of their former country, while the corresponding figure for the secular is 22.8% (Table 3.2.10). Furthermore, 21.4% of the secular feel very much that they are part of the Russian-speaking community in Germany, whereas the respective figure for the orthodox is 6.1% (Table 3.2.11).

Interestingly enough, regarding the division of the sample according to religiosity as such (Table 3.2.12) is the fact that we see a tendency for the younger to express stronger feelings of orthodoxy than the older and to be less represented among the secular. This may be somehow influenced by sample proceedings, but one may also hypothesize that younger respondents, especially among RSJs, have had in Germany the opportunity of a Jewish education, which their parents did not have. In this respect, the case of Jews in Germany seems quite exceptional in the Jewish world where it is widely sustained that the young is less attached to Judaism than the elder.

Respondents leaning to orthodoxy also illustrate more closeness to non-Russian speaking Jews, feel more at ease, as Jews, in Germany and exhibit less allegiance to both their previous country and the local non-Jewish Russian-speaking population. These findings lead to questioning the issue of age as a factor on its own right, at additional respects.

*What Difference does Age Make?**Language Use and Knowledge*

In line with expectations, the use of German appears to be more extensive among (–40) respondents whereas the use of Russian is more widespread among (61+) respondents. Among the latter, this is confirmed by data concerning the reading language (Table 3.3.1) and watching television (Table 3.3.2), the language spoken with partners (Table 3.3.3), with children (Table 3.3.4) and reports about the language that children of the same families speak among themselves (Table 3.3.5). From this may be deduced that Russian is also the language used with one's closest Jewish friends who, as shown by the data (Table 3.3.6) are mostly Russian-speakers. Moreover, (61+) respondents also contend that they experience greater difficulties in acquiring German (Table 3.3.7) and that they feel much more at ease with Russian (Table 3.3.8). Thus, 14.7% of the (–40) respondents use German exclusively for reading, while the corresponding figure for the (61+) is only 1.5%. Moreover, 70.1% of the (61+) use Russian exclusively for reading—with 28.4% among the (–40). It is also worth noting that 14.1% of the (–40) respondents use German with their partner exclusively, while the corresponding figure for the (61+) is 0.5%. On the other hand, 95.7% of the (61+) speak only Russian with their partner, while the respective figure for the (–40) is 69.6%. In spite of the differences revealed here, it is obvious that in all age strata, Russian is the dominant language in communicating with partners. Moreover, 75.8% of the (–40) evaluate their knowledge of German as quite good or good, while the respective figure for the (61+) respondents is 8.8% (Table 3.3.9).

To sum up, on all counts, we see that German is gaining ground among the younger, leaving the older stratum using Russian almost exclusively in many areas of social activity. It is clear that even among the younger, Russian still predominates on most counts.

*Attitudes Toward German Society*

The data reveal mixed tendencies with respect to attitudes toward German society. We observed greater attachment to German society among the (–40) age group in certain aspects. This is indicated in the more positive description of respondents' insertion in German society (Table 3.3.10). Moreover, the (–40) also underrate unpleasant

aspects of life in Germany—regarding job opportunities, the memory of the Shoa (Table 3.3.11) and evaluations of anti-Semitism in Germany (Table 3.3.12). Thus, 32% of the (–40) respondents describe their insertion in German society as very satisfactory, while the figure is 2.6% for the (61+) (Table 3.3.10). Similarly, while nearly 60% of the (61+) respondents report that the memory of the Shoa is very disturbing for them, the corresponding figure for the (40–) is 19.8% (Table 3.3.11).

On the other hand, we also observe a more positive attitude vis-à-vis German society on the part of the (61+) when it comes to appreciation of its national and European culture (Table 3.3.13), the importance attached to children’s adopting German culture (Table 3.3.14) and appreciation of the social perspectives available to children. The (61+) are also more appreciative of the political regime than the younger (Table 3.3.15). Moreover, while 35.8% of the (61+) respondents consider it very important that their children adopt German culture (Table 3.3.14), the corresponding figure for the (–40) is 19.5%.

Table 3.3: The factor of age (RSJs)

3.3.1. Languages used for reading (935; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
	–40	41–60	61+
German	14.7	2.5	1.5
Russian	28.4	56.7	70.1
German & Russian	54.8	40.8	28.0
Other	2.0	0.0	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.3.2. Watching television (922; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
	42.3	22.2	15.3
German	17.5	31.6	52.6
Russian	38.6	45.8	31.7
German & Russian	1.6	0.4	0.4
Other	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total			
3.3.3. Language spoken with partner (748; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
	14.1	3.8	0.5
German	69.6	92.4	95.7
Russian	13.3	3.8	3.2
German & Russian	3.0	0.0	0.5
Other	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total			

Table 3.3 (*cont.*)3.3.4. Language spoken with children (706; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

German	4.3	1.3	1.5
Russian	70.0	89.0	92.5
German & Russian	21.4	9.3	5.8
Other	4.3	0.4	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.5. Language spoken by children among themselves (638; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

German	16.9	20.0	10.3
Russian	33.9	58.1	69.1
German & Russian	42.4	21.9	20.1
Other	6.8	0.0	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.6. Closest Jewish friends in Germany (mostly) (926; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Russian-speaking	62.6	79.3	80.3
non Russian-speaking	1.5	0.4	0.2
Both	35.9	20.4	19.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.7. Experiencing difficulties in acquiring German (914; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	34.7	10.6	3.1
A little	35.3	31.8	14.2
Moderately	23.7	36.1	36.7
Very much so	6.3	21.5	46.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.8. Knowledge of Russian (908; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Poor	0.5	0.4	0.4
Somewhat	3.7	0.7	0.9
Quite good	28.3	6.3	10.2
Good	67.4	92.6	88.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.9. Knowledge of German (912; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Poor	7.4	19.2	51.2
Somewhat	16.8	37.6	39.9
Quite good	33.7	27.7	7.5
Good	42.1	15.5	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.3 (*cont.*)

3.3.10. Insertion in German society (930; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not satisfactory	8.6	15.2	21.7
Somewhat satisfactory	28.4	39.9	42.2
Satisfactory	31.0	33.7	33.5
Very satisfactory	32.0	11.2	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.3.11. Unpleasant aspects in Germany: Memory of the Shoa (892; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	16.1	9.7	9.7
A little	33.9	14.1	6.7
Moderately	30.2	32.0	23.7
Very much so	19.8	44.2	59.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.3.12. Unpleasant aspects in Germany: Anti-Semitism in Germany (884; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	15.1	15.4	12.4
A little	35.4	19.2	11.5
Moderately	29.2	30.1	19.7
Very much so	20.3	35.3	56.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.3.13. Positive aspects in Germany: European and German culture (921; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	13.4	5.8	5.5
A little	26.3	17.9	7.7
Moderately	33.5	34.7	39.7
Very much so	26.8	41.6	47.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.3.14. Importance of children adopting German culture (757; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	20.3	10.2	9.7
A little	21.8	8.6	7.9
Moderately	38.3	51.2	46.6
Very much so	19.5	29.9	35.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.3 (*cont.*)

3.3.15. Positive aspects in Germany: Political regime (905; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	5.2	6.9	7.5
A little	19.2	7.7	5.7
Moderately	36.8	24.8	25.6
Very much so	38.9	60.6	61.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In sum, the (−40) are more positive toward German society, in which they find more advantages than disadvantages. The (61+), however, do not stand in a polarized position vis-à-vis them: they too find Germany a place offering advantages, even though they tend to place more emphasis on the practical hardships of adjustment—with all their appreciation of the cultural and political aspects, as well as social security.

*Does the Length of Stay Make a Difference?*

The length of stay in Germany—up to 10 years; from 11 to 15 years; and 16 and more according to our categorization—is particularly relevant for immigrants, and revealing of their insertion in their new environment. This parameter was found to be significant in both the area of language and attitudes toward German society.

*Language Use and Knowledge*

The use of German is more extensive among the (16+) whereas Russian is more widely used among the (−10). This difference between the two end-categories is exemplified in reading (Table 3.4.1). For instance, 13.3% of the (16+) use only German for reading, while the respective figure for the (−10) is 2.9%; on the other hand, 65.6% of the (−10) use Russian exclusively for reading, while the corresponding figure for the (16+) is 28.6%. The same trend is also seen regarding the language spoken with children (Table 3.4.2) and among children (Table 3.4.3); 38.5% of the children of the (16+) use only German among themselves, whereas the corresponding figure for the (−10) is just 8.5%. In contrast, 69% of the children of the (−10) use Russian exclusively for speaking among themselves, while the respective figure



for the (16+) is 36.9%. At the same time, 59.1% of (16+) evaluate their knowledge of German as quite good or good, and the corresponding figure for the (–10) is 24.3% (Table 3.4.4).

In brief, the (16+), as could be expected, show wider use of German than the (–10) in different areas of activity—though Russian is still prevalent even among the latter, particularly in socializing. In other words, use of German increases with duration of stay, but Russian is not given up.

*Attitudes Toward German Society*

Findings also reveal a more positive attitude to German society among the (16+). It is reflected in evaluations of their insertion in German society (Table 3.4.5), and feeling at home in Germany (Table 3.4.6). On certain counts, though, it is the (–10) who show more positive appreciation of Germany and German society: they have greater appreciation for the promising perspectives for children, and the social security arrangements (Table 3.4.8); inter-group relations within the Jewish community and Vets’ attitudes to RSJs.

Table 3.4: Length of stay in Germany (RSJs)

3.4.1. Reading language (980; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
	–10	11–15	16+
German	2.9	7.0	13.3
Russian	65.6	46.0	28.6
German & Russian	30.7	46.6	57.1
Other	0.9	0.3	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.4.2. Language spoken with children (739; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
German	0.7	0.9	12.2
Russian	93.1	86.6	62.2
German & Russian	6.0	10.3	25.7
Other	0.2	2.2	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.4 (*cont.*)3.4.3. Language spoken by children among themselves (668; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

German	8.5	20.2	38.5
Russian	69.0	52.2	36.9
German & Russian	21.3	26.6	24.6
Other	1.3	1.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.4. Knowledge of German (955; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Poor	40.2	21.7	9.7
Somewhat	35.4	33.6	31.2
Quite good	16.2	24.7	24.7
Good	8.1	20.0	34.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.5. Insertion in German society (974; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not satisfactory	20.6	13.8	4.1
Somewhat satisfactory	42.0	34.9	22.7
Satisfactory	30.7	34.2	47.4
Very satisfactory	6.7	17.1	25.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.6. Feeling more at home (945; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Germany	40.2	61.0	69.2
Former country	14.9	6.5	4.4
The same in both	31.3	20.2	17.6
In neither	13.5	12.3	8.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.7. Working in one's profession (943; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

No	44.2	50.3	44.6
Yes	7.3	15.3	33.7
Not working	48.5	34.4	21.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.8. Positive aspects in Germany: Social security (937; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Not at all	1.3	1.4	7.4
A little	2.7	2.1	5.3
Moderately	13.0	16.3	24.5
Very much so	83.0	80.2	62.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

To sum up, (16+) who are the most veteran among RSJs, feel positively about German society, which by no means precludes the newcomers (–10) from also showing positive appreciation of their lot in this country.

Table 3.5: Endogamous versus exogamous partner regarding friendship (RSJs)

Closest friends in Germany (699; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
	Non-Jewish partner	Jewish partner
Jewish	24.8	40.5
Non-Jewish	1.1	1.1
Both	74.0	58.4
Total	100.0	100.0

*What Difference Endogamous Versus Exogamous Partnership Make?*

A substantial number of RSJs live with a non-Jewish partner. According to our data a bit more than a quarter of our respondents originated from families where one parent is not Jewish. Among the respondents themselves, we also found that nearly 40% of those who live in couple, have non-Jewish partners. We wanted to know if these factors also make differences with respect to the diverse topics that we investigated. The first observation is that the tendency to exogamy is increasing from generation to generation. As far as the accounts of parents' patterns are concerned, we found no significant lines of distinctions among categories regarding insertion in society. With exogamy of partnership, we found a few items where this parameter matters, regarding insertion in and attitudes toward German society. The principal finding concerns social relations: 40.5% of those with a Jewish partner have close friends who are exclusively Jewish, and the figure drops to 24.8% for those living with a non-Jewish partner (Table 3.5).

The differences yielded by the Table are not too dramatic but still highly significant: mixed—versus non-mixed—partnership is bound to quite stronger relations with the non-Jewish environment.

*Does Region of Residence Make a Difference?*

Being a large country, Germany is distinguished by differences in development and environment throughout its various regions. The outcome for RSJs who migrated to Germany could be altered by the place where they settle, the more so since state policy prefers to disperse newcomers, since it aspires to prevent large concentrations of them in a few metropolitan areas—which, in general, Jewish immigrants everywhere tend to prefer. Moreover, even now there is still a quite sharp distinction of urban, economic and social development between East Germany and West Germany: RSJs who settled in regions that previously belonged to the former find less opportunities for advancement. In this context, we categorized our respondents under three headings: Berlin, the capital and major metropolitan area in the country; the former East Germany, i.e. the “East”; and the former West Germany, i.e. the “West.” This categorization elicits several important differential data.

*Social Relations*

We found that for 20.1% in the East, their closest friends in Germany are exclusively Jewish, while for the same parameter, the figure is 44% in Berlin, and 38% in the West (Table 3.6.1).

Table 3.6: Region of residence and insertion in German society (RSJs)

3.6.1. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (973; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

	Berlin	East	West
Jewish	44.0	20.1	38.0
Non-Jewish	2.2	1.3	1.2
Both	53.7	78.6	60.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.6.2. Language spoken by children among themselves (668; %;  $\chi^2=0.04$ )

	Berlin	East	West
German	20.7	11.3	15.0
Russian	58.7	71.3	57.5
German & Russian	19.6	17.3	26.1
Other	1.1	0.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.6 (*cont.*)

3.6.3. Positive aspects in Germany: Economic situation (918; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	2.5	3.9	2.6
A little	8.3	3.0	7.4
Moderately	42.5	21.6	29.8
Very much so	46.7	71.4	60.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.6.4. Working in one's profession (943; %; ( $\chi^2=0$ ))			
No	57.5	32.2	49.2
Yes	15.0	10.3	12.5
Not working	27.6	57.5	38.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

This finding is explained by the fact that in the East, it concerns mostly small communities, often quite remote from big Jewish centers. More isolated, these Jews become more socially dependent on the environment. Moreover, one finds in the East a larger number of people whose length of stay in Germany is shorter (only 9.2% reside here for 16 years and more, in contrast to 46.9% in Berlin and 43.9% in the West). This is part of the explanation of the differences founded between regions in Table 3.6, such as that Russian is used in the East much more than in the two other regions—not to speak of the fact that East Germany's past as a part of the Soviet Bloc may account for the spread of Russian among the general population (see Table 3.6.2).

Quite paradoxically in this context, and despite the contrary figures regarding unemployment (Table 3.6.4), we also find that in Berlin, perceptions of German society are less positive, at least with respect to the economic situation, than elsewhere in the country—though in all regions there is a tendency to describe Germany in advantageous terms (Table 3.6.3). One explanation of this discrepancy may well be that in Berlin there are generally more critical opinions about German society.

### *Does Community Size Make a Difference?*

As mentioned in the Preface, we also considered the size of the Jewish communities to which our respondents belong. We therefore cat-

Table 3.7: Size of community (RSJs)

3.7.1. Working in one's profession (943; %; $\chi^2=0.003$ )			
	Large	Medium	Small
No	52.3	41.7	36.9
Yes	12.1	12.5	12.3
Not working	35.5	45.8	50.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3.7.2. Positive aspects in Germany: Economic situation (918; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	2.1	2.8	6.3
A little	8.5	5.1	3.1
Moderately	35.7	24.1	22.7
Very much so	53.8	68.0	68.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

egorized the sample as follows: large communities including Berlin (11,000 registered members) and other cities where registered membership exceeds 1500—like Frankfurt am Main, Düsseldorf, and Munich; middle-size communities numbering 500–1500 members—like Bremen, Leipzig, and Hanover; and small communities of less than 500 members—like Potsdam, Rostock, Frankfurt (East), and Chemnitz.

In this respect too, we found mixed tendencies when it comes to perceptions of German society. Respondents in large communities show somewhat less positive views of this society, expressed in greater emphasis on unpleasant aspects of Jewish life in Germany—anti-Semitism or the perception of the economic situation of Germany (Table 3.7.2). Unemployment rates seem lower in these communities, however (Table 3.7.1).

### *Comparing the Younger Generations of Vets and RSJs*

In the above, we presented a general characterization of the sample, concerning sociological parameters of respondents' perceptions regarding their insertion in society. We also conducted a more detailed analysis of RSJs, who comprise around nine out of ten members of this population. Next we examined the specific correlations of those parameters with attitudes relevant to the topic of insertion. The question that we wanted to answer at this stage was how far Vets and RSJs

exhibit different attitudes in the concern studied here. To narrow our outlook, we focused on the younger generations of both groups (i.e. aged 40 and less), since the future development of Germany's Jewry is in their hands.

### *The Socioeconomic Dimension*

The first observation that can be made is that RSJs and Vets in the (–40) age groups are clearly distinct at the level of their self-perceived income. RSJs are divided by half by their perceptions of their incomes as “less” versus “average or more” than the national average income (Table 3.8.1). Vets are divided by one quarter of “less” versus three quarters of “average or more.” This divide still carries a clear distinction: Vets are definitely better-off than RSJs as a population. If all age-groups were included, it is more than plausible that the differentiation would have been sharper, as we know that many older RSJs are either unemployed or retired. In this context, the comparison of (–40) shows that the RSJ-Vet gap is substantial but not polarized. From the viewpoint of insertion in German society, this finding means that Vets are undeniably better integrated than RSJs. It must be added here that (–40) RSJs also tend to report a better economic standing than older RSJs, which indicates a tendency of convergence between the two (–40) groups.

### *The Linguistic Barrier*

The linguistic dimension (Table 3.8.2–4), is probably a major barrier between Vets and RSJs. Clearly, so far one may say that Vets and RSJs within the younger stratum of age use different languages in many areas of activity—especially with respect to family life. The language that RSJs use most is Russian; the language used by Vets in general is German. In this respect, it is a matter of two different speech communities.

The same kind of tendency toward different orientations, but without rigidity, is exemplified by the question of the language used for reading. Among (–40), one finds, as expected, that each category shows a preference for its own language. This contrast is mitigated by the relatively large proportion of RSJs who assess their use of German in this respect conjunctively with Russian. Here too, differentiation is far from indicating polarization. We continue from this to watching television, where there is a predominance of German over Russian

among RSJs, and a very obvious convergence toward Vets. To the extent that reading and watching TV say something about culture, we can draw the conclusion that RSJs tend to evolve toward Vets by acquiring and engaging with German culture—notwithstanding their concomitant retention of Russian.

*Feelings about German Nation and Society*

Regarding their sense of being a part of the German nation, we see again that there are differences between the two categories, but they do not point to diametrical opposition. As a general tendency, Vets tend to be more positive than RSJs in this respect; however, both Vets (about 50%) and RSJs (about 70%) are frankly negative in their answer to the query, or at least express strong reservations (Table 3.8.5). These data are particularly interesting as they concern the (–40) Vets who grew up in Germany.

However, when we asked respondents about specific aspects of the German social reality, as a rule both Vets and RSJs (Table 3.8.6–10) gave positive assessments. We did not find the greatest enthusiasm regarding each particular item, but there was still a widely consensual and unquestionable level of satisfaction. The differences that emerged between the two categories of respondents are interesting; Germany's political regime is more appreciated by RSJs than by Vets, seemingly because their comparative reference is the FSU or the present-day nascent regimes of Eastern Europe. A similar tendency appears regarding the country's economic situation: RSJs are definitely more positive, probably in the context of their knowledge of the situation in their countries of origin. This propensity is also apparent when it comes to the appreciation of welfare services, perspectives for children, or the quality of life. On all these counts, RSJs who themselves came from settings very different than Germany, or heard about them at home from their parents, are more positive about the circumstances of their present-day life. In this, however, RSJs do not create a genuine gap between themselves and the Vets who, despite their weaker approval for the reality of their environment, by no means seem alienated from German society.

We also compared Vets and RSJs regarding what unpleasant aspects they find in Germany (Table 3.8.11). Readers will recall that we found that most Vets and RSJs argue that it is not problematic for them to live as Jews in Germany. This convergence also holds true for



respondents in the younger category. A majority on both sides assert the importance of their children adopting German culture, although it is noteworthy that it is much more important to the RSJs than to Vets, possibly because they do not yet have a command of German culture. What our data confirm is that the degree of importance attached to the acquisition of German culture tends to decline among the younger RSJs, who also are more at home in that culture. So although the issue is more important to the (–40) RSJs than to the (–40) Vets we again find a tendency for convergence.

Interestingly enough, however, the attractiveness of German society is less pronounced among the younger age cohort of RSJs than in the older age groups. In that respect too, one finds a certain convergence between the (–40) group in both categories. On the other hand, RSJs also tend to find Germany and German society less attractive than the Vets in specific respects—difficulties in finding suitable jobs (Table 3.8.11), barriers by non-Jewish Germans, the memory of the Shoa, and anti-Semitism.

Table 3.8: Young Vets and RSJs compared (–40)

	RSJs	Veterans	p-value
3.8.1. Self-rated income level (%)			
	(n=189)	(n=111)	
Below average	51.9	27.0	0.00
Average and above	48.1	73.0	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	
3.8.2. Language spoken with partner (%)			
	(n=135)	(n=65)	
German	14.1	60.0	0.00
Russian	69.6	4.6	0.00
German & Russian	13.3	26.2	0.09
Other	3.0	9.2	0.22
Total	100.0	100.0	
3.8.3. Language used for reading (%)			
	(n=197)	(n=151)	
German	14.7	86.1	0.00
Russian	28.4	0.7	0.00
German & Russian	54.8	9.3	0.00
Other	2.0	4.0	0.45
Total	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.8 (*cont.*)

## 3.8.4. Watching television (%)

	(n=189)	(n=147)	
German	42.3	82.3	0.00
Russian	17.5	0.0	0.00
German & Russian	38.6	10.9	0.00
Other	1.6	6.8	0.06
Total	100.0	100.0	

## 3.8.5. Feeling part of the German nation (%)

	(n=196)	(n=151)	
Not at all	45.4	16.6	0.00
A little	25.5	33.1	0.24
Moderately	24.0	39.7	0.01
Very much so	5.1	10.6	0.14
Total	100.0	100.0	

## 3.8.6. Positive aspects in Germany: Political regime (%)

	(n=193)	(n=150)	
Not at all	5.2	7.3	0.58
A little	19.2	40.7	0.00
Moderately	36.8	39.3	0.71
Very much so	38.9	12.7	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	

## 3.8.7. Positive aspects in Germany: Economic situation (%)

	(n=189)	(n=147)	
Not at all	3.7	6.8	0.37
A little	10.6	42.9	0.00
Moderately	31.7	36.1	0.56
Very much so	54.0	14.3	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	

## 3.8.8. Positive aspects in Germany: Promising perspectives for children (%)

	(n=104)	(n=59)	
Not at all	1.9	6.8	0.31
A little	5.8	30.5	0.00
Moderately	21.2	40.7	0.03
Very much so	71.2	22.0	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.8 (cont.)

3.8.9. Positive aspects in Germany: Social security (%)			
	(n=192)	(n=147)	
Not at all	1.0	2.0	0.61
A little	5.2	15.6	0.01
Moderately	22.9	50.3	0.00
Very much so	70.8	32.0	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	
3.8.10. Positive aspects in Germany: Quality of life (%)			
	(n=192)	(n=148)	
Not at all	1.6	0.7	0.58
A little	2.1	12.2	0.00
Moderately	20.3	48.0	0.00
Very much so	76.0	39.2	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	
3.8.11. Unpleasant aspects in Germany: Difficulties in finding a suitable job (%)			
	(n=185)	(n=144)	
Not at all	16.2	66.7	0.00
A little	15.7	21.5	0.33
Moderately	27.6	9.7	0.00
Very much so	40.5	2.1	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	

*Conclusion*

Our interviews with leading figures show the complexity of the issue of Germany’s official and non-official approaches to Jewry. The official positive attitude is embedded in the “baggage” from the past that overshadows the capability to crystallize a straightforward approach—especially in the context of the Middle Eastern conflict which is controversial in several places. The Jewry discussed here, however, has taken shape very recently.

In this context, we now turn to the Jews’ own attitudes, and consider how they perceive their insertion in society and what are their ambitions in this respect. These data show the recent character of the transformation of German Jewry, and its pluralism regarding religiosity. Clearly, the large majority decline to consider themselves religious. It is also a population where belongingness to mixed families is by

no means exceptional. The greatest number of respondents, like Jews everywhere, live in big cities. Moreover, no less than one-third are unemployed and live on social welfare. Russian is the most widely used language but knowledge and use of German is progressing.

The closest friends of most respondents are both Jewish and non-Jewish, while for about one-third, they are exclusively Jewish. For over half of our respondents, the closest friends are drawn from the Russian-speakers. Hence, while Jews in Germany do not form a ghetto, social life for many of them involves Jews exclusively. A slight majority of all respondents even describe their insertion in German society as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Moreover, an even larger majority say that living as a Jew in Germany is not problematic. A majority also mention that they attach importance to their children's adopting German culture; RSJ respondents who settled in Germany after age eight, emphasized that they feel more at home in Germany than in their former country.

German reality is assessed by respondents in positive terms, and Germany is much appreciated for the political regime, economic situation, perspectives for children's future, social security system and the quality of life—even though respondents also cite difficulties and hardships. When we isolate the RSJs in the sample, we find that slightly less than half of the respondents describe their insertion in German society as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Yet one may say that RSJs appreciate German society at numerous respects while they tend to acquire and use the language in many areas of activity—though without abandoning Russian. This population is by no means a closed enclave and most social relations do not consist solely of RSJs or of Jews. These relations are especially open when it comes to individuals who live with a non-Jewish partner.

Another division of significance is geographical. Germany is a large country and socio-economic differences distinguish the diverse regions. What is particularly salient here is that in the East, the communities are mostly small and relatively remote; people there tend to keep more to Russian, to experience especially high unemployment, and to exhibit greater dependence on their direct environment.

While respondents tend to share positive views of the society and underline the positive aspects of life in Germany, RSJs are also aware of unpleasant aspects—including anti-Semitism or perceptions of Germany's economic situation. The more people live in a metropolitan area like Berlin, the more critical they are of the German reality in general.

To sharpen our outlook, we chose to focus on the younger generations of both groups (i.e. aged 40 and below). These RSJs and Vets are clearly distinct from each other by their respective self-perceived income. RSJs are divided into half by their perceptions of their incomes. It should be added here that (–40) RSJs also tend to report a stronger standing than elder RSJs, which indicates the tendency to convergence between the two (–40) groups.

In many respects, one can indicate such tendencies to convergence—even though, to a large extent, it can also be contended that Vets and RSJs form two different Jewries in Germany. Our own conclusion, however, is that the convergence found does lead to the crystallization of one entity that appreciates the German environment, but also emphasizes the importance of keeping to themselves. To sum up, this chapter about the insertion of Jews in German society indicates, on the basis of survey findings as well as testimonies gathered from leading figures, that one cannot speak of general tendencies to assimilation and “disappearing into the crowd.” It seems more appropriate to speak of forms of insertion that vary from milieu to milieu, according to origin, age, length of stay, and other variable factors.

From the sociological perspective of transnational diaspora, this chapter shows that one can talk of Germany’s Jewry in terms of a force of multiculturalism. In this respect, analysts might come to the conclusion that this is a population which aspires to form an enclave within German society. However, when we examine additional data referring to individuals’ satisfaction with life in Germany, indicators of familiarization with the environment, and positive feelings regarding social benefits and privileges, it shows that we should rather speak of a kind of insertion in society whose progress accords with length of stay, young age, and education. Assimilation and integration seem inappropriate terms here, despite widespread appreciation for the quality of life in contemporary Germany. In the background there are unquestionably the hardship of adjustment and the undeletable memory of the Shoa. Hence, we cannot indicate strong anchorage in mainstream German society.

As we saw in Chapter One, all these respond to the transnational diaspora model and the principle of societal multiculturalization to which it relates. Our data also show that the Jewish population of Germany which consists mostly of non-orthodox—but liberal, traditional or secular—Jews who illustrate as such the ethnocultural cluster. As one could expect, we observe the reality of flexible social boundar-

ies that find expression in numerous occurrences of Jewish individuals of mixed parenthood and/or who live with non-Jewish partners. We see that this relative openness of boundaries does not bring about unbridgeable gaps between categories of Jews, and certainly not—at this point at least—rifts and splits within Germany's Jewry.

This last assertion, however, still requires confirmation from within the Jewish community itself, and the next chapter examines that question.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DYNAMICS OF THE COMMUNITY

#### *The Community in the Eyes of Leaders*

Our interviews with leading figures clearly elicited that the three major issues that preoccupy them concerning the evolution of Germany's Jewry are the relations between Vets and RSJs; the involvement of the young generation in the community; and the numerical importance of non-Halakhic Jews.

The opinions that we heard from the people interviewed with respect to the question of Vets-RSJ relations in the community can be divided into three types: (1) there are no longer any problems or tensions between the two groups; (2) some problems remain, but the situation is radically improving; and (3) the situation remains unchanged, and relations are still very problematic. The first, most optimistic opinion, is represented by a minority of one—Charlotte Knobloch—who maintains that:

The relations between Russian and German speaking Jews are good. In the past few years there has been a coming together, also due to contacts in the communities, or volunteer projects where Russian and German speaking community members worked together. Learning the German language has also facilitated the process of getting to know each other and allows understanding on a deeper level.

The second standpoint is expressed by several individuals. Evgueni Berkovitch, for instance, contends that:

At the beginning there were very large difficulties, and very large differences. With the passing of each year, these differences and difficulties become weaker and less pronounced and things will probably be balanced soon... The older generation is going, new people are coming for whom the German language poses no problem. And therefore I think that the chasm between these two groups has already been bridged, or will soon be bridged.

Gesa Ederberg also subscribes to this opinion:

There are obvious tensions in some of the communities, especially when veterans, most of whom are themselves immigrants from the generation



before, feel pushed to the sidelines by the newcomers. But my general impression is that in the last few years the relations have improved a lot... In the younger generation, people will just intermingle. There is considerable intermarriage between German-speaking Jews of German origin and of Russian origin. In the Jewish schools, mixing works very well. The problem of inter-cultural tensions will become obsolete within the next 20 years, obviously.

However, most of the people interviewed who gave their impressions of the topic, still consider relations between these groups as problematic. According to Toby Axelrod, for instance:

There is still a lack of communication between both groups, and it seems to me that there are still some false expectations and mistaken attitudes on both sides. For some, the language problem remains.

A similar view is shared by Dmitri Belkin:

I would say in general, that there is still a pretty large distance between them [the two groups]. It is not growing smaller, in my view.

Certain observers mention differing mentalities as explaining the problematic situation. Benjamin Bloch contends that:

Many people from Russia don't have any idea what a community is; they've got to get used to it. They don't understand it. It takes time, a long time, until they can even understand how the communities work here.

Christian Böhme explains the problem of insertion in the Jewish community by unfamiliarity with Judaism and Jewishness and the different mentality of the RSJs. According to him:

It's very, very difficult to win over the Russian Jews as members, and that's connected to many different factors. They've come here as Jewish contingency refugees, but most of them are not familiar with their own Jewishness. How should there be a bridge between them and the Veterans who cultivate their Jewishness? Then there are the differences in mentalities... This manifests itself, for example, very clearly on holidays. Not religious holidays, but secular holidays; 9 November—as the anniversary of the Night of Broken Glass pogrom—is a day that needs to be remembered. The Veterans would say this, while the Russians would say no, that's not a special day for them, 9 May (Victory Day) is their holiday. That seems to me to represent the huge differences in mentalities that have a virulent effect again and again.

Moreover, the numerical ratio between these two groups further complicates the insertion process according to Böhme:

A huge group, the Russians, meet a tiny minority, and that's very different from how integration usually works in Germany, where about 80 million Germans have to absorb three million Muslims or ethnic German repatriates, for example. That's nothing. Here there were maybe 20,000 veterans and 200,000 new people who needed to be integrated. That's a source of immense tension that manifests itself in everyday community life again and again...I assume that only when the second generation of immigrants has grown up here, something will happen there. I think that we're going to have a very different Jewry here in ten years than what we have today. It will be represented very differently.

Mikhail Goldberg also emphasizes the numerical ratio between the groups and questions whether it is appropriate to use the term integration in such a context. He remarks:

The biggest problem when talking about integration and what the federal government considers to be integration is that no one has a clear idea of what exactly they're talking about. How can you integrate 90% into 10%?

Walter Homolka also maintains that there is no improvement in that respect and he does not think that these problems are diminishing at all. He also mentions mentality differences or problems:

There were also problems mentality-wise; for example, that Russians were used to having everything organized for them. And they find it awkward that they should suddenly take an active role and responsibility.

These differences are disappearing over time, and he expects drastic improvement within the next generation that has been educated in Germany. Michael Kogan also mentioned different mentalities: "Regardless of the fact that everyone's Jewish, whether Russian or German, they have absolutely different mentalities." Lala Süsskind tends, like others, to distinguish in that respect between different age groups or generations. She argues that:

The older generations do not have much in common, this is simply due to language barriers...Older people want their familiar networks and cultures on both sides, and there isn't so much interaction between the veterans and the newcomers.

However, unlike most observers, she does not think that "this is such a tragedy." According to her, "...for the middle aged or younger generation...we hope for much more interaction and exchange between the two groups." Heinz-Joachim Aris agrees with this generational distinction: "I've always said that with the first generation of immigrants

we'll experience a considerable quantitative improvement, and with the second a clearly qualitative."

On this point, Micha Brumlik distinguishes between Jewish communities by their size. According to him:

In some smaller Jewish communities there are still some veterans who feel a little bit alienated by the Russian influx. I think this problem will be solved in the smaller communities as it has been in the larger ones like Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Cologne.

Christian Böhme's impression is that in some individual communities RSJs replace the Veteran establishment. He provides the examples of Kassel and Erfurt, pointing out that:

These are small beginnings; it's coming on a small basis. I think that the pressure, the political, demographic pressure will increase starkly over the next few years, and in the long-term the establishment will either have to do something to remain integrated themselves or the others will exert so much pressure that there'll be no holding them back any longer.

Hence, in one way or another, the people we interviewed cite the time dimension and many emphasize expectations from the next generation. In this respect, several of them are preoccupied with the question of the insertion of the young into the Jewish community. Thus, for example, according to Benjamin Bloch "the main problem is that the 18–30 year olds are rarely reached by the communities." Bloch's impression is that the problem is far more acute in Germany than in other European countries. As he noted, "In France and in England, the student movements are much more active than here. Or in Belgium." He explained that "there are thousands of Jewish students here in the bigger towns. Compared to what there used to be, there is no active student life here in Germany."

Christian Böhme thinks that the young are "largely lost to the community," and he believes that the communities are unable to run programs in a way that is interesting enough to attract the people:

We know that people are entering a new period in their life at this time, they're having children and becoming established in their careers... and as I hear, they're leaving the community. They may have attended in their childhood and youth and were always in the Youth Center, but then there's the break in their biography and also a break with the community.

Other young people, who were never community members, do not join the community or are not committed to it. Though, according to Sergey Lagodinsky, “the problem is not the people, but the ways to recruit and to work with them. The problem is the overall image of the community.” Jewgenij Singer claims that

the communities have failed to include people in Jewish life from an early age on or from the moment they came to Germany. There’s now the problem of actively including people between 20–35 years old in Jewish life.

Homolka agrees and says: “We have not yet found a mechanism in the Jewish communities to interest the younger generation.”

Several interviewees also raised in this respect the issue of the exclusion of non-Halakhic Jews from the Jewish community in Germany. Evgueni Berkovitch argues that it is “a very serious problem, especially for the children from mixed marriages.” Berkovitch elaborates the point:

Say you were a former Soviet citizen with the name Goldfarb. You spent your whole life in Russia and were considered to be Jewish by everyone. Now you’re not recognized as Jewish anymore because your mother isn’t Jewish, just your father... This is very painful for many immigrants to understand.

According to Berkovitch if this Goldfarb feels Jewish, “his kids can marry Jews and that’s why his grandchildren can be Jewish. But if a line is drawn after him already, saying he’s not Jewish anymore then the next generations are lost, too.” Hence, he thinks that “it’s a big mistake that these people are being cut off from the very beginning.” Sergey Lagodinsky criticizes the community for this policy: “Here the community is very bureaucratic... It’s a very closed community. For example, if there are younger fathers who out married, they’re automatically excluded.”

Hermann Simon suggests in this respect:

Concerning the perspectives of the second generation, I think that the communities must become open for children with a non-Jewish mother but other Jewish ancestors. I think that there’s a great potential here and I know that there are certainly people who want to come to the communities, but they’re not being accepted! This is absolutely incomprehensible for me.

On this point, Micha Brumlik asks

whether liberal Jewish congregations in Europe should adopt the North American model, in which one does not have to be the child of a Jewish mother, but can also be the child of a Jewish father to be recognized as a Jew.

Evgueni Berkovitch holds that the local Jewish community plays an important role here, and says that when the community is attractive and welcoming, people do participate. Gesa Ederberg emphasized that

the communities have very often been too self-sufficient, too established and not welcoming enough. Newcomers...often lamented that they went to the synagogue and nobody even said 'Shabbat Shalom'...so they never went back.

Walter Homolka thinks that the single most difficult issue is to offer a meaningful explanation to everyone who immigrated to Germany why they should associate with the Jewish community:

We are already very late in providing a meaningful framework for the next generation that will lead second-generation immigrants to becoming more engaged with Jewish communities, and not only for social reasons, but also for religious or educational reasons.

In brief, the leaders interviewed do not offer an over-optimistic description of integrative processes within the Jewish community of Germany. Gaps exist and mutual understanding is fraught with problems at different levels. How, however, is this reality captured by individuals on the basis of their personal experience? This was one of the goals of the survey.

### *The Survey Data*

We address first the whole sample which includes RSJs and Vets. As shown in Table 4.1.1, two-thirds of our respondents are members in Jewish communities. Interestingly enough, this kind of involvement seems limited to the local Jewish community framework—as shown by the contrasting low figures of participation in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, as well as the alienation expressed toward specific RSJ or just RS (Russian-speaking) organizations. The findings indicate an interest about membership in organized Jewry, but little interest in other forms of activity.

Table 4.1: The sample: membership and contact with Jewish institutions

## 4.1.1. Membership in organizations (%)

	Zionist/pro-Isr org. (n=1121)	Jewish community (n=1141)	RSJ organizations (n=939)*
No	90.3	33.2	92.7
Yes	9.7	66.8	7.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 4.1.2. Contacts with institutions (%)

	Jewish inst. in Ger (n=1140)	Russian-sp inst. Ger (938)*	Russian-sp J. inst. Ger (881)*
No	18.1	61.4	44.0
A few	53.5	35.1	44.6
A lot	28.4	3.5	11.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* RSJs who arrived in Germany after the age of 8

While most respondents are somewhat in contact with Jewish institutions, a good quarter describe such contacts as frequent. On the other hand, it appears that both Jewish Russian-speaking organizations and non-Jewish Russian-speaking institutions or organization are not attractive to RSJ respondents (Table 4.1.2). It is clear that while both kinds of institutions have only weak appeal for our RSJ respondents, between Russian-speaking frameworks and RSJ frameworks, the latter attract them more.

All in all, Jews in Germany tend to attach themselves to the Jewish community—the community as an organization and, to some extent at least, as a set of institutions. Other forms of institutionalization of personal relations are much less popular.

### *RSJs in the Community*

As is the case of the sample as a whole, most RSJ respondents are members of local Jewish communities. Membership in other organizations is low. While this may be accounted for by practical and material reasons (like access to welfare services), only 23% describe their contacts with the community as continuous. Furthermore, the vast

majority of the respondents attend synagogue service, though 39.5% do so only rarely. For almost half the respondents, the figures for synagogue attendance are quite impressive: 25.7% attend synagogue several times a year and 22.5% more frequently.

On the other hand, a little over half of the respondents (51.4) describe the Veterans’ attitudes to the newcomers in positive terms, though an important cohort (39.1%) define these relations as marked by mutual indifference; a minority (11.4%) even portray them as conflictual.

*Does Religiosity Matter?*

RSJs’ own attitudes toward Jewry relates to religiosity. Orthodox respondents show stronger attachment to this respect than the secular. It is expressed, for instance, in contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany (Table 4.2.1); using Jewish media (Table 4.2.3); Jewishness of closest friends in Germany (Table 4.2.4); Jewishness of Russian-speaking friends (Table 4.2.5); membership in Jewish organizations in Germany (Table 4.2.6); and frequency of synagogue attendance (Table 4.2.2).

In brief, 42.9% of the orthodox maintain numerous contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany, while the corresponding share for the secular is only 12%; 47.3% of the orthodox respondents attend synagogue frequently, while the respective share of secular respondents is only 7.9%.

Table 4.2: Insertion in the Jewish community according to religiosity (RSJs)

4.2.1. Having contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany (n=853; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
	Orth/Ultra Orth	Liberal Judaism	Traditional	Secular
Not at all	6.7	17.2	13.9	30.4
A few	50.5	60.6	58.3	57.6
A lot	42.9	22.2	27.8	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4.2.2. Synagogue attendance (n=881; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Never	1.8	7.5	4.9	23.3
Rarely	26.4	38.5	31.6	49.4
Several times a year	24.5	25.1	34.2	19.5
Frequently	47.3	28.9	29.3	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.2 (*cont.*)

4.2.3. Consuming Jewish media (n=863; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Never	12.8	23.3	18.8	31.0
Seldom	33.9	43.9	34.1	43.2
Often	34.9	25.4	36.5	20.6
Very often	18.3	7.4	10.6	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4.2.4. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (n=877; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Jewish	50.0	31.9	38.5	29.1
Non-Jewish	2.8	2.1	1.1	0.9
Both	47.2	66.0	60.4	69.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4.2.5. Russian-speaking friends (mostly) (n=881; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
	Orth/Ultra Orth	Liberal Judaism	Traditional	Secular
Jewish	50.0	34.6	42.3	31.3
Non-Jewish	3.6	2.1	0.4	0.6
Both	46.4	63.3	57.3	68.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4.2.6. Membership in Jewish organizations in Germany (n=859; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
No	21.7	25.7	23.2	42.1
Yes	78.3	74.3	76.8	57.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Does Age Matter?*

Age is also a factor. The oldest age group (61+) shows greater attachment than the youngest age group (-40) to the Jewish community in Germany. The (61+) report higher rates of membership in Jewish organizations in Germany (Table 4.3.1). Thus, 73% of the (61+) respondents are members of Jewish organizations in Germany, and the respective figure for the (-40) is 56.5%. In addition, 21.9% of the respondents of the (-40) never attend synagogue services, whereas the corresponding rate for the (61+) is 6.3% (Table 4.3.2). To sum up, the different age strata illustrate different kinds of attachment to Jews and Jewry in Germany. The oldest age group (61+) shows greater attachment than the youngest age group (-40) to the Jewish community in Germany.



*Are Additional Factors Relevant?*

In some respects, length of stay is also significant (Tables 4.3.3–5). Attachment to Jewry in Germany is stronger among the (16+) group than among the (–10): they have more contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany; their closest friends in Germany tend more often to be Jewish; their closest Russian-speaking friends are more often Jewish. In sum, it seems that respondents who have been in Germany for a longer time than others show stronger attachment to Jews and Jewry in Germany, and are more willing to be in contact with Jewish institutions.

Table 4.3: Contacts with institutions and composition of networks: according to age; length of stay; partnership; region; community size (RSJs)

4.3.1. Membership in Jewish organizations in Germany (n=904; %;  $\chi^2=0$ ) according to age

	–40	41–60	61+
No	43.5	32.1	27.0
Yes	56.5	67.9	73.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.2. Synagogue attendance (n=932; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

	21.9	15.5	6.3
Never	21.9	15.5	6.3
Rarely	36.7	45.1	37.9
Several times a year	19.9	24.9	28.3
Frequently	21.4	14.4	27.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.3. Contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany, by length of stay (n=941; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

	–10	11–15	16+
Not at all	17.2	27.4	15.8
A few	60.4	53.4	47.4
A lot	22.5	19.2	36.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.4. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (n=973; %;  $\chi^2=0.026$ )

	32.4	34.1	48.5
Jewish	32.4	34.1	48.5
Non-Jewish	1.7	1.0	0.0
Both	65.9	64.8	51.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.3 (*cont.*)4.3.5. Russian-speaking friends (mostly) (n=976; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Jewish	31.0	41.0	54.1
Non-Jewish	1.5	0.3	1.0
Both	67.4	58.6	44.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.6. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (n=699; %;  $\chi^2=0$ ) according to partners' origin

	Non-Jewish partner	Jewish partner
Jewish	24.8	40.5
Non-Jewish	1.1	1.1
Both	74.0	58.4
Total	100.0	100.0

4.3.7. Russian-speaking friends (mostly) (n=700; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Jewish	27.6	42.4
Non-Jewish	1.1	0.7
Both	71.3	56.9
Total	100.0	100.0

4.3.8. Having contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany (n=941; %;  $\chi^2=0$ ) according to region

	Berlin	East	West
Not at all	13.6	12.2	24.7
A few	52.3	67.7	53.8
A lot	34.1	20.1	21.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.9. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (n=973; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Jewish	44.0	20.1	38.0
Non-Jewish	2.2	1.3	1.2
Both	53.7	78.6	60.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.10. Russian-speaking friends (mostly) (n=976; %;  $\chi^2=0$ )

Jewish	49.3	22.7	38.7
Non-Jewish	1.5	1.3	1.0
Both	49.3	76.0	60.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.3 (*cont.*)

4.3.11. Closest friends in Germany (mostly) (n=973; %;  $\chi^2=0$ ) according to size of community

	Large	Medium	Small
Jewish	39.9	33.0	19.1
Non-Jewish	1.5	1.1	1.5
Both	58.6	65.9	79.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3.12. Russian-speaking friends (mostly) (n=976; %;  $\chi^2=0.001$ )

Jewish	40.5	36.5	20.8
Non-Jewish	1.4	0.6	1.5
Both	58.1	63.0	77.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

We also know that respondents originating from homogeneously Jewish families show stronger attachment to the Jewish community, are more often affiliated with Jewish organizations, and attend synagogue in greater numbers. Thus, 74.5% of the respondents from homogeneous families belong to Jewish organizations in Germany, whereas the corresponding figure for respondents from mixed parentage is 51.7%. To sum up, the offspring of homogeneous families feel stronger belonging to the Jewish community in Germany.

RSJ respondents who live with a Jewish partner (Tables 4.3.6–7) show stronger attachment to Jewry than those living with a non-Jewish partner. The difference is indicated in their contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany, and the Jewishness of their closest friends in Germany and of their Russian-speaking friends, as well as their attendance at synagogue services. In summary, endogamous RSJs show stronger attachment to Jewry in Germany than exogamous RSJs—including more frequent attendance at synagogue services.

In certain respects, the region of residence also has some influence (Tables 4.3.8–10). Thus, respondents in the East manifest weaker attachment to Jewry in Germany than do respondents in the West, and especially those in Berlin. This difference is found in contacts with Jewish institutions; Jewishness of one’s closest friends in Germany and of Russian-speaking friends. As a whole, respondents residing in the East seem less committed to Jewry. This may be explained by the fact

that these are small communities, often quite remote from large Jewish centers. More isolated—and also of relatively more recent arrival—these Jews are highly dependent on the environment and thus more exposed to its culture and orientations.

Consistent with these findings, attachment to Jewry is stronger among respondents in large Jewish communities than in others (Tables 4.3.11–12). The difference is expressed in the Jewishness of their closest friends in Germany (Table 4.3.11) and of Russian-speaking friends (Table 4.3.12). Members of large communities are more committed to Jews and Jewry in Germany. These differences, to be sure, are not drastic and may be related to the fact that large communities tend to have more Jewish institutions and a stronger presence within the public.

*Comparing Vets and RSJs with Respect to the Attitudes Toward  
Jewry in Germany*

We now return to the Vet-RSJ comparison of the younger stratum in both groups; a majority of both immigrants (68.1%) and veterans (60.4%) are members in some Jewish organization in Germany—especially in local Jewish communities. Now we see that this rate of membership is lower among the younger, especially among the RSJs. So to the extent that membership of young people in Jewish organizations forecasts the recruitment of future community leaders, there seems to be a continuation of the pattern in which Vets are more ready to become involved in Jewish activities—even though they are now a small minority in the Jewish population. Most RSJs, in contrast, are only moderately willing to become involved. This predicts some difficulties in the future recruitment of community activists and leaders. RSJs are even not too eager to be affiliated with organizations working on their behalf as RSJs, and this tendency is particularly prominent among the younger.

Still, in one respect at least, there is a strong tendency for convergence among the younger strata of both Vets and RSJs: the overwhelming majority of both groups consider the massive immigration of RSJs in Germany as a positive contribution to Jewry in that country. When RSJs see their settling there in this light, it signifies that they see themselves not just as *émigrés* from Eastern Europe but as a Jewish population in Germany. On the other hand, when Vets see RSJs in

this light, the implication is that they are absorbing them—or wish to—into local Jewry.

Social barriers, it is true, have not disappeared and social relations appear to be somehow demarcated along the RSJ-Vet line, though it is by no means an impenetrable barrier. RSJs' closest friends are generally also RSJs, but the majority of Vets declare that Russian-speaking individuals are among their closest Jewish friends. For quite a few RSJs too, their circle of closest Jewish friends does include non-Russian speakers. Hence, the social distinction between RSJs and Vets in this age stratum is flexible. That it is more flexible for Vets than for RSJs is, of course, accounted for by the numerical discrepancy between the two categories in the social reality: Vets have far more opportunities to encounter RSJs socially, than vice versa.

Perhaps the major barrier between Vets and RSJs, as mentioned in the above in a different context, is the linguistic barrier. Up to now one could say that Vets and RSJs from the younger age-stratum use different languages in many areas of social activity. In this respect, it is a matter of two different speech communities, and the fact is primarily indicated by the languages used with partners.

The tendency toward different—but flexible—orientations is exemplified by the question of the language used for reading. Among the (–40) one still finds, as might be expected, that each category shows preference for its own language, although this contrast is mitigated by the relatively large proportion of RSJs who evaluate their use of German in this respect as similar to their use of Russian. Here too, differentiation does not point to polarization. We can continue from this to television viewing. In this respect, one may even speak of a predominance of German over Russian among RSJs, conjunctively with a visible convergence toward Vets. To the extent that reading and TV-watching say something about culture, one may draw the conclusion that RSJs tend to evolve toward Vets by acquiring and practicing German culture—notwithstanding the fact that they also retain Russian in specific areas of their social activity.

### *Conclusion*

Interviews of leading figures show different understandings of the RSJ-Vet relations in present-day Germany. The diversity of opinions indicates that the situation is not polarized, in any event, but one cannot

yet speak of unquestionable harmony. Most interviewees agree that these relations are still fraught with difficulties on the ground of differing cultures and interests, as well as the fact that, objectively, RSJs are more often reduced to low-status positions, more of them are secular, and many are scattered throughout small communities. Neither does the numerical discrepancy ease integrative processes, since the absorbing group is a tiny minority in comparison with the cohort of newcomers. Many leaders, however, show some optimism as to the evolution of the relation between these groups, and expect that the younger generation will contribute to bridging the gaps.

As for the survey data, they show that the majority of respondents are members in Jewish communities but express little interest for more focused forms of activity; yet a good quarter describe their contacts with Jewish institutions as frequent. As is the case for the sample as a whole, most RSJ respondents are members of local Jewish communities. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents attend synagogue services at least occasionally. When it comes to Vet-RSJ relations, opinions among RSJs differ widely—a little over half of the respondents describe the Veterans' attitudes to them positively, but more than a few cite tensions and indifference.

It is worth noting, at this point, that orthodox RSJs show stronger attachment to organized Jewry.

Among RSJs, the oldest age group shows greater attachment than the youngest age group to the Jewish community. In some respects, the length of stay is also significant: respondents who have been longer in Germany show stronger attachment to Jews and Jewry in Germany, and are more willing to be in contact with Jewish institutions. Respondents originating from a homogeneously Jewish family show stronger attachment to the Jewish community, and so do individuals whose partner is Jewish—in comparison to those who live with a non-Jewish partner.

In addition, we have also seen that the region of residence has some influence in certain respects. Respondents in the East manifest a weaker attachment to Jewry than those in the West, and especially in Berlin. This may be explained by the fact that Jews in these smaller and more recent communities are more isolated, depend more on the immediate environment and thus are more exposed to its culture and orientations. Consistent with these findings, attachment to Jewry is stronger among respondents in large Jewish communities than in others.

When comparing Vets and RSJs among the younger stratum, we found several lines of convergence, including those relating to the positive evaluation of the immigration of RSJs in Germany. Some social barriers, though flexible, still separate the two groups. Among the elements that distinguish the groups from each other are the languages used in each group within the family and when socializing. Moreover, there is no doubt that younger Vets are much more enthusiastic about community activism than young RSJs, and this may eventually create obstacles to recruiting future leaders of Germany's Jewry from the RSJs' ranks.

To sum up, the subjective data yielded by the survey broadly confirm the complexity of the situation as the community leaders perceive it; together with the difficulties, they also point out processes that may result in a more integrated future for Germany's Jewry. Above all, they show that Germany's Jewry is pluralistic along a variety of lines, and that those lines relate to practices and attitudes within and toward the Jewish community. Moreover, in this population the non-orthodox are the broad majority and as such belong to the ethnocultural cluster, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, is characterized by flexibility and permeability of collective boundaries. Individuals tend to register with the Jewish community but are not ready to involve themselves further than that, even if they do attend synagogue from time to time. This community is therefore by no means coherent or crystallized, and its members' interest in community affairs is limited.

In a single sentence, the impression we obtained is of widespread belonging-without-believing, and we must still elucidate what is the "believing." This is what we discuss in the next chapter in addition to other relevant aspects.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

#### *The Leading Figures about the Attachment to Israel*

A major aspiration of the research was to delve into collective identity issues among Germany's Jews. We phrased these issues in questions that consisted an important part of our questionnaire. Before we present here our results, we bring in the feelings of the interviewed leading figures who, as a rule, tended to focalize, in this respect on Jews' attachment to Israel. The opinions among them in this respect were found to vary very much.

The prevailing view among the leaders is that nowadays Israel and the connections of Germany's Jewry with Israel are very important to it. Jews in Germany, they assess, feel strongly solidaristic with the Jewish state. As to their projections about the future of this attachment, opinions however, were divided. The prevailing view is that the importance of Israel for Germany's Jews will not change and Israel will continue to keep its centrality. Though, some voices predict a decline in this centrality of Israel.

The importance of Israel for the contemporary generation is echoed by Dmitri Belkin: "For this generation... the significance [of Israel] will remain." Lala Süsskind agrees and adds: "For my generation... the importance of Israel is unquestionable." Evgueni Berkovitch elaborates further:

Israel, for every Jew, is a home. Regardless of where you're living. When we were in Russia, Israel was still our second home, or our main home... And that's the same in Germany. The problems in Israel are our problems, regardless of where we live.

Küf Kaufmann emphasizes that there are a lot of contacts between Jews in Germany and Israelis. He says that "every community member [in Leipzig] has relatives in Israel... almost every family visits Israel once every two years."

The prevailing view among the interviewed leaders that Israel will remain important and central for Germany's Jewry is also expressed by Charlotte Knobloch:



Israel will continue to play an important role for the Jewish communities in Germany in the years to come. Israel is the only refuge for the Jewish people in the diaspora, and will always keep its borders open during an existential threat. We can count on Israel, and Israel can rely on our solidarity, especially in hard times.

Lala Süsskind also emphasizes the importance of Israel as possible refuge:

Even if you don't live in Israel, it's a great feeling to know that there is a Jewish state which will host you in any situation. You will never be alone, and the times of being a marginalized, unprotected minority in the world are over.

Most evocative in this respect is Joshua Spinner who is very suspicious about European potential hospitality toward Jews:

To think for a minute that Europe and the Europeans are going to allow us Jews to become so comfortable here that we don't feel a need for identification with somewhere else—forget it! On the contrary, if Jews are feeling threatened in greater numbers here in European countries, that could cause more distance. And do not underestimate when politicians, social groups, church groups and labor unions call for Israel boycotts.

Christian Böhme projects that Israel will continue to play a large role in Germany. He argues, as well that “the connection between German Jewry, organized German Jewry and Israel is much stronger, which is easily explained by the history, than in the USA, England, France or wherever.”

Arkady Litvan thinks that Israel will remain important for Germany's Jewry but he projects a possible shift in emphasis in this respect. According to Litvan:

Up to the 1980s, or maybe even later, the Jews living...in Germany...saw Israel as where they'd be living in the near future. They all bought apartments there and saw their life...in Germany as something temporary, short-term. Now this has all changed. The majority assume that they'll stay...in Germany, or try to stay or want to stay. But Germany remains and is and will be their home. However, the spiritual, the religious-spiritual center will be in Israel...the emphasis will shift a bit, and is shifting already. The connection to Israel will remain...it will be something like, Mecca for the Muslims. The center stays in Mecca.

It is worth mentioning that one leader, Kuf Kaufman thinks that “if nothing stands in our way, it [the attachment to Israel] will become even more intensive.” However, there are also several leaders that

project a decline in Israel's centrality for Germany's Jewry. Dmitri Belkin maintains:

In the future [Israel's significance] will decrease, like it will decrease everywhere, in America as well. I can't imagine that this flaming Zionism that the veterans had 20–30 years ago will now emerge amongst the new members, or among the Jewish youth in Germany in general. But I do think that the feeling of solidarity will remain...Valuing the culture and visiting there will remain priorities in any case. But just to say that we're a branch office of Israel, that too will decrease a bit, just as it has in America. It's not as important there anymore as it once was...we're now in a post-Zionist era, where Jewish people across the world are saying that Zionism is one option among others.

The same opinion is voiced by Micha Brumlik. Moreover, he also adds that

On the whole, community leaders are having more and more doubts about current Israeli politics, but officially they still stand strongly behind it, and...this rather schizophrenic attitude is not going to last very long.

In brief, leaders do show preoccupation regarding the attitude toward Israel. In this respect and regarding the present state of affairs, they underline the general feeling of solidarity among Germany's Jews vis-à-vis the Jewish state. The major difference of opinion concerns the future and its apprehension. In the survey itself we looked deeper into respondents' collective identities.

### *The Survey Data*

One of the major topics addressed in our questionnaire concerned the contours of collective identities. We defined this topic as primarily involving the feeling of being part of wider collectives—i.e. allegiance to the Jewish people, solidarity with Israel, and the attitude toward the German nation and the country of origin (if different from the former).

Table 5.1 shows that of all four circles of belongingness, it is solidarity with Israel and feeling part of the Jewish people that are by far the strongest allegiances of our respondents. Only small minorities—respectively 3.1% and 3.9%—do not identify at all with those two circles of reference. The comparable figures for the feeling of belongingness to the former country's nation (28.2%) or the German nation

Table 5.1: Feeling part of/solidarity with given collectives (%)  
(entire sample)

	Collective identities			
	Part of German nation (n=1169)	Part of Jewish people (n=1143)	Solidarity with Israel (n=1157)	Part of former nation * (n=946)
Not at all	46.2	3.9	3.1	28.2
A little	30.5	13.4	8.6	27.7
Moderately	20.0	32.8	24.6	32.3
Very much so	3.3	49.9	63.6	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* RSJs who arrived in Germany after the age of 8

(46.2%) are far more important in these respects. The former country’s nation and the German nation cannot be neglected altogether, though: no less than 44% still identify with the former, at least moderately, and nearly a quarter (23.3%) with the latter.

The importance of Jewishness and Israel naturally raises the question of what Judaism signifies for our respondents. The questionnaire offered the respondents several possible answers—which explains why the replies total over 100%. The results were as follows:

- *religion* was the most popular, with a slight majority (51.3%);
- *culture* came in second, with a large minority (42.7%);
- *ethnicity* was in third place, obtaining nearly one-third (30.0%);
- *group solidarity* received the fourth place (27.4%).

The first place of religion testifies that this dimension of Judaism is still viewed as an important factor of Jewish identity even though, as mentioned, only 13.2% of the respondents feel close to orthodox Judaism, and another 35.5% feel close to non-Halakhic religious denominations. Hence, many respondents feel that religion defines Judaism, even when they do not see themselves as religious. Other data show that about three-quarters of the respondents attend synagogue at least once a year: with 28.2% reporting that they attend synagogue services several times a year, and 24.1% stating that they attend “frequently.”

As Table 5.2 shows, many respondents do not overlook the religious factor when it comes to the question of who is a Jew, and of non-

Table 5.2: Attitudes toward mixed marriage and offspring

## 5.2.1. Considering non-Jews who are married to Jews (%) (n=1141)

	Non-Jewish man (married to a Jewish woman)	Non-Jewish woman (married to a Jewish man)
A regular Jew	4.1	5.3
Like a Jew	21.6	3.2
A regular non-Jew	74.2	91.5
Total	100.0	100.0

## 5.2.2. Considering a child of a non-Jew and a Jew (%)

	Child of a Jewish woman + non-Jewish man (n=1164)	Child of a non-Jewish woman + Jewish man (n=1161)
A regular Jew	43.6	7.1
Like a Jew	14.9	17.6
A regular non-Jew	3.2	26.3
Depends on home education	38.3	49.0
Total	100.0	100.0

## 5.2.3. Feeling about marrying a non-Jew (%)

	Respondent's child (n=1090)	Respondent (n=637)
Opposed	18.7	25.9
Not enthusiastic but supports	39.5	33.9
No opposition at all	41.7	40.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Jews marrying Jews. Respondents tend to adopt a clearly halakhic attitude—most consider non-Jews married to Jews as “regular” non-Jews. This is close to unanimous when it concerns women of non-Jewish origin who marry Jewish men. The difference between the results for the two questions reveals the influence of halakha, since it is common knowledge that halakha endows women with the determinant role in defining the Jewishness of offspring.

However, regarding the offspring of mixed unions, one sees a mixture of Halakhic and non-Halakhic attitudes. The Halakhic attitude is manifest, for example, in attaching differing importance to women and men in determining the Jewishness of children in mixed unions. A child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman is seen by a large minority as a regular Jew, but that of a non-Jewish woman and a Jewish man,

only by a small number. The table also indicates the importance that large minorities of respondents ascribe to education. These attitudes illustrate non-Halakhic attitudes—even though the relative difference between the two categories of cases again shows some influence of the Halakhic tradition.

A certain non-Halakhic orientation is also visible in the relatively high percentages of respondents—though still minorities—that show no opposition at all to the possibility that either the respondent's child or the respondent him/herself, if unmarried, would marry a non-Jew.

### *The Russian-Speaking Jews*

When focusing only on the RSJs of our sample, we conducted a more in-depth study of the impact of our major background factors.

#### *Does Religiosity Make a Difference?*

The *religiosity* factor impacts on RSJs' attachment to Judaism, the Jewish People and Israel. Orthodox respondents manifest stronger attachment to Judaism and to the Jewish people than the secular do. It is expressed, for instance, in questions like feeling part of the Jewish people; contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany; giving children a Jewish education; the importance of children receiving a Jewish education; using Jewish media; negative feelings about one's child marrying a non-Jew; preferring to marry a Jew; Jewishness of closest friends in Germany; Jewishness of Russian-speaking friends; membership in Jewish organizations in Germany; frequency of synagogue attendance; knowledge of Yiddish; and feeling part of the RSJ community in Germany (see selected findings in Table 5.3).

Thus, 64.2% of the orthodox feel strongly that they are part of the Jewish people, whereas the respective figure for the secular is 36.2% (Table 5.3.1); 42.9% maintain many contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany, while the corresponding share for the secular is only 12%; 43.3% of the orthodox respondents oppose their child's marrying a non-Jew, while the rate for the secular is only 8%. In fact, 58.5% of the secular respondents have no objections at all to their child's marrying a non-Jew, whereas among the orthodox this figure is only 24.7% (Table 5.3.4). Unsurprisingly, 47.3% of the orthodox respondents attend synagogue frequently, while the respective share of the secular respondents is only 7.9%.

Table 5.3: Religiosity and identity (RSJs)

	Orthodox/ Ultra-Orthodox	Liberal Judaism	Traditional	Secular
5.3.1. Feeling part of the Jewish people (n=867; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Not at all	1.9	4.8	2.3	6.1
A little	17.9	17.6	8.8	15.4
Moderately	16.0	35.1	35.2	42.3
Very much so	64.2	42.6	53.6	36.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.2. Giving/gave children a Jewish education (n=650; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
No Jewish education	32.9	57.1	63.9	76.7
Sunday school	19.7	10.0	16.5	6.7
Day school	30.3	19.3	11.3	7.1
Other	17.1	13.6	8.2	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.3. Importance of children receiving a Jewish education (n=760; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Not at all	7.5	22.3	19.7	44.9
A little	20.4	24.6	23.1	30.8
Moderately	15.1	34.3	29.7	19.0
Very much so	57.0	18.9	27.5	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.4. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=814; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Opposed	43.3	14.3	18.5	8.0
Not enthusiastic but supports	32.0	43.4	45.2	33.4
No opposition at all	24.7	42.3	36.3	58.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.5. Feeling about marrying a non-Jew (n=425; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Opposed	48.2	19.4	26.1	14.5
Not enthusiastic but supports	23.2	35.5	39.9	25.4
No opposition at all	28.6	45.2	34.1	60.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.6. Non-Jewish man who marries a Jewish woman (n=848; %; $\chi^2=0.022$ )				
A regular Jew	2.8	4.3	3.9	3.7
Like a Jew	9.3	21.2	23.4	26.6
A regular non-Jew	87.9	74.5	72.7	69.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.3 (cont.)

	Orthodox/ Ultra-Orthodox	Liberal Judaism	Traditional	Secular
5.3.7. Child of non-Jewish man and Jewish woman (n=873; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
A regular Jew	67.9	42.6	39.5	27.5
Like a Jew	10.1	11.2	17.1	19.2
A regular non-Jew	2.8	4.3	4.2	3.5
Depends on home	19.3	42.0	39.2	49.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.8. Child of non-Jewish woman and Jewish man (n=871; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
A regular Jew	7.3	4.8	6.0	11.0
Like a Jew	11.0	19.6	15.8	18.2
A regular non-Jew	54.1	25.4	23.8	14.0
Depends on home	27.5	50.3	54.3	56.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.9. Visiting Israel (n=872; %; $\chi^2=0$ )				
Never	27.3	43.5	39.3	50.6
Once	32.7	31.0	30.5	29.1
Several times	40.0	25.5	30.2	20.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.3.10. Membership in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations (n=840; %; $\chi^2=0.001$ )				
No	83.0	93.8	92.9	94.4
Yes	17.0	6.2	7.1	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Related to these correlations, many more orthodox respondents conceive of Judaism and the Jewish people in Halakhic terms than the secular do. This is evinced—like in the sample as a whole—regarding such issues as: how to consider a non-Jewish man who is married to a Jewish woman; how to consider the child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman, and the child of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman: 87.9% of the orthodox consider a non-Jewish man who marries a Jewish woman as a regular non-Jew, while the corresponding figure for the secular is 69.8% (Table 5.3.6); while 49.8% of the secular think that a child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman should be considered according to the education given at home, among the orthodox only 19.3% share this view (Table 5.3.7).

In summary, as could have been expected, orthodox respondents are clearly more strongly aware of their allegiance to Judaism and to the Jewish people, more involved in activities of Jewish institutions, and more strongly committed to their children's Jewish education. Clearly more than the secular, they seek a milieu that is Jewish, and are also inclined to have RSJs as friends.

In addition, the orthodox are also more strongly attached to Israel as a Jewish state than the secular. Thus, the orthodox visit Israel more frequently than others, especially when compared with secular respondents and are also more often members of Zionist or pro-Israel organizations. The membership rate of the orthodox in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations (17%), is substantially higher than in the other categories—and again especially when compared to the secular (5.6%) (Table 5.3.10).

### *Does Age Make a Difference?*

Age is a factor of importance in several respects, though as Table 5.4 shows the relation of identities to age strata is not one-directional. Hence the (–40) illustrate greater attachment to Jewish education for children. At the same time, it is the (61+) who report stronger feelings of belongingness to the Jewish people; higher rates of membership in Jewish organizations and RSJ frameworks. On the other hand, knowledge of Hebrew is more widespread among the younger, even though the older testify to stronger solidarity with Israel.

Thus, 97% of the (61+) respondents rate their knowledge of Hebrew as poor, while this figure for the (–40) is 74.4%; 62.2% of the (61+) intensively follow Israeli events and developments, whereas the respective figure for the (–40) is 39.4%; 73.8% of the (61+) respondents are not giving or have not given their children any Jewish education, but the rate for the (–40) is 38.8%; 73% of the (61+) respondents are members in Jewish organizations in Germany, and the respective figure for the (–40) is 56.5%.

Interestingly enough, (–40) respondents conceive of Judaism and the Jewish people in more Halakhic terms than the (61+); this is shown by how they view the child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman and the child of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman: 57.5% of the (–40) respondents consider the child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman as a regular Jew, while the figure for the (61+) is 28.3%; 48.3% of the (61+) maintain that such a child should be considered according to the education given at home, whereas the corresponding figure



Table 5.4: The impact of age (RSJs)

	-40	41-60	61+
5.4.1. Importance of children receiving a Jewish education (n=795; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	19.4	33.5	35.7
A little	23.9	30.6	22.9
Moderately	21.1	23.4	25.1
Very much so	35.6	12.5	16.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.2. Knowledge of Hebrew (n=815; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Poor	74.4	93.9	97.0
Somewhat	18.3	4.3	2.0
Quite good	3.3	0.9	1.0
Good	3.9	0.9	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.3. Feeling solidarity with Israel (n=920; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	4.7	1.8	2.8
A little	13.6	12.5	4.6
Moderately	28.3	29.0	25.6
Very much so	53.4	56.6	67.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.4. Following Israeli events and developments (n=917; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	4.1	0.7	1.5
A little	23.3	13.8	5.3
Moderately	33.2	36.1	31.0
Very much so	39.4	49.4	62.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.5. Giving (have given) Jewish education to children (n=689; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
No Jewish education	38.8	64.9	73.8
Sunday school	20.0	14.2	6.2
Day school	23.8	10.0	11.6
Other	17.5	10.9	8.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.6. Child of a non-Jewish man and a Jewish woman (considered) (n=922; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
A regular Jew	57.5	38.0	28.3
Like a Jew	10.4	14.9	18.3
A regular non-Jew	2.1	2.9	5.1
Depends on home	30.1	44.2	48.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.4 (*cont.*)

	-40	41-60	61+
5.4.7. Feeling part of the Jewish people (n=948; %; $\chi^2=0.002$ )			
Not at all	4.8	4.2	2.1
A little	15.9	14.2	7.4
Moderately	39.5	31.9	28.4
Very much so	39.8	49.7	62.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.8. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=901; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Opposed	12.4	18.5	25.0
Not enthusiastic but supports	36.1	40.0	46.7
No opposition at all	51.5	41.5	28.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.4.9. Visiting Israel (n=969; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Never	51.2	38.4	17.7
Once	29.2	32.7	26.0
Several times	19.6	29.0	56.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

for the (-40) is 30.1%. This stronger closeness to religious-Halakhic premises among the younger age group correlates with the fact already mentioned in the above that, in our sample at least, orthodoxy is more popular among the younger than the older.

To sum up, the different age strata illustrate various kinds of attachment to Judaism, the Jewish people, and Israel. The younger ascribe more importance to Jewish education, and effectively try to provide their children with it. They themselves know little Hebrew, but more than the older, and they also tend to attend synagogue services more. This accords with their more Halakhic understanding of who is a Jew. On the other hand, the older stratum is marked by stronger feelings of belongingness to the Jewish people and solidarity with Israel, and they also demonstrate more readiness to join Jewish and RSJ organizations. This disparity may be due to the fact that RSJs, old and young, are relatively new to Judaism and to relations with the Jewish world. Each age stratum encounters different realities—the older never knew Jewish institutions in action during their early socialization; the younger are closer to Germany's Jewish institutions, but they themselves received little Jewish education at home.

In addition, the (61+) respondents maintain stronger contacts with their former country—family and friends—and visit there from time to time. Thus, 29.4% of the (61+) respondents visit their former country at least once a year, while the corresponding figure for the younger (–40) is 16%. In summary, the older maintain stronger contacts with their former country than the younger, though contacts have not completely declined among the latter either.

*Does Length of Stay Make a Difference?*

Length of stay is another aspect that relates to some attitudes of respondents. Hence, attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people is clearly stronger among the (16+) than among the (–10): their feeling of belonging to the Jewish people is stronger; they have more contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany; they are more eager to give a Jewish education to their children; they are more negative about the possibility of their child marrying a non-Jew; they are more negative about their own marrying a non-Jew; their closest friends in Germany tend more to be Jewish; their closest Russian-speaking friends are more often Jewish. The (16+) also show a stronger attachment to Israel than (–10)—which is reflected in the frequency of visits to Israel and the knowledge of Hebrew.

Thus, 62.1% of the (16+) feel very much that they are part of the Jewish people whereas the respective figure for the (–10) is 39.8%; 36.8% of the (16+) have many contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany, while the corresponding figure for the (–10) is 22.5%; 56.3% of the (16+) have visited Israel several times, while this figure for the (–10) is 19.6%.

It seems that living in Germany impels RSJs to become more aware of their Jewishness. This may be explained by the fact that before immigration, most RSJs were very remote from Judaism, but in Germany they have gradually discovered it as their heritage.

Moreover, as could also be expected, the (–10) maintain wider contacts with their former country than the (16+). This tendency concerns relatives and friends, and visits to the former country. However, and this is also significant, (16+) do maintain non-negligible contacts with their former country: 70.4% of the (–10) have frequent or very frequent contact with relatives or friends in their former country, whereas the respective figure for the (16+) is 40.4%. Additionally, 49.4% of the

(–10) visit their former country at least once every two years, while the corresponding rate for the (16+) is 23.9%.

To sum up, while length of stay tends to diminish the relation with the former country, RSJs as a whole still qualify for the notion of “transnational diaspora”—seeing how far the countries of origin are still present in their current endeavors.

*Does Endogamy or Exogamy of Parenthood Make a Difference?*

The respondents originating from a homogeneously Jewish family generally show stronger attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than those of mixed parenthood (see selected findings in Table 5.5). It is expressed in the sense of being part of the Jewish people; the importance of giving children a Jewish education; reservations over the possibility that their child might marry a non-Jew; and reservations regarding their own readiness to marry a non-Jew. Moreover, these respondents also emphasize the more unpleasant aspects of being a Jew living in Germany in the context of the memory of the Shoa, the presence of anti-Semitism, and personal experience of anti-Semitism. More of them are affiliated with Jewish organizations in Germany, and attend synagogue services. They manifest a stronger attachment to Israel: they visit Israel more frequently; feel stronger solidarity with the state; they more often follow Israeli events and show interest in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations.

Accordingly, 52.3% of the respondents originating from homogeneous families feel very strongly that they are part of the Jewish people, while the respective figure for the respondents from mixed parenthood is 25.6%; 74.5% of the respondents from homogeneous families are members in Jewish organizations in Germany and 66.5% feel a strong solidarity with Israel—the corresponding figures in the other group are 51.7% and 47.3%. In addition, 58.8% of the respondents from homogeneous families closely follow Israeli events whereas the figure for the respondents from mixed parenthood is 39.3%.

In tandem, individuals originating from a mixed family are more attached to their former country: they visit there more frequently; are more in contact with friends and relatives living there; feel more at home there, and feel more part of that former country's nation.

Table 5.5: Homogeneous/non-homogeneous parenthood (RSJs)

	Non-homogeneous parenthood	Homogeneous parenthood
5.5.1. Feeling part of the Jewish people (n=943; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Not at all	12.0	1.5
A little	24.4	10.9
Moderately	38.0	35.3
Very much so	25.6	52.3
Total	100.0	100.0
5.5.2. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=896; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Opposed	10.4	17.5
Not enthusiastic	25.7	43.0
No opposition at all	63.9	39.6
Total	100.0	100.0
5.5.3. Feeling about marrying a non-Jew (n=464; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Opposed	15.7	25.4
Not enthusiastic	23.5	34.1
No opposition at all	60.8	40.5
Total	100.0	100.0
5.5.4. Feeling solidarity with Israel (n=957; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Not at all	4.5	2.3
A little	14.8	6.8
Moderately	33.3	24.4
Very much so	47.3	66.5
Total	100.0	100.0
5.5.5. Following Israeli events and developments (n=954; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Not at all	4.2	1.0
A little	19.8	8.5
Moderately	36.6	31.6
Very much so	39.3	58.8
Total	100.0	100.0
5.5.6. Feeling part of former country's nation (n=932; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Not at all	20.9	31.3
A little	25.6	28.3
Moderately	36.2	30.8
Very much so	17.3	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0

*Does the Partner's Origin Matter?*

Also related to the issue of mixed versus homogeneous parenthood is the question of the respondent's own life-partner, i.e. whether s/he lives with a Jewish or non-Jewish partner. What clearly emerges in this respect is that RSJ respondents who live with a Jewish partner show stronger attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than those living with a non-Jewish partner. This difference is reflected in their contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany; the importance they attach to giving their children a Jewish education; their reservations about the eventuality that their child might marry a non-Jew; their feeling about marrying a non-Jew themselves; their emphasis on the issue of anti-Semitism in Germany and personal experience of anti-Semitism; the Jewishness of their closest friends in Germany and of their Russian-speaking friends; and the frequency of their attendance at synagogue services. These respondents also visit Israel more frequently and more of them are members in Zionist and pro-Israel organizations (see selected findings in Table 5.5).

Thus, 21.1% of the respondents who live with a Jewish partner are opposed to their child's possible marriage to a non-Jew; while the respective figure for those living with a non-Jewish partner is 6.1%; 40.5% of the former have exclusively Jewish close friends, and this figure is 24.8% for those who live with a non-Jewish partner; 36.1% of the former never visited Israel, whereas the respective share for respondents who live with a non-Jewish partner is 53.1%.

Endogamy is clearly bound to stronger attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than exogamy. This concurs with a less positive perspective on Jewish life in Germany and a stronger propensity to belong to homogeneous Jewish milieus—including more frequent attendance at synagogue services—as well as stronger feelings of solidarity with Israel.

On the other hand, respondents who live with a non-Jewish partner maintain stronger contacts with their former country and illustrate firmer allegiances to it; they have more contacts with relatives or friends who remained there, and they visit that country more frequently; 50.4% visit it at least once every two years, whereas the corresponding figure for respondents living with a Jewish partner is 35.9%.

Table 5.6: The impact of partner's origin (RSJs)

	non-Jewish partner	Jewish partner
5.6.1. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=667; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Opposed	6.1	21.1
Not enthusiastic	31.7	43.5
No opposition at all	62.2	35.4
Total	100.0	100.0
5.6.2. Feeling about marrying a non-Jew (n=283; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Opposed	8.9	30.2
Not enthusiastic	22.8	32.4
No opposition at all	68.3	37.4
Total	100.0	100.0
5.6.3. Visiting Israel (n=693; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
Never	53.1	36.1
Once	27.1	31.7
Several times	19.8	32.2
Total	100.0	100.0
5.6.4. Visits to the former country (n=684; %; $\chi^2=0$ )		
At least once a year	31.4	21.6
Once every 2 years	19.0	14.3
Less than once every 2 years	20.9	20.4
Rarely, if at all	28.7	43.7
Total	100.0	100.0

### *Does Region Make a Difference?*

Region of residence is also a relevant aspect to attitudes on the examined matters (Tables 5.7.1–4). Respondents from the East manifest a weaker attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than those from the West, and especially from Berlin. The difference is indicated in feeling part of the Jewish people; contacts with Jewish institutions in Germany; importance attached to children's Jewish education; reservations regarding the possibility of one's child—or oneself—marrying a non-Jew; Jewishness of one's closest friends in Germany and of Russian-speaking friends. The respondents from the East also displayed a weaker attachment to Israel than those in Berlin and the West, as expressed in a lower frequency of visits to Israel, weaker feeling of

solidarity with the Jewish state, less interest in following Israeli events, lower membership rates in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, and less knowledge of Hebrew.

For instance, 48.7% of the respondents in the East feel strong solidarity with Israel, whereas the corresponding figures for respondents in Berlin and the West are 62% and 66.3%. Furthermore, only 1.8% in the East are members in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, while the figures for the other two categories are 4.6% in Berlin and 10.1%, in the West. Likewise, 64.3% in the East have no opposition to their child marrying a non-Jew, while the figures in Berlin and the West are 29.3% and 43.1%, respectively. Additionally, for 20.1% in the East, the closest friends in Germany are exclusively Jewish, while the figures are 38% in Berlin and 44% in the West. The fact that Jews in the East appear systematically less committed to Judaism, the Jewish people and Israel may again be explained by those communities' small size and remoteness from larger Jewish centers. One additional factor that might be relevant to these traits may be the fact mentioned in the above that Jews in the East are of more recent arrival and are thus less involved with the all-Germany Jewish activity.

Moreover, the attachment of respondents in Berlin to Germany's Russian-speaking community (Jewish and non-Jewish) is stronger than that manifested by respondents in the West and the East. This difference is exemplified by stronger feelings of being a part of the Russian-speaking Jewish community in Germany; the sense of belonging to the Russian-speaking community in Germany; and a higher rate of membership in RSJ organizations. It may be due to the larger numbers there of both RSJs and Russian-speaking non-Jews and the number of clubs, centers of entertainment or other at the disposal of Berliners—RSJs as well as Russian-speaking non-Jews. Accordingly, 28.2% of respondents in Berlin strongly feel that they are part of the Russian-speaking community in Germany, while the corresponding figures for respondents in the West and the East are 15.2% and 14.3%, respectively.

### *Does the Size of the Jewish Community Matter?*

Community size is yet another factor to be taken into consideration in our context. Attachment to Judaism and to the Jewish people is stronger among respondents in large Jewish communities than in medium and small ones (Table 5.7.5–7). This difference is expressed in the importance attached to children's Jewish education; reservation about



one's child or oneself marrying a non-Jew; the Jewishness of one's closest friends in Germany and of Russian-speaking friends. Attachment to Israel is also slightly stronger among respondents in large Jewish communities as indicated by interest in Israeli events, and membership in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations.

Table 5.7: The impact of region and community size (RSJs)

	Berlin	East	West
5.7.1. Feeling solidarity with Israel (n=962; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	3.1	0.9	3.7
A little	2.3	20.1	6.0
Moderately	32.6	30.3	24.0
Very much so	62.0	48.7	66.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.7.2. Membership in Zionist or pro-Israel org. (n=923; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
No	95.4	98.2	89.9
Yes	4.6	1.8	10.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.7.3. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=901; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Opposed	34.1	9.2	13.8
Not enthusiastic	36.6	26.6	43.1
No opposition at all	29.3	64.3	43.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.7.4. Feeling part of the Russian-speaking community (n=854; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	15.4	14.8	23.5
A little	16.2	35.0	20.4
Moderately	40.2	35.9	40.9
Very much so	28.2	14.3	15.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Large	Medium	Small
5.7.5. Feeling about child marrying a non-Jew (n=901; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Opposed	22.4	8.0	10.1
Not enthusiastic	41.1	37.9	29.4
No opposition at all	36.5	54.1	60.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.7 (*cont.*)

	Large	Medium	Small
5.7.6. Membership in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations (n=923; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
No	88.0	97.0	98.5
Yes	12.0	3.0	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.7.7. Feeling part of the Russian-speaking Jewish community (n=930; %; $\chi^2=0$ )			
Not at all	6.3	11.3	8.5
A little	19.1	27.6	28.5
Moderately	40.2	39.2	40.0
Very much so	34.4	22.0	23.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Thus, 36.5% of the respondents in large communities would have no opposition at all to their child marrying a non-Jew, whereas the corresponding figures for respondents from medium and small Jewish communities are 54.1% and 60.5%, respectively. Twelve percent of the respondents from large communities are members of Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, while the respective figures for respondents in medium and small communities are 3% and 1.5%.

The differences are not drastic, and may be related to the fact that larger communities have more Jewish institutions and a stronger presence in the public scene. It should be added here that the attachment of respondents from large communities to the RSJ community in Germany and to the Russian-speaking community, are both stronger than that shown by respondents in medium and small Jewish communities. The difference is reflected in their sense of belonging to the Russian-speaking Jewish community and the Russian-speaking community in Germany; membership in RSJ organizations; and membership in organizations working with Russian-speaking people.

#### *Young Adults: Vets Versus RSJs*

A comparison between young adults (–40) in the Vet and RSJ groups, regarding aspects of collective identities, throws additional light on this picture. It appears that attachment to the Jewish people and Israel is relatively stronger among Vets than among RSJs. Another

difference concerns the comparison between attachment to the Jewish People and solidarity with Israel: among Vets, there is no difference regarding these two while among RSJs, the allegiance to Israel is somewhat stronger—but still lower than among Vets. In general terms this implies that younger Vets are more involved in Jewishness and solidarity with Israel than RSJs—at least in the (–40) age stratum, and that the national drive is stronger among the latter than the religious axis. When it comes to involvement in Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, however, a wide majority of both RSJs and Vets express unwillingness to get involved—though, again, this reluctance is weaker among Vets (21.9% of younger Vets are affiliated to such an organization as against 8.1% of RSJs). In addition, the majority of the (–40) stratum among both RSJs and Vets attend synagogue services at least occasionally—with Vets again, more assiduous in this respect.

At this point we can examine the perception of Jewishness in these two groups. More than a few respondents, both RSJs and Vets, endorse Halakhic definitions regarding “Who is a Jew?,” though many others, again in both categories, are open to stressing the importance of Jewish education at home. Regarding these notions, no substantial differences were elicited between the two cohorts. This, we suggest, reveals that younger RSJs tend effectively to absorb the prevailing notions of Jewishness that they find in Germany among Vets, and so we can speak here of a tendency to convergence.

On the other hand, regarding feelings of being a part of the German nation, we again see that while there are differences between the two categories, they do not point to diametrical opposition. As a general tendency, Vets tend to be more positive than RSJs in this respect; however, both Vets (about 50%) and RSJs (about 70%) give frankly negative answers, or very reserved ones, to the question (Table 3.8.5). These data are particularly interesting concerning the (–40) Vets. Both Vets and RSJs are satisfied with many a specific aspect of life in Germany. One cannot detect, however, the greatest enthusiasm.

### *Conclusion*

One of the major issues considered in our research concerned the contours of collective identities. We defined the issue as primarily involving the sense of being part of the Jewish people, solidarity with Israel,

and the attitude toward German society and nation, on the one hand, and the country of origin (if different from the former), on the other. Unquestionably, solidarity with Israel and the feeling of belonging to the Jewish people are the most prominent axes of allegiances among our respondents. Yet it is also clear that the former country and the German nation retain some significance.

These kind of allegiances accord with a recognition of “religion;” i.e., the religious principle as the principal component of Jewishness in the eyes of a slight majority; however, the notions of culture and ethnicity are not far behind the religious principle. This result is all the more interesting since most of the respondents who indicated religion as a marker of Jewishness do not feel close to orthodox Judaism. In a similar vein, most respondents who do not see themselves as religious nevertheless attend synagogue at least once a year.

In tandem, and not unrelated, many respondents mention the religious factor when it comes to the question of “Who is a Jew?”. They generally tend to mix Halakhic and non-Halakhic attitudes. Large minorities of respondents ascribe importance to education, in these respects, and relatively high percentages of respondents show no opposition to the possibility that the respondent’s child or the respondent him/herself might marry a non-Jew.

Even among the numerous secular RSJs, the religious factor has an impact up to a certain point. In comparison to the orthodox secular RSJs display weaker attachment to Judaism, the Jewish people and Israel. Fewer of them conceive of Judaism and the Jewish people in Halakhic terms, leaving the orthodox to be more involved in the activity of Jewish institutions and in more homogeneous milieus. We must add to this picture that the younger RSJs attribute great importance to Jewish education for children, while the older report stronger feelings of belongingness to the Jewish people and exhibit higher rates of membership in Jewish organizations and RSJ frameworks.

In a similar vein, length of stay among RSJs relates positively to attachment to Judaism, the feeling of belonging to the Jewish people, more contacts with Jewish institutions, and willingness to give children a Jewish education. Old-timers are more negative regarding exogamous marriages—for themselves and their children. Their closest friends in Germany tend more often to be Jewish, and their attachment to Israel stronger. This may be explained by the fact that before immigration, RSJs were often very remote from Judaism, and gradually discovered

their Jewish heritage in Germany. At the same time, while more recent newcomers maintain stronger contacts with their former country, old-timers also maintain significant contacts with their former country.

Respondents originating from a homogeneous Jewish family show stronger attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than do subjects of mixed parenthood. These respondents also emphasize more unpleasant aspects for a Jew living in Germany in the context of the memory of the Shoa, the presence of anti-Semitism, and personal experience of anti-Semitism. More of them are affiliated with Jewish organizations in Germany, and they attend synagogue more often. They report a stronger attachment to Israel and visit it more frequently; feel stronger solidarity with the state; and are less in contact with the country of origin. Similarly, respondents' endogamy is also bound to a stronger attachment to Judaism and the Jewish people than exogamy, as well as to weaker contacts with the former country.

As elaborated in the above, region of residence in Germany and the size of the community are also influential on attitudes toward the issues at stake. In the East and/or small and medium size communities respondents appear as systematically less committed to Judaism, the Jewish People and Israel. This may be explained by the fact that it is spoken mostly of communities relatively isolated from big Jewish centers.

When we now compare young adults among Vets and RSJs, it appears that the younger Vets are more involved in Jewishness and solidarity with Israel than RSJs and that the national drive is stronger among the latter than religiosity. Yet concerning Zionist or pro-Israel organizations, a wide majority among both RSJs and Vets express unwillingness to get involved—though, again, this reluctance is weaker among Vets. In addition, the majority in this stratum—RSJs and Vets alike—attend synagogue services at least occasionally, with Vets again being more assiduous in this respect. So while there are clear differences between these groups, Vets and RSJs share a basic positive attitude toward Jewishness together with interests in additional allegiances. More than anything else, in this stratum Jewish education is at the center of their identity-based preoccupations.

In terms of the model of identity that we outlined in chapter one, what we see here is undeniably what we termed a Jewish population that tends, in various forms, to illustrate the ethnocultural principle:

- a. The survey has shown that Jews in Germany are clearly committed to the Jewish collective—the local Jewish community—and through it, to the wider Jewish world.

- b. Especially underlined by the interviewed public figures, solidarity is emphasized when it concerns relations with Israel; it is not formulated in terms of national ideology but stems from the fact that Israel is the Jewish state, and thus attracts solidarity from Jews worldwide.
- c. On the other hand, we also find here, probably in contrast with Jews in France or the USA, some reticence among respondents about defining the German nation as their nation and the focus of their own nationalism. This does not preclude anyone from recognizing the benefits attached to life in Germany.
- d. When defining the collective identity of Germany's Jewry, it is difficult to say what Jewishness signifies—beyond a mixture of traits such as solidarity, some symbolic attachment to the synagogue, and the recognition of an ancestral religious allegiance. For most people, the well-known syndrome of “belonging without believing” is relevant here.

While these traits may refer to Germany's Jewry as a whole, for RSJs specifically we must add a few other attributes:

- a. For them, collective commitment also signifies remaining attentive to the plight of their fellow-RSJs in their countries of origin and elsewhere; from this, we also learn about the reality of the RSJ diaspora as a distinct segment of the Jewish world.
- b. A major feature of RSJs' particularism is their retention of Russian language and culture which they view as an essential part of their cultural assets as Jews.
- c. This is clearly expressed in the fact that the RSJs' circle of allegiance does not lead RSJs to assimilate into non-Jewish Russian-speaking Germans—who by far outnumber the RSJs in Germany.

These attributes demonstrate, better than any others, the particular significance of RSJ transnationalism. Quite uniquely, is revealed here a kind of “Judaization” process by a collective that has retained collective identification with Jewry, but has lost its links to its particular historical cultural contents. Nowadays, that collective is regaining awareness to what, in their specific circumstances, may substantiate what Jewishness stands for, but without conceding, at least at this stage, the cultural resources they acquired in their previous way of life. This condition qualifies them as a transnational diaspora at a dual level: as part of the Jewish world, and part of the worldwide RSJ community.

By the same token, we also see here all the problems of this sort of cluster: the vagueness of symbols, uncertainties over what Jewishness means—especially for the RSJs—and the commitment it requires. These uncertainties indicate how community-building and insertion in society accord here with options for “disappearing into the crowd.”

Belonging without believing gives an answer to the question raised by the paradoxical contours of reality, but at the same time, it also raises difficult questions about the future, and above all, Jewish education.

## CHAPTER SIX

### EXPECTATIONS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

#### *The Views of the Leading Figures*

One of the major focuses of this investigation was the sphere of Jewish education. This research was intended to consider, in the context of its sociological description and analysis, how far the Jewish population of Germany handles the education of their children in a Jewish perspective, and what their aspirations are in this respect. In this chapter, we concentrate on the major findings obtained by means of our questionnaire, at the level of the respondents' beliefs and aspirations, while in Chapter Seven we present an overview of what is happening on the ground, in the sphere of education.

The views of the leading figures on this issue are more consensual than on other questions. For Toby Axelrod, for instance, it makes sense to set up more Jewish adult education centers and widen the offerings of Jewish programs. In this regard, Dmitri Belkin favors the teaching of Jewish studies in Hebrew and German, but would also recommend offering Jewish topics taught in English. According to Micha Brumlik, the current generation of young parents is not adequately supplied with Jewish educational frameworks, and he proposes the founding of a Jewish academy. It could help to bring together the old-timers and newcomers, socially and culturally, and also provide a facility for training future leaders of Jewish communities.

Gesa Ederberg's view is that meanwhile the "Jewish bookshelves" in German are pretty empty yet and German Jewish culture is still waiting to be revived. This task, is of course highly urgent for educating the younger generation and school-age children. Gesa Ederberg insists here on the need of high quality programs to be prepared in the German language and which are still missing.

Küf Kaufmann contends that relevant projects—already running or planned—should be vigorously supported, in order to deepen a local Jewish culture and tradition. It is only in this way that Jewish institutions can hope to reach people still distant from Judaism, and



who are often suspicious about everything that to any extent touches on the notion of religion. Cultural events, lectures, public discussions or seminars should all assert the Jewish culture. In tandem, Joshua Spinner is convinced that the first thing to deal with is to ensure that schools are good and attractive. He also believes that synagogue services should offer a wide range of activities, appropriate for both people who “know” and those who “don’t.” The main thing is that they should all be run by competent individuals, capable of attracting large numbers.

In a similar vein, Adriana Stern contends that educational programs in Germany are not sufficiently developed; many resources are absent and unavailable. She particularly deplores the fact that interesting books, relevant computer games, and other modern methods are lacking. Lala Süsskind maintains, in the same vein, that Hebrew studies should be emphasized, especially among the young. Those who do know Hebrew are often excellent in reading but not in conversational Hebrew.

Gesa Ederberg adds that the community is experiencing a huge lack of teachers, educators, rabbis, and educated activists. As a result working in Jewish education is not attractive to younger people. As long as this situation continues, there is no other choice than importing to Germany people who can fill the positions—instructors, emissaries from Israel, and certified educators. A mentoring system would also be important.

This latter point is taken up by Walter Homolka, who says that there is a grievous lack of young professionals in the education sphere. Adding to this picture, he remarks that the main parameter still missing is “a mechanism to interest the 8–20 years old.” He praises the *Jung und Jüdisch* (Young and Jewish) program, operated in conjunction with the Union of Progressive Judaism in Germany for the 17–25 age-group. This program, he reports, is active and could be copied and widened to other strata. Homolka also supports increasing the availability of youth camps as appropriate educational frameworks.

Michael Kogan mentions a problem common to many communities, namely the absence of elementary and secondary schools in many cities. Most Jewish communities have only kindergartens and youth centers, while it is in the elementary and secondary schools that pupils acquire the most important knowledge that will mold their general culture. It is here that children should acquire the basics of Jewish religion, history, and languages.

In brief, the leading figures of German Jewry contend that education is of crucial importance to creating and crystallizing the new Jewry in Germany and that, unfortunately, things have not yet moved fast enough to respond to the immense needs in this respect. On the basis of our survey data, we were able to examine the extent to which this assessment is supported by respondents.

*What do Respondents Think of Jewish Education?*

Our first subject is the question of whether or not the Jewish population of Germany—as a whole, and its various segments—provides Jewish education to their children. The general data show a quite problematic reality. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents have not given or are not currently providing their children with any form of Jewish education outside home (Table 6.1).

These data concern the sample as a whole, but the differences between RSJs and Vets categories are minimal in these respects: among RSJs who arrived after the age of eight, 65.3% did not give or are not giving their children a Jewish education; 11.1% have sent or are sending their children to Sunday school; 13.1% have sent or are sending their children to a Jewish day school; and 10.6% have arranged some other kind of Jewish education for their children.

But when one considers additional divisions of the RSJ respondents, one obtains differences that throw light on the contours of the *problématique* of Jewish education in Germany. A most important factor of differentiation is religiosity. As indicated in Table 6.2.1, orthodox respondents have given or are giving their children more Jewish education than any other category—and especially the secular. Even among

Table 6.1: Have given (are giving) children a Jewish education  
(entire sample)

- 
- 62.7% of all respondents did not give or are not giving their children a Jewish education;
  - 11.2% have sent or are sending their children to Sunday school;
  - 14.7% have sent or are sending their children to a Jewish day school;
  - 11.4% have arranged some other kind of Jewish education for their children.
-

the orthodox, one finds that one-third of the respondents have not given or are not giving their children a Jewish education outside home. This may be explained by the fact that appropriate Jewish education is not available everywhere in Germany, or was not available in the FSU. On the other hand, among liberal, traditional and secular respondents, more than half admit that they did not give or are not giving their children any Jewish education outside home—among the secular, the figure is about three-quarters. Moreover, among those who gave or are currently giving their children a Jewish education, day schools are more popular among the orthodox and the liberals, and Sunday schools to some extent among the traditional.

Table 6.2.2 presents this picture in reference to the different age-strata among RSJs. The salient fact here is the clear trend in which the younger stratum tends to give their children more Jewish education than the other strata—and especially the (61+). This may be partially accounted for by the unavailability of Jewish education in the FSU. Of interest, in this respect, is the relative importance of day schools and Sunday schools for the younger stratum. These points seem to indicate new tendencies in Germany's young Jewish population.

This is confirmed when we now look at RSJs' data according to the length of stay in Germany (Table 6.2.3): we see effectively that the more veteran immigrants (16+) gave or are giving their children a Jewish education, more than others. Together with the findings pertaining to age strata, it appears that younger RSJs who have been in Germany for some years attach more importance to Jewish education for their children, and concretize, more than others, available possibilities.

Another criterion consists of the size of the Jewish communities. For obvious reasons—primarily the numerical importance of the interested public—Jewish education is more strongly anchored in large communities, where day schools have a chance to thrive and attract parents and pupils in sufficient numbers. In small communities where Jewish education is weak, it is most often available only in Sunday schools (Table 6.2.4). Concomitantly, Table 6.2.5 shows that this diffusion of Sunday schools and the lack of more comprehensive frameworks apply primarily to Jewish communities in the East, where the smaller communities have fewer opportunities for Jewish education.

Table 6.2: Have given (are giving) children a Jewish education (RSJs)

	No Jewish education	Sunday school	Day school	Other	Total
6.2.1. Religiosity (n=650; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
Orthodox	32.9	19.7	30.3	17.1	100.0
Liberal Judaism	57.1	10.0	19.3	13.6	100.0
Somewhat trad.	63.9	16.5	11.3	8.2	100.0
Secular	76.7	6.7	7.1	9.6	100.0
6.2.2. Age (n=689; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
–40	38.8	20.0	23.8	17.5	100.0
41–60	64.9	14.2	10.0	10.9	100.0
61+	73.8	6.2	11.6	8.4	100.0
6.2.3. Length of stay (n=720; %) ( $\chi^2=0.002$ )					
–10	65.5	12.9	10.3	11.3	100.0
11–15	69.5	8.0	13.7	8.8	100.0
16+	50.0	10.3	27.9	11.8	100.0
6.2.4. Community size (n=720; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
Large	57.4	11.9	19.9	10.8	100.0
Medium	74.0	7.9	6.9	11.2	100.0
Small	69.2	17.6	5.5	7.7	100.0
6.2.5. Region of residence (n=720; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
Berlin	62.8	4.3	19.1	13.8	100.0
West	61.3	12.1	15.2	11.4	100.0
East	77.2	12.3	4.1	6.4	100.0

*Aspirations for Jewish Education for Children*

At this point, the defining issue concerns, of course, our respondents' aspirations in this area and the extent that the differences elicited between them are along systematic divisions of that population. In a general manner, the data show that the aspirations are greater than the practical implementation. While two-thirds say that their children did not and do not receive any Jewish education outside home, only 25.7% of all respondents told us that they believe a Jewish education for their children is unimportant. In contrast, about three-quarters state that it is important for them in some measure at least—some

importance for 22.4%, moderate importance for 23.8%, and great importance for 28.1%. Here again, the data referring to RSJs are quite similar to those of the general sample with respectively 30.3% of “no importance,” 25.3% of “little importance,” 24.1% of “moderate importance” and 20.3% of “great importance”.

As could be expected and as Table 6.3.1 shows, among RSJs the orthodox attach much greater importance to their children’s Jewish education than respondents of other groups—especially the secular. At the level of aspirations, however, a majority in all groups including the secular attach at least a “moderate” importance to a Jewish education for their children. Most liberal and traditional respondents cite “moderate” and “great importance,” while a majority (slight—but still a majority) among the secular divide into supporters of “a little” and “great importance.”

Interestingly, when it comes to age groups among RSJs (Table 6.3.2) we find that while a majority in all three strata aspire to Jewish education for their children, it was the respondents in the younger stratum who were more decisive—even though they are divided between those who answered “moderately” and those who answered more emphatically.

Table 6.3.3 also shows that the more years the immigrants have spent on German soil, the greater the importance they attach to a Jewish education for their children. Together with previous data, this means that length of stay and young age correlate to jointly emphasize this basic aspiration.

Table 6.3.4 also indicates that RSJ individuals originating from families where one parent was not Jewish tend to be less ambitious regarding the Jewish education of their children. Also significant is the fact that this differentiation is anything but polar: even among the offspring of such mixed families, the aspiration for some Jewish education for children is shared by over 60% of the respondents.

Similarly, Table 6.3.5 reveals that (1) RSJ respondents whose partners are Jewish attach greater importance than respondents married or living with a non-Jew, to the Jewish education of their children, and also that (2) even among respondents who live with non-Jewish partners, the majority still express this aspiration.

When it comes to the impact of community size, Table 6.3.6 shows that respondents in large communities attach greater importance than others to their children’s Jewish education. As we have already noted, this may be due to differences in the scope of opportunities offered in the diverse settings, and it accords with the results obtained with respect to regions of residence (Table 6.3.7). Hence, Berlin’s Jewish

Table 6.3: The importance of giving children a Jewish education (RSJs)

6.3.1. Religiosity (n=760) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Great	Total
Orthodox	7.5	20.4	15.1	57.0	100.0
Liberal Judaism	22.3	24.6	34.3	18.9	100.0
Traditional	19.7	23.1	29.7	27.5	100.0
Secular	44.9	30.8	19.0	5.3	100.0
6.3.2. Age (n=795; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
–40	19.4	23.9	21.1	35.6	100.0
41–60	33.5	30.6	23.4	12.5	100.0
61+	35.7	22.9	25.1	16.3	100.0
6.3.3. Length of stay (n=831; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
–10	33.2	22.7	24.1	20.0	100.0
11–15	30.9	32.4	20.7	16.0	100.0
16+	13.3	18.9	33.3	34.4	100.0
6.3.4. Respondents according to families of origin (n=827; %) ( $\chi^2=0.006$ )					
Mixed	39.3	22.2	20.9	17.6	100.0
Homogeneous	26.9	26.4	25.2	21.6	100.0
6.3.5. Respondents who live with a Jewish or non-Jewish partner (n=621; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
Non-Jewish	42.6	24.3	18.7	14.5	100.0
Jewish	24.1	25.4	28.5	22.0	100.0
6.3.6. Size of communities (n=831; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )					
Large	24.4	20.9	27.4	27.4	100.0
Medium	39.0	29.2	20.1	11.7	100.0
Small	28.1	29.8	23.1	19.0	100.0
6.3.7. Region of residence (n=831; %) ( $\chi^2=0.003$ )					
Berlin	19.3	23.7	29.8	27.2	100.0
West	31.8	23.1	23.5	21.6	100.0
East	32.8	31.8	22.2	13.1	100.0

population is the most ambitious with respect to children's Jewish education, and is followed by Western communities which are generally larger than the Eastern ones. This correlation may also be accounted for by differences in length of stay of RSJs in the different communities and regions.

*Importance of Children’s Acquiring German Culture*

On the other hand, this population is overwhelmingly composed of relatively recent immigrants, who also share a problem of insertion in a new environment. This dictates that we also consider respondents’ attitudes to the importance they attach to their children’s acquisition of their society’s culture. The difficulty here resides, of course, in the fact that this German culture is associated, in one way or another, with the memory of the Shoa. But precisely for the conjunction of these reasons, we felt it doubly important to question our respondents on this point.

We found significant results mainly regarding three criteria among RSJs—the level of education of respondents, their degree of religiosity, and their division into age strata.

As a whole, the distribution of the sample on this issue is as follows (Table 6.4):

Table 6.4: Importance of children’s acquiring German culture  
(entire sample)

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• For 13.2% it is not important at all their children acquire/adopt German culture;
• For 13.3% it is of little importance
• For 44.2% it is moderately important
• For 29.3% it is very important.

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Similar data were obtained for the RSJs, in particular: for 11.9%, it is not important at all that their children adopt German culture; for 11.1%, it is of only little importance; for 46.5% it is moderately important, and for 30.5% it is very important. Generally speaking then, respondents tend to emphasize the importance of their children acquiring German culture. This aspiration, however, is not absolute—most respondents express a moderate stand on this issue.

When we then turn to the various divisions of RSJ respondents, it transpires that as far as the level of education is concerned—Table 6.5.1—RSJ individuals with an academic education are openly more supportive of their children’s acquiring German culture, though the differences between categories are by no means polarized.

On the other hand, and as indicated in Table 6.5.2, religiosity relates more ambiguously to the question of children's acquisition of German culture. The orthodox attach less importance to the possibility that their children acquire this culture than other groups among RSJ respondents.

Finally, another aspect that was found significant concerns the RSJs' age strata—see Table 6.5.3. It appears here that the younger are less sensitive than the older to the question of their children's acquisition of German culture. This may be accounted for by the fact that their education in Germany has meant that they take their control of German culture “for granted,” and in this context they tend to place greater emphasis on Jewish education as a primary goal.

All in all, Jews in Germany have moderate aspirations for their children's acquiring German culture. In contrast, aspirations for a Jewish education are strong and stand in discrepancy with respondents' cognitive picture of the limits of opportunities. In this context, we learn “what is missing”—for both children and adults—according to respondents, and what requests they would like to raise.

Table 6.5: Importance of children's acquiring German culture (RSJs)

6.5.1. According to education (n=788; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )

	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Great	Total
Non-academic	16.0	16.9	47.9	19.2	100.0
Academic	10.2	9.0	45.9	35.0	100.0

6.5.2. Religiosity (n=718; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )

Orthodox	27.9	20.9	27.9	23.3	100.0
Liberal Judaism	11.5	9.1	46.1	33.3	100.0
Traditional	10.2	14.4	49.3	26.0	100.0
Secular	11.5	6.7	49.6	32.1	100.0

6.5.3. Age groups (n=757; %) ( $\chi^2=0$ )

–40	20.3	21.8	38.3	19.5	100.0
41–60	10.2	8.6	51.2	29.9	100.0
61+	9.7	7.9	46.6	35.8	100.0



*What is Missing?*

Table 6.6 yields selected findings regarding what respondents believe is lacking for granting their children a proper Jewish education. Nearly half of the answers do not indicate anything special. One-fifth of the respondents complain about the lack of programs in the area of Israel Studies while others speak of the absence of children camps, courses in Bible, Judaism and Jewish history or Hebrew classes. Eight percent would like more Sunday schools and 6.2% have still other propositions. The figures that concern RSJs follow, in the same order.

Religiosity makes a difference among RSJs. Only one-fifth of the orthodox feel that no program is missing, as opposed to nearly half of the secular who share the same feeling—liberals and traditional are in-between. In a similar vein, orthodox respondents who complain that Sunday schools are missing are far more numerous than among the secular—with, again the liberal and traditional in-between. We learn from these data that the orthodox are more ambitious on this point, but that all categories do feel that Jewish educational programs should be augmented.

Table 6.6: Lacking programs for children’s Jewish education (%)\*

	Lacking programs						
	Nothing	Israel	Camps	Judaism	Hebrew	Sunday schools	Other
6.6.1. General data							
Sample	47.0	19.3	16.8	14.8	14.6	7.8	6.2
RSJs	45.6	21.0	18.9	15.0	13.3	6.9	6.5
6.6.2. Religiosity**							
Orth/ultra	20.2	17.7	13.7	11.3	18.5	14.5	4.0
Liberals	25.9	24.3	15.7	17.3	8.1	4.9	3.8
Traditional	35.0	11.3	16.9	14.3	11.3	5.6	5.6
Secular	48.8	16.2	13.1	6.2	8.1	1.9	5.8
6.6.3. Region of residence**							
Berlin	46.0	11.3	11.3	12.9	8.9	4.8	4.8
West	38.9	12.0	15.5	12.2	10.1	5.8	5.6
East	25.0	28.1	15.4	10.4	11.9	5.0	4.3

\* Respondents could give more than one answer on this question

\*\* RSJs who arrived in Germany after the age of 8

Table 6.7: Lacking programs for adults (%)\*

	Lacking programs					
	Nothing	Israel	Arts	Judaism	Hebrew	Other
6.7.1. General data						
Sample	37.7	27.1	29.5	21.5	15.3	4.5
RSJs	35.1	28.7	33.8	21.6	13.2	4.8
6.7.2. Region of residence **						
Berlin	37.5	15.6	15.0	15.0	13.1	3.8
West	24.6	23.1	24.9	14.9	7.9	4.6
East	21.5	18.4	29.4	18.1	11.9	0.7

\* Respondents could give more than one answer on this question

\*\* RSJs who arrived in Germany after the age of 8

It is also noteworthy that while the feeling of deficits in Jewish educational programs seems to reflect an objective reality, for RSJs the feeling is the weakest in Berlin, which has the largest community and relatively strong structures of Jewish education. This feeling of no-shortage decreases, however, when we move to the communities of the West which are still large but less so than Berlin's, and are thus poorer in infrastructures. The worst situation is, of course, reported in the small communities of East Germany.

However, as shown in Table 6.7, respondents maintain that not only programs for children are lacking.

We also see how far the respondents themselves are aware of the issue of Jewish learning for themselves. Table 6.7, which offers only a few selected data, shows that in a general manner only a minority of respondents consider what is offered them, as adults, to be either entirely satisfactory or of no interest to them. On the contrary, we see that a wide majority would like to be offered programs in Jewish studies—in the realms of Jewish arts, Israel, Judaism or Hebrew courses.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, the data point to a basic contradiction: a wide majority of respondents aspire to a Jewish education for their children but do not provide one that would satisfy them. The orthodox RSJs seem the

only ones who concretize their wishes into programs and institutions. And even among them, quite a few believe they cannot fulfill their wishes. Other salient facts are that the younger stratum and the more veteran RSJs seem more committed than others to their children's Jewish education. On the other hand, because of their resources, Jewish education is more encouraged in large communities—Berlin and the West—while the smaller and less affluent communities in the East complain of genuine shortage.

Orthodoxy, young age, length of stay, and residence in large communities assure higher aspirations for Jewish education among RSJs. Factors that impact in the contrary sense are origin in families where one parent was not Jewish, or living with a non-Jewish partner—though even here many report some aspiration for children to receive a Jewish education.

On the other hand, roughly speaking a good quarter of all respondents do not see the acquisition of German culture as of major importance, while about half the respondents share a moderate position on this issue. For less than a third, it is a major educational goal. In brief, acquiring German culture does not arouse most respondents' enthusiasm. This attitude oscillates among RSJs according to education—an academic education is linked to a more positive attitude, and religiosity—non-orthodox respondents also tend to share a more favorable attitude toward this option than the orthodox.

In addition, the younger RSJs are less sensitive to the older ones to the question of their children's acquiring German culture. As we suggested, it may be accounted for by the fact that their better acquaintance with German culture makes them take for granted the acquisition of this culture, and they feel that their children's Jewish education is now a more acute problem.

In this context, more than a few respondents complained about the shortage of institutions and programs of Jewish education. Again, religiosity makes a difference here among RSJs. While only a minority of the orthodox feel that no program is lacking—most seem to provide for some Jewish education on their own—nearly half of the secular voice requests, with liberal and traditional respondents in an in-between position. As a rule, however, the feeling of shortage in Jewish educational programs fluctuates from place to place: among RSJs the feeling is weaker in Berlin and large communities in the West. Interestingly enough, we also see that respondents are aware of the issue of Jewish learning for themselves. A broad majority of

RSJs—in all places—would also like the option of Jewish Studies programs for themselves. Hence, the answer to the question whether Jews in Germany show interest in Jewish learning—is clearly affirmative.

In this, our survey data corroborate and converge with the contentions of the leading figures. In the opinion of our rank-and-file respondents, like that of the heads of Jewish organizations, education is crucially important for crystallizing Germany's new Jewry. They also believe that the supply is not keeping pace with the demand.

This picture corroborates our discussion of the Jewish ethnocultural syndrome. It is a population that displays lack of clarity over what its cultural singularity—Jewishness—represents, in the dual absence of an ultra-orthodox orientation and a Zionist perspective. Instead, it is a collective the cultural singularity of which seem rather vague to many members. These members hang their hopes for clarification on broadening their knowledge and—especially the youngsters'—through relevant educational programs. Such programs are expected to teach and diffuse narratives, deepen historical awareness, encourage familiarity with symbols and offer notions of religion—even though the people themselves are mostly not religious.

The only ones who are not associated with these demands are the ultra-orthodox and orthodox who do not in fact belong to that ethnocultural syndrome. Their profile only accentuates by contrast, the weak awareness of what makes Jewishness unique among most Jews in Germany.

What should still be noted, in this context, is the many people who have crossed the boundaries and have partners who are not fellow-ethnics, or are themselves offspring who were born outside the collective borders, that share, like many “kosher” Jews, concern about their children's Jewish education. It seems here that the permeability of boundaries typical of ethnocultural syndromes is a circumstance that works both ways: both for those who wish to go out and build their life in a different setting, and for those who went out as a first step but still wish to remain part of the Jewish community—even if they are not Halakhic Jews, or live with a non-Jew. All these, of course, notwithstanding the opposition of orthodox institutions to accepting individuals who are non-Jews according to halakha. From this standpoint, when we look at the picture as a whole, we indeed see how wide a range of variance exists among Germany's Jewish population on countless issues. That very heterogeneity is a marker of syndromes pertaining to the ethnocultural cluster. It is certainly a weakness insofar

as it disperses the efforts of people of goodwill; on the other hand, it is also a source of force in the sense that it endows the Jewish scene with the vibrancy of conflicting perspectives. This is also a longstanding attribute of Jewishness that fuels its viability and vitality.

The question at this point is how far complaints about insufficient offerings of Jewish education address a genuine problematic reality. Hence, the next chapter turns to Jewish education offered in Germany today.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### JEWISH EDUCATION IN GERMANY TODAY

#### *Introduction*

The previous chapter presented the reported beliefs that educational frameworks for Jewish children are lacking, as well as adults' aspirations for more Jewish studies. In the "field," however, there is a plethora of Jewish educational and learning frameworks that in many cases are recent initiatives. There is no one central body that controls and organizes this development; it represents efforts stemming from various agencies. It comprises a diversity of models that target a range of audiences. In many cases, they also attract non-Jews interested in Jewish topics and education. Some of these programs or institutions receive support from public bodies and ministries (in the area of science or culture) which often condition their goodwill on admitting non-Jews. Most institutions, however, are open only to Jews since they are sponsored by foundations aspiring to contribute to the development of Jewish community structures.

Table 7: Jewish educational institutions in Germany (2010)

	Total	Central Council	UPJ Ref	Masorti <sup>2</sup>	Chabad	Lauder	State- run	Indep.
Academic Jewish Studies <sup>1</sup>	9	—	—	—	—	—	9	—
Rabbinical Colleges / Yeshivot	5	—	1	—	2	2	—	—
Batei Midrash	3	2	—	1	—	—	—	—
Adult Educational Centers	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Student Organizations	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	2

<sup>1</sup> The departments of "Judaistik" at German universities are not included, because they are linked to general departments of Religious Science or (Christian) Theology.

<sup>2</sup> Conservative Judaism designates a denomination midway between Reform and orthodox Judaism.

Table 7 (*cont.*)

	Total	Central Council	UPJ Ref	Masorti	Chabad	Lauder	State- run	Indep.
Other independent Frameworks	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	16
Youth Centers	23	22	1	—	—	—	—	—
Religious School (for Youth & Children)	4	2	—	—	2	—	—	—
High Schools	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Elementary Schools	8	5	—	—	1	2	—	—
Kindergartens	14	9	1	1	1	2	—	—
Total	89							

In almost all communities, especially the medium-size or small ones, there is a deplorable lack of financial resources and qualified personnel that would allow the setting-up of a full-fledged Jewish educational system. It is a challenge for the Jewish bodies—German or international—that are intent on filling the void. Some of the frameworks are thus affiliated with local communities, others are linked to academic institutions, and still others consist of independent projects.

To consider this complex setting Table 7 presents the major kinds of Jewish education according to their level and intended audience.

*From Kindergartens to Elementary and Secondary Education*

The basic educational institution is the kindergarten. In Germany one finds fourteen institutions of this kind of different allegiances—orthodox, liberal or others. Strict guidelines can hardly be implemented here in terms of organization, pedagogy or equipment in the small and medium-size communities with only a few children of kindergarten age. Most are run by the communities, and the majority are open to the children of non-Halakhic Jews, and even of non-Jews. This openness stems both from the issue of small classes and the fact that some kindergartens are partially financed by local governments that oppose exclusionist practices. It is also noteworthy that some kindergartens are allied with Israeli institutions such as the TAL Education Fund and emphasize the teaching of Hebrew, while in other frameworks special attention is paid to German.

In eight cities there are elementary schools where Jewish children are enrolled for a full-school schedule. This is the case in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf and Cologne. The Lichtigfeld elementary school in Frankfurt/Main is the biggest of those schools, with a student body of close to 500, and 70 teachers. It opened its doors in 1966, and was the first post-war Jewish elementary school in Germany to be set up. The school runs up to junior-high school and there are plans to add senior-high school classes; it will then offer the *Abitur*, the German university entrance qualification exam. The student body of the Lichtigfeld school comprises 30% of RSJ children and 30% of non-Jewish students. It is linked to the Jewish community of Frankfurt and maintains connections with Israeli educational institutions. Graduating classes visit Israel, and pupils organize annual campaigns to raise funds for Israeli projects.

Other examples are the Heinz Galinski school in Berlin, the Joseph Carlebach school in Hamburg, the Jewish school of Stuttgart, and the Yitzhak Rabin school in Düsseldorf, all of which are elementary institutions functioning under the auspices of local communities. This, however, is not the case of the Lauder Morijah school in Cologne which is independent and supported by its own foundation. This school is also accredited by the state and as such enrolls up to 25% of children of non-Jewish background. This school is known to give children a strong program in Judaism.

Several large communities have not yet opened a Jewish elementary school, while on the other hand, Berlin now has three schools. They are the Heinz Galinski school (founded in 1986), an elementary Chabad school and Beth Zion, a Lauder elementary school founded in 2008. In the Chabad school, classes are taught in German, Hebrew and English from the first grade.

However, one of the most serious shortfalls in Jewish education in Germany today is the nearly total absence of high schools. To date, in contrast to numerous Jewish communities throughout Europe, there is only one Jewish high school in Germany. It was founded in Berlin in 1993 and numbers about 420 pupils (in 2009). This missing link in the chain of Jewish education is the most acute problem in German Jewish education today.

One may add here the Sunday schools (not included in Table 7) which, on the basis of a half-day per week, offer programs in Hebrew and Judaism. Most have a religious affiliation: they are operated by Chabad in Berlin and Hamburg, and by orthodox congregations in Frankfurt (the Yeshurun school) and Stuttgart.



*Youth Centers, Student Organizations and Programs for Adults*

In contrast to the paucity of secondary Jewish education, Germany has a quite impressive number of Jewish youth centers. Supported by Jewry's central authority, they often represent the major, if not the only, institution gathering Jewish youngsters around social and cultural activities. The importance of these activities follows directly from the fact that despite all efforts, in many places in Germany, Jewish communities are unable to finance more ambitious and comprehensive frameworks and schools. The numerous youth centers constitute a kind of compensation. They are intended to provide a wide range of educational and cultural activities. Some centers have been operating since the 1950s, but most were founded in the 1990s and the 2000s, following the influx of RSJs.

The youth centers offer programs for children and youngsters from age 6 to 18, under the guidance of teachers and counselors. While their emphasis is the transmission of Jewish values, the centers are also responsive to requests for entertainment and leisure activities. They are open to youngsters of non-Halakhic background and their general aim is to familiarize their participants with Judaism, the Jewish world, and Israel. Several centers are supported by the Israeli *Lehava* project which, among other activities, contributes to organizing seminars for counselors and educators.

Jewish student organizations, however, have attained only limited success. Throughout Germany there are only three such organizations, and their activities are sporadic—although Jews are relatively numerous in universities. Several of the leading community figures interviewed during the research admitted that it is hard to speak of Jewish student life, and in response to this situation some centers for Jewish students are being launched here and there. They are the Jewish student centers in Heidelberg, Cologne and Hamburg. The Union of Jewish Students in Baden in Heidelberg aims to access all Jewish students in Southern Germany. It is an independent body, although it is supported by the Jewish Council of Baden, and has close to 100 members. The intention is to open a student house—in the style of the American Hillel House—for Jewish students on the Heidelberg campus. The Cologne student organization has 60–70 members. It aspires to constitute a debating club focusing on topics of general and Jewish interest—in tandem with organizing social events and leisure activities. The most active regional student initiative in 2010 is the Jewish

Organization of North German Students (JONS) founded in 1995 in Hamburg. With around 420 members, the organization develops programs of lectures and discussions on Jewish values, from a secular perspective. Its slogan is—integrate into German society but do not assimilate—and it maintains active ties with international Jewish student organizations. These bodies cooperate with local Jewish communities, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany or with the Central Council. One cannot overlook the efforts of Chabad which offers programs and activities for Jewish students. The Chabad Berlin Center is especially lively and invites students to Shabbat celebrations and excursions. Close to the Chabad movement are adult centers of Jewish learning like the *batei midrash* (houses of learning) dedicated to Jewish teaching, in a religious spirit. They operate in various cities—Bamberg and Emmendingen among others—and are supported by local communities as well as by Jewish and non-Jewish foundations. In most cases, they are affiliated with orthodox Judaism, but the *beit midrash* in Berlin, founded by the Conservative movement in 2003, has become a foremost place of Jewish learning.

Besides these *batei midrash*, in the three cities with the largest Jewish communities—Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt/Main—there are adult education centers (*Volkshochschulen*) that attract a relatively large Jewish and non-Jewish audience. They were founded before the unification of Germany (in Berlin in 1962, Munich in 1983, and Frankfurt in 1988). Their teaching focuses on Judaism and Hebrew but they also provide information about the Jewish Diaspora and Israeli society, as well as serving as forums of inter-religious dialogue and programs. Today they play an important role for RSJs who acquire basic knowledge about Judaism at the centers. To contribute practically to RSJs' integration into German society and the Jewish community, the centers offer German-language courses and provide important information about German institutions. These centers often cooperate with non-Jewish adult education centers in their respective cities.

### *Rabbinical Seminaries and Academic Jewish Studies*

Germany today has several institutions that train and qualify candidates for a rabbinical career. The Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, which depends on the Reform congregation, is a renowned institution of that kind. The Rabbinical College of Berlin is another

one, run by the orthodox Lauder Foundation that also supports the *Beis Zion* yeshiva (institution of religious learning) in Berlin. These colleges cooperate with Jewry's official bodies. Up to now their student-body is still modest (17 rabbinical students and five cantorial students in Potsdam and nine students at the *Beis Zion* yeshiva in 2010). One must add to the list the Chabad *yeshivot* (plural of yeshiva) in Berlin and Frankfurt (with 12 students in each).

Jewish Studies is a topic that has developed in the academy in several modes—mainly university programs and specialized research centers. Most importantly, there is Heidelberg's University for Jewish Studies, supported by the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Its major programs train teachers of Judaism, social workers, and administration managers. The curriculum comprises both Jewish and professional subjects. Students may receive undergraduate and graduate degrees in Jewish Studies and continue for rabbinical certification at a rabbinical college. Despite the great ambitions, only 150 students are currently enrolled in Heidelberg (2010) and about half of them are not Jewish.

Another academic institution for Jewish Studies is more recent; it was created in 2007 at the University of Applied Science in Erfurt as a department of Jewish Social Work. The program offers a major in this field, in the frame of BA studies. The innovation was sponsored by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, in collaboration with a Swiss foundation (the Dorothea Gould Foundation) and it focuses primarily on issues of immigrants. The goal is to train individuals who will ultimately work with RSJ immigrants.

Other academic frameworks and institutes of research in Jewish Studies at German universities include an institute at Düsseldorf University, the Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute at Duisburg University, and the Moses Mendelssohn Center at Potsdam University. Also noteworthy is the Touro College of Berlin which is part of the international network of Touro Colleges and combines academic studies and involvement in Jewish life. As well as Jewish Studies, it offers a program in Business Management and Administration, as well as an M.A. degree in Holocaust Studies. There are also several departments of Comparative Jewish Studies (*Judaistik*) that are affiliated with or are part of centers of Christian theology.

It is undeniable that the majority of students currently attending Jewish Studies programs in Germany are not Jewish. As a topic of higher education, Judaism does not attract massive interest among

Jewish students, while at the same time it arouses the interest of many individuals outside the Jewish population.

### *Independent Educational Projects*

Some educational projects also grow out of private initiatives, independent of official agencies. One example is *Limmud*—the popular Learning Festival project that started in England with great success, and arrived in Germany through the voluntary efforts of a handful of people with no public financial support. The Limmud team carries out fundraising on its own, to finance a national three-day-festival of Jewish learning, held annually in May. Its success is unquestionable: 24 workshops were offered at the first festival in 2006; 105 workshops in 2008; and 170 workshops in 2009. The festival offers a panorama of the current Jewish world in a variety of domains.

Another independent project is the Salomon Birnbaum Society for Yiddish in Hamburg which since 1995 has supported the teaching of Yiddish and its literature in several universities. The society targets the public interested in Yiddish literature, language, linguistics, history and arts. As well as lectures, it provides reading sessions, seminars, theater performances, filmmaking, and colloquia. Funded by government money, registered members' fees, and private donations, the society is open to Jews and non-Jews, and collaborates with academic and non-academic organizations. It also offers Yiddish classes, publications in Yiddish, and translations of works from Yiddish to German, and through the Salomon Birnbaum Library, it encourages academic research.

The same interest in Yiddish finds expression in the *Klezmer* music revival. A so-called Other Music—Yiddish Summer Festival is held in Weimar, an initiative of the American pianist and composer Alan Bern, leader of the Brave Old World klezmer group. The festival offers a yearly workshop open to the public, and each winter a small workshop for professional musicians (*Yiddish Winter*) is held. Interested people from many countries attend these events, and the festival itself is now entering its eleventh year. The project brings together about 300 students per year, and has gained an international reputation.

Still another project in this category is the Dresden-based project Hatikva—Education and Meeting Center for Jewish History and Culture in Saxony. Hatikva stemmed from a general historical project of

research that took shape in Dresden at the beginning of the 1990s, and since then has become an association dedicated to transmitting Jewish history and culture. Within this project, Hatikva focused mainly on outreach to children and young people; it organizes Hebrew classes and develops pedagogical material for teachers and social workers. The association runs an online magazine—Medaon Magazine for Jewish Life in Research and Education. Though not financially supported by the community in Dresden, Hatikva cooperates with it in many respects, and it also works with several non-Jewish organizations, such as the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation.

### *Conclusion*

In our interviews with community leaders, we heard feelings of dissatisfaction with the extent of educational work throughout the country's Jewry, feelings strongly echoed by many respondents to the survey. Reality "in the field," however, indicates an assortment of educational institutions of many kinds. Those institutions indicate the centrality of education in the preoccupations of people as well as community leaders who are dissatisfied with the efforts made, however impressive the achievements. What is also evident from these feelings is that, despite their efforts, they have not yet managed to put in place an overall, dense and comprehensive educational network. In almost all communities in Germany—especially the medium-size and small ones—there is a much-deplored lack of financial resources and qualified personnel that would make possible a full-fledged education system for children and interested adults. There are Jewish kindergartens, but not everywhere, with differing religious orientations, and with too few children. There are elementary schools in several cities, but still not enough, they are completely absent in some large communities, and there is just one Jewish high school—in Berlin.

Youth centers targeting children and teenagers are more plentiful. We have seen that they are supported mostly by communities and foundations, and that student organizations have not managed to recruit a large number of participants. The latter are involved in debates about Jewish or Israeli matters, as well as leisure activities that could compete with Chabad's work among Jewish students. And finally there are adult education centers in quite a few places, offering Jewish studies.

We have seen that Germany has several rabbinical seminaries though with a modest enrollment of students. At the level of academic higher education, a variety of offerings are available—from professional training at the Jewish University of Heidelberg and the new department of Jewish Social Work at the University of Applied Science in Erfurt, to Jewish Studies programs and research centers in several universities—and of course in Berlin's Touro College. To this picture we added popular non-academic projects like the *Limmud* Learning Festival that replicates the English experience, the Salomon Birnbaum Society for Yiddish in Hamburg and the Other Music—Yiddish Summer Festival in Weimar.

In brief, Jewish education in Germany is on the rise—both with respect to the number of institutions and the diversity of offerings. This growth coincided with the arrival and settling of RSJs. In many communities, the majority of which took shape recently, the number of Jews is still too small to provide the ground for developing an extensive educational setting. For the time being, Berlin is the only community that has been able to build a solid chain of Jewish educational institutions, though Munich, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt are moving closer to this model. Many other communities still have a long way to go before emulating the capital. In many cases, a compromise has been the opening of frameworks—kindergartens or schools—to non-Jewish pupils. However, such frameworks still depend on the possibility of recruiting educators locally.

At this point, it is worth recalling that a major challenge of Jewish education at all levels in Germany is the secularism of the majority of the present-day Jewish population, who often express little interest in religious education. This is the challenge that organizations like the secular Jewish Cultural Association of Berlin are facing; although this sort of association still has limited influence in Germany where, in most places, the synagogue is the heart of the community.

Before concluding this chapter, however, it is worth recalling that education has always been the major code of Judaism and Jewishness, in all circumstances. So there is nothing new in the fact that in Germany too it is stressed as one of the community's primary goals. Moreover, this emphasis, as the data reveal, is not restricted to one specific milieu among Germany's Jews—whether they belong to the ultra-orthodox, or to the ethnocultural syndrome. In other words, while practical circumstances create objective difficulties for putting in place a solid, complete setting of Jewish education for all children

in the community, these difficulties do not constitute the only factor that causes people's dissatisfaction with the educational setting. For, in fact, the educational setting is making undeniably impressive achievements. Judaism's cultural code, that sets the highest demands in the sphere of education, may well explain the dissatisfaction.

And still we cannot free ourselves from the feeling that the special insistence of those within the ethnocultural syndrome indicates something more—that they attach to the educational setting roles and tasks that they themselves, as adults and parents, cannot perform themselves. This appears to us as characteristic of ethnocultural syndromes in general, when religion or nationalism do not provide a backbone of community coherence, and interpretations and degrees of commitment become ever more diversified.

In our case, we must factor in to this vagueness of collective singularization that the overwhelming majority of people concerned—the adult RSJs—received far more hours in Marxist-Leninist education than in Jewish studies. Jewish education in Germany therefore represents a kind of replanting of the community in their Jewish heritage—even at the cost that this heritage is not exactly the same as their ancestors' was.

For more details, Appendix Two provides a tentative list of Jewish educational institutions that we drew up on the basis of our investigation of Jewish communities in Germany.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS— AN ETHNOCULTURAL SYNDROME

#### *The New Jewry of Germany*

The Jewish population in Germany has increased enormously over the past decades. A large body of knowledge has recently been created by researchers interested in this new Jewry, but as a rule they have not yielded a comprehensive perspective on this development and internal Jewish dynamics. These are the goals that this study has tackled, with special attention to future perspectives, and therefore to the current state of Jewish education.

RSJs are now the overwhelming majority of Germany's Jewry. Many of them have resided in this country for less than a decade, are not German citizens, and do not know the language fluently. There is a language barrier between many RSJs and Vets—though it does not seem to be too rigid. From a socioeconomic point of view, and quite unusually for a Jewish population, the majority evaluate their income as below the average in German society.

Most Jews in Germany do not favor orthodox Judaism, but neither are they overwhelmingly secular. They are best characterized by the notion of Jewish religiosity pluralism, and divide into Orthodox/Ultra-Orthodox, Liberals (Conservative and Reform congregations), somewhat traditional Jews, and totally secular individuals. A large majority are Halakhic Jews, while people of mixed ascendancy, married to or living with a non-Jewish partner, constitute a substantial part of this Jewish population.

The prevailing allegiances of Jews in this country are definitely directed toward Jewishness and solidarity with Israel, though they do not exclude some feelings for their country of origin, and Germany. Jewishness, moreover, is defined here by reference to both the religious principle and sociocultural particularism. On issues relating to "who is a Jew," both Halakhic influences and non-Halakhic cultural criteria emerge. Related to these allegiances, respondents tend to become members of Jewish communities, but are less eager to affiliate themselves with other Jewish organizations.



Socially, most respondents describe relations between RSJs and Vets in terms of both tension and cooperation, and only a minority cite irreconcilable alienation. Many RSJ respondents mention that they still have regular contacts with relatives and friends who either remained in their former country, or emigrated to Israel. In this latter respect, there is no salient difference between RSJs and Vets. In this context, it is noteworthy that despite the bleak socioeconomic conditions in which many of them live, there is a significant tendency among respondents to appreciate Germany and German society—even though this does not preclude their awareness of genuine and unsolved problems.

### *Inner Divisions of RSJs*

We have seen that RSJs, currently forming a 90% majority of Jews in Germany, can be divided by religiosity, length of stay in the country, regions of residence, size of communities, origins, income, and age, and that some of these features do correlate in some ways. Interesting correlations were found between these background features and respondents' attitudes. We note here only the most striking conclusions.

- (1) *Jewish religiosity pluralism.* As could be expected, orthodox respondents show stronger allegiance to Judaism, the Jewish people and Israel than other categories of religiosity. They are also more involved in Jewish institutions, and more strongly committed to the Jewish education of their children. Clearly more than the secular, they seek a Jewish milieu. On the other hand, secular respondents appreciate Germany and German culture more than the orthodox, and also feel more attached to their country of origin.
- (2) *Exogamy versus endogamy.* Offspring of homogeneous families, and RSJs who live with a Jewish partner feel more Jewish, stronger belongingness to the Jewish people, and greater solidarity with Israel than, respectively, the offspring of exogamous families and RSJs who live with a non-Jewish partner. They tend also to be more sensitive to unpleasant aspects of life in Germany. On the other hand, offspring of mixed families are somewhat more bound to the former country, and the same applies to RSJs who live with a non-Jewish partner in comparison with those living with a Jewish one.

- (3) *The age factor.* In comparison to the younger strata, the older show stronger belongingness to the Jewish People and solidarity with Israel. More than the younger, they appreciate what they find in Germany, especially in the domains of culture, the political regime, and welfare. Moreover, they continue to use Russian in most areas of activity and maintain more contacts than the younger do with their former country. The younger ascribe more importance to Jewish education, try to provide their children with it and attend synagogue services more often. On the other hand, German is gaining ground among them, and they feel but somehow more belongingness to the German nation.
- (4) *Length of stay.* Length of stay influences attitudes in the same direction as age but in the contrary sense: the longer the stay, the more individuals tend to adopt attitudes typical of the younger. Hence, the more veteran RSJs use German more than the less veteran—even though Russian remains dominant in certain spheres. They also feel but somehow more belongingness to the German nation. Length of stay also relates to some extent to feeling at home in Germany.
- (5) *Region of residence and size of community.* Residents of smaller communities in the East tend to be less veteran than RSJs in the other regions. They are less committed to Judaism, the Jewish people and Israel, and use Russian more. Unemployment is also more acute than in Berlin and Western cities. At the same time, members of large communities also show greater attachment to German society, while in Berlin, RSJs have more contacts with Jewish and non-Jewish Russian-speakers.

In these data, Germany's RSJs appear to be a rather peculiar Jewish population. Another special feature is that whatever their numerical importance, they have joined another, more veteran Jewish population. The question then is whether one may speak of fusion, assimilation, or the formation of two Jewries.

### *One Jewry?*

When we compare RSJ and Vet young adults, it appears that attachment to Judaism is stronger among Vets than among RSJs, and that this is also the case with belonging to the German nation. Because each

group depends on different circumstances, attachment to Jewry does not contradict some degree of adherence to the German nation—for Vets. And for RSJs, a somewhat weaker attachment to Jewry may also be concomitant with weaker belonging to that nation. On the other hand, the RSJ younger stratum tends to converge toward its Vet counterpart—notwithstanding divergences that are still prominent, notably in the area of language. All in all, Vet and RSJ young adults tend to move closer to Vets, in their attitudes vis-à-vis themselves, their feelings toward the community, and their perspectives on their environment.

We cannot ignore, however, that the willingness to join Jewish organizations is much weaker among RSJs than among Vets, which predicts that today's problematic situation regarding the recruitment of community leadership may well be replicated—a Jewry headed by elements from a small Vet minority, leading a community where the immense majority are RSJs. In this situation, alienation could easily grow among the latter in the context of linguistic and cultural gaps, as well as socioeconomic differences: nevertheless, it is a situation where the tendency for social intermingling is present.

In brief, and despite the divergences underlined above, there are clear lines of convergence, referring mainly to the importance of Jewishness, solidarity with Israel, openness to each other, reticence from merging into German society and—together with all these—appreciation of many aspects of that society. At this point of time, one may indeed speak of a process of formation of one Jewry in Germany, composed of the segments that divide it today. It is not an unavoidable process, depending as it does on the actors themselves.

We now look at the importance of education and the hopes of today's adults for the next generation.

### *Jewish Education: Expectations and Reality*

A wide majority of respondents are willing to provide their children with a Jewish education. Not all, however, translate these wishes into facts. Among RSJs, it is the orthodox who firstly concretize this ambition in practical efforts—even though more than a few of them admit their powerlessness in this respect. Among the other categories—liberal, traditional, and secular—efforts and realizations illustrate a declining gradient. We must add to this that RSJs originating from mixed families, or who live with a non-Jewish partner, are not concerned by the

necessity of providing a Jewish education as much as others. Even among them, the majority aspire to give children elements of a Jewish education. Among RSJs, the younger stratum is probably more committed to Jewish education than the older ones. Jewish education is expensive, even when some public support is provided, and hence it is more within reach of the larger, more affluent communities than the smaller and poorer ones—like those in Eastern Germany.

In the context of these diverse factors, we must also consider how much importance RSJ respondents attach to their children's acquisition of German culture. Their position on this issue is quite divided: a minority—especially among individuals without an academic education and/or who belong to the orthodox stream—do not endorse its importance, and the majority favoring it are divided into differing degrees of enthusiasm. The younger stratum are less sensitive than the older ones to the question of children's acquiring German culture. As noted, their own exposure to German culture may make them take this acquisition for granted, while they feel a more pressing need for their children to receive a Jewish education.

A major challenge of Jewish education at all levels in Germany is the non-orthodox and non-observant character of the largest part of the present-day Jewish population who often show little interest for religious education. Organizations like the Jewish Cultural Association of Berlin are dealing with this challenge by investing in educational-cultural events. This kind of association still has only limited influence throughout Germany's Jewry where, in most places, the synagogue is the heart of the community.

### *The Burning Issues*

With few exceptions, the leading figures who were interviewed as part of this research agree that many communities are failing to attract young people to become involved in community work. While some interviewees blame competing stimuli in the surroundings, that overshadow the community's appeal, others cite the poor equipment found in the community centers—especially in the small communities. The rapid growth of the Jewish population in the 1990s was not accompanied by an adequate influx of resources.

Other interviewees pin the blame on RSJs' attitudes and their lack of experience in community life. Few RSJs, it is contended, have been successfully enlisted by the Vet leadership, because most RSJs lack experience

in the circumstances prevailing in Germany. Some of the interviewees said frankly that a change in leadership recruitment would only be likely in the second generation. Others point out that mixed marriages, which could destabilize the community, are increasing, while yet others believe that pessimism is unjustified and that many veterans and newcomers are strongly committed to Germany's Jewry.

The non-orthodox and non-observant character of Germany's Jews—Vets and RSJs alike—does not necessarily imply growing assimilation: in some Jewish milieus, at least, mixed families are welcome in the community and may join Jewish frameworks. Some interviewees call for acceptance of the principle that it is no longer possible to ignore non-religious Judaism, along the continuum of Jewish identity. While not many interviewees opposed this approach, it does require work to be conducted on defining the Jewish identity—or identities—that might be relevant to new Jewish generations, and not necessarily motivated by religious incentives. Furthermore, several interviewees also hope that contacts with Israel, especially in the field of education and youth exchanges, might serve as an important lever for community work in Germany.

Interviewees certainly ask themselves whether the Jewish state will remain the definitive religious, spiritual and cultural center for global Jewry. In any event, all agree that the times when Jews were ashamed to live in Germany are over. However, the future development of organized Jewish life is unpredictable. The synagogues will probably remain the focus of Jewish life and Jewish clubs, interest groups and initiatives will grow out of them. At the same time, Jews' interests are most varied and questions are being asked that require new answers; it seems that these questions will accompany Germany's Jewry in the coming years.

### *Comparative and Theoretical Aspects*

Several diachronic and synchronic comparisons can be made with regard to Jews in Germany today. These comparisons can relate to Jewry as a whole as well as RSJs in Germany who form the vast majority of Jews in today's Germany.

*Jews and RSJs in Today's Germany as a Jewish Community*

When considering German Jewry as a whole, we can draw comparisons between contemporary and past Jewry, and also between contemporary German Jewry and other relevant Jewries—now and in the past. Contemporary German Jewry differs significantly from pre-WWII German Jewry. The latter Jewry was strongly assimilated into German society and culture and saw themselves mainly as “Germans of the Mosaic faith,” while contemporary German Jewry, with its large component of RSJs, can hardly be considered, either in its identification or culturally, as similarly assimilated within German society.

The recent immigration of RSJs to Germany and its implications for the Jewish community in Germany can be compared, in that respect, to the immigration wave of *Ostjuden* to Germany in the past. In both cases the new immigrants differed enormously from the veterans, culturally, linguistically, and also in terms of their economic status. In the contemporary case, however, the newcomers are less religious and less acquainted with Jewish religiosity and culture than the veterans, whereas in the past the *Ostjuden* were far more religious than the veterans. Another important difference between these two cases is the relative numerical weight of the newcomers with regard to the total population of the Jewish community. The contemporary newcomers compose a much higher percentage (90%) of the total population of the Jewish community in Germany than in the previous case.

In this absolute and relative numerical aspect, there may be a historical parallel in the absolute and composition change of French Jewry caused by the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to France. The numerical aspect also indicates a similarity between the immigration of RSJs to Germany in the past two decades, and the mass immigration of North African Jews to France in the second half of the twentieth century. In the latter case, however, the immigrants landed in France with knowledge of the language and an acquaintance with the host society's culture: this is in striking contrast with the case of the recent immigration of RSJs to Germany. In the case of France the numerical dimension, though less impressive than in the German case, and the linguistic and cultural aspects were important factors in the relative speed with which Jews of North African origin achieved a dominant position in France's organized Jewish community. It may be the case that lack of knowledge of German language and culture means that it will take much longer for RSJs in Germany to obtain a

dominant position among German Jewry, than in the case of North African Jews in France.

### *RSJs Communities Compared*

Another comparative strategy relates to comparisons between the three major communities that were recently formed by RSJs immigrants in Israel, the USA, and Germany. Here too the numerical aspect is important both in absolute numbers as well as relative to the population of the Jewish community and the host country. While RSJs in Germany are not as numerous as in Israel or in the USA, they are a large majority of the country's Jewish community. In Israel they make up 20% of the total population, in the USA they comprise around 10% of American Jewry, and in Germany they consist of close to 90% of German Jewry. These absolute and relative numerical differences have important implications for various aspects. RSJs in the USA and Germany are hardly involved in federal and local politics, while in Israel several RSJs political parties have become part of the political scene at national and local levels. Such a relatively strong and effective involvement in the host country's politics by immigrants, and quite soon after their arrival, is almost unparalleled in many recently evolving diasporas across the world.

But because of their absolute and relative numerical strength with regard to German Jewry, RSJs in Germany are able to take control of the Jewish establishment and to become the dominant segment of German Jewry. RSJs are more numerous in the USA than in Germany, but they represent a much smaller part of the society as a whole, let alone of the Jewish community, and so their prospects for becoming major actors among American Jewry, at least in the short-term, are much smaller.

In Germany, as well as in Israel and the USA, RSJs display a strong attachment to Russian culture and speak Russian extensively. Moreover, in all three countries, RSJs tend to create their own cultural and social structures. Of these three countries, the self-organization of RSJs is strongest in Israel and weakest in the USA. It may stem—as well as from their absolute and relative numerical strength proportional to the total population in the host society in the Israeli case—from the lack of public funding available to RSJs in the USA, in contrast to the partially government-subsidized activities in Israel and Germany.

In all three communities, RSJs' preference for Russian culture has resulted in the creation of services, ranging from grocery stores that

sell products imported from the FSU, to restaurants serving traditional Russian food. One of the most visible forms of self-organization is the growth of Russian-language media. In all three countries there are weekly and monthly Russian-language newspapers, and in Israel, there are even a few national Russian-language newspapers. Russian-language radio broadcasts and TV programs are features in all three countries, though in this respect Israel has a clear edge over the other two countries. Another effect—unique to the Israeli case and influenced to a great extent by the numerical aspect and its implications for the power RSJs have achieved in politics and elsewhere—is the vitality of RSJs with respect to the linguistic landscape. It has no direct counterpart in the USA and Germany.

Distinct from Israel, in Germany and the USA the issue of RSJs' insertion concerns two kinds of insertion—into society at large and into the Jewish community. Altogether, RSJs in both the USA and Israel consider themselves to be relatively better inserted into the host society than RSJs in Germany. As to the economic dimension of insertion into wider society, the situation of RSJs in Germany seems the worst. Unemployment figures and reliance on social welfare are higher among RSJs in Germany than among their counterparts in Israel and the USA. Most RSJs in Germany report that their income is below the average income in German society. Furthermore, 60% of RSJs in Germany reported that their current income is “much lower now” than it was in the FSU. Only 30% of RSJs in Israel reported this as well. We can thus say that RSJs in Germany (and since they are the overwhelming majority among German Jewry, we can also say that German Jewry), are relatively the poorest Jewry in the “West.”

RSJs in Germany have less knowledge and fluency in the language of the host country than their counterparts in Israel and the USA, and they also exhibit less involvement in the host culture. The very reluctance of RSJs to identify themselves as “Germans” and hence as “German Jews” also sets Germany's RSJs apart from their counterparts in Israel and the USA.

As to insertion into the Jewish communities, the established Jewish communities in Germany and the USA are ethno-religious communities that, by and large, would like to see RSJs adopt that orientation. However, the secularism that characterizes RSJs usually means that the character of Jewish life in those countries is alien to them. This ethno-religious nature of the established Jewish communities may explain the difference between Israel, on the one hand, and the USA and Germany, on the other, in the level of religiosity reported by RSJs.



In Israel, RSJs seem to be less likely to voice their religious allegiances or closeness to Jewish traditions than those in the USA and Germany. However, for RSJs in Germany, the USA and Israel, Jewish identity is depicted as their most important collective identity.

Nevertheless, despite that noted similarity between RSJs in Germany and the USA, in contrast to the American case most RSJs in Germany are members of local Jewish communities. Perhaps this can be explained more by economic and practical considerations, than as stemming from their self-identification with the traits of the organized Jewish community in Germany, which is dominated by the veterans.

### *The Transnational Dimension of RSJs and Veterans in Germany*

RSJs in Germany, as in the USA and Israel, appear to be similarly attached to the formation of a RSJ transnational community. Forming social, professional and cultural ties among co-ethnics around the world is evident in Israel, Germany and the USA. Russian performers are popular among RSJs everywhere; Russian poets and writers continue to publish their work for readers throughout the Russian diaspora; and Russian satellite television is watched everywhere.

At a theoretical level, we address the question of how and to what extent the case of Germany's Jewry accords with the notion of transnational diaspora which is a core preoccupation of social researchers in this era of global trends in population movements. The notion (Ben-Rafael 2010) refers to a reality that is familiar to researchers of the Jewish people and has become quite common in the contemporary world, characterized as it is by new modes of insertion of migrants from all over the world. It designates the dispersal of people sharing the same, real, or mythological, territorial origin and who in one way or another maintain allegiances to the whole that they form as they enter different societies. Understandings attached to the diasporic condition vary both within and between diasporas, but that "transnationality" implies a continuation—through transformation—of the principle of "one diaspora."

The diverse facets of our research substantiate that conceptualization of "transnational diaspora." It has always been a typical condition of dispersed Jewish communities—even long before the Israeli state existed, when the notion of "territorialized origin" was little more than a myth. In Germany today, this notion of transnational diaspora may be of particular relevance, even of different kinds of relevance. The

small veteran Jewish community that itself represents an amalgamation of survivors of the Shoa, refugees from Eastern Europe, emigrants from Israel and others, has always been known for its strong allegiance to Israel. As soon as the state was created, the community adopted it as its “territorialized origin.”

The RSJs who arrived over the past two decades also illustrate a case of transnational diaspora, though it is a singular case, essentially different from the veteran community. In the contemporary period, both Veterans and RSJs form part of the Jewish diaspora. Furthermore, each group is also part of a unique sub-diaspora of the Jewish people: the Veterans are part of the German-speaking Jewish diaspora (as evidenced above by this sub-diaspora’s periodicals *Jüdisches Europa*, *Aufbau* and *Tachles*) and the RSJs are part of the Russian-speaking Jewish diaspora. Distinct from the Veterans, the RSJ immigrants are also part of two other additional transnational communities: their former country’s diaspora (for example, Russian, Ukrainian, or Latvian diasporas) and the global Russian-speaking transnational community (in which they participate while residing in countries where Russian language and culture are not the dominant or prevailing ones). In this latter respect, the RSJ immigrants in Germany can be seen as part of a global Russian-speaking “diaspora.” The RSJs transnational community is not a diaspora in the classical sense, since this “Russianness” shares a language and culture but not necessarily a certain territorial origin. Not all of them, for example, will identify themselves as Russian-Jews, but most of them can be deemed Russian-speaking Jews who are strongly attached to Russian culture. However, though not a diaspora in the classical sense, it is certainly a transnational community and hence RSJs in Germany, as well as those in Israel and the USA, can be seen as part of this world-wide transnational community.

As members of transnational communities, RSJs stay in touch with friends and relatives or business partners in their country of origin, and are consumers of its culture and products. However, and this is a far more important aspect, many RSJs, especially in their practices, can be seen as part of the Russian-speaking transnational community. A community that is, like RSJs, by no means a diaspora in the classical sense. Several examples can illustrate the differences between these two diasporas. Thus, for example, reading the *freijiskaya Gazeta*, attending a concert of the Jewish Turetsky Choir or buying a Yiddish CD by Iosif Kobzon represent participation in the RSJ transnational community. On the other hand, watching Russian-speaking TV

broadcasting from Russia or the Ukraine, reading a Russian novel, listening to Russian music and consuming Russian food, entering Russian-speaking Internet websites all represent participation in the RS transnational community. Under this angle, many RSJs in Germany can be seen as belonging to two diasporas sharing two “territorialized origins” Israel and their country of origin (i.e. Ukraine, Georgia or Azerbaijan), as well as to two transnational communities. As recent immigrants from their former country, they continue to keep in touch with relatives and friends left behind, and visit the “old country.” Yet, they also identify with Israel as Jews; they have relatives and friends who reside in Israel; they follow events in the Middle-East, and show strong solidarity with Israel as the Jewish state. However, their main line of allegiance to a territorialized origin binds them to Israel. These two simultaneous allegiances to outside “homelands” underline the peculiarity of this diaspora as well as their belonging, so to speak, to two transnational communities—RSJ and RS communities; this distinguishes RSJs everywhere from other Jewish communities in the world. Unquestionably, in these respects, RSJs in Germany are also distinct from the veterans in Germany.

All in all, this general description of present-day Jewry in Germany shows that it effectively represents a case of transnational diaspora, and quite a complex one as well. The importance of Jewishness and solidarity with Israel, as two identity principles that appear together, predominate in the set of collective identities. It does not preclude, however, that links and identification also appear—among the Russian-speaking Jews—with respect to the “old country” and the RSJ and RS transnational communities. On the other hand, from their stated attitudes toward German language, culture and society, acceptance of the present-day environment as the place they feel at home also emerges. Still, a very large minority (46.2%) of the respondents (and more than 50% of RSJs) do not feel at all that they are part of the German nation. Even though they do feel at home in Germany, this feeling does not necessarily imply that they see Germany as their genuine homeland.

It is against this background that we may ask whether one is entitled to speak nowadays of Jews in Germany or of German Jews. What stands beyond doubt is that a majority of RSJs, do not at all see themselves a part of the German nation, and agree definitely more with the Jews-in-Germany label. Their attachment to the Russian language and culture only strengthens this outlook. Although they find Ger-

many and German society attractive in many aspects, this attraction is mainly instrumental, and does not penetrate deeper into their identity and cultural self-perception. When it comes to the veterans the majority see themselves more attached to the German nation. Yet, here too attachment goes firstly to the Jewish people and solidarity commitment to Israel. They see themselves as Jews far more than as Germans.

### *Possible Future Trajectories*

It is difficult, if not impossible, to extrapolate the future trajectory of Jewry in Germany on the basis of our analyses of today reality. This Jewry has experienced great changes and transformations, starting from a point where its overwhelming majority lacked basic knowledge in Judaism, Jewish religiosity and tradition. The present-day newness of the experience of Judaism and Jewishness adds up to the newness of experiencing transnationalism—especially with respect to the RSJ diaspora. This addition of new experiences makes up the uncertainty of future developments and trajectories. At best, we may point out to plausible hypotheses.

One such hypothesis by Michal Bodemann (2008: 162) forecasts assimilation into the German host society:

In all likelihood, the Russian-Jewish immigration to Germany catered to more assimilated Jews, not the more Zionist or religiously inclined ones who as a rule prefer Israel or the United States. On these grounds, it is at least possible that much of the immigration will blend into German society without leaving any visible trace in ethnic terms.

Our findings, however, as well as other researchers' do not confirm this prognosis. They indeed show that (1) RSJs in Israel are more secular than their counterparts in Germany and the USA; (2) secular Jews are a minority among RSJs in Germany; and (3) solidarity with Israel, that can serve as a kind of indicator to Zionism, is very strong among RSJs in Germany. Furthermore, in the last two aspects the results for the Vets are even stronger, and indicate a same direction.

Bodemann (2008: 163) sustains his line of argument by contending that "while other Jews in Germany experienced the Second World War and the Holocaust as the great trauma, this is not necessarily so for the Russian Jews." The implication is that for the RSJs' historical experience with regard to the German nation is less dramatic than

for the Vets and it follows that assimilation into the German nation could be much easier for them. Our findings show however that for RSJs the Shoa experience is no less important than for the Vets, and they distance themselves from the German nation even more than the Vets do.

In referring to RSJs in Germany, Bodemann (2008: 165) also comments that:

They have become what I would describe as ‘Jewssians’—Russian-Germans with a Jewish tinge. Lena Gorelik has put it aptly when she describes herself and her friend as being Russian and German with a little Jewishness.

Here too our findings show that for RSJs in Germany, Jewishness or Jewish identity ranks much higher than German identity or their former’s country identity. Our data as well as evidence from other investigations contradict Bodemann’s arguments and shed serious doubt on his conclusions with regard to the assimilation hypothesis.

Another hypothesis that is raised by researchers forecasts the establishment of a European Jewish identity and that “in the future, European Jewry may well end up being a point of equilibrium between the Israeli and the American poles of world Judaism (Pinto n.d.).” Diana Pinto argues that Jews in Europe can constitute a significant “third pole” for a postwar Jewish world mainly established in Israel and America. She believes

that only now in the context of a democratic (or aspiring democratic) and reunited pan-European continent do we have the premises for such a new Jewish identity.

Several features shed doubt on this projection. One is the absence of a common language for European Jewry. Another is the absence, in the European case, of the organizational capacities and abilities that American Jewry developed over decades of common action. Furthermore, the prominent place of American Jewry in the Jewish Diaspora stems to a great extent from America’s centrality as a world power and the presence of more than five million Jews within the same political borders. At this time at least, a parallel development in Europe is not in view, and the perpetuation of its present-day—political, cultural and linguistic—divisions seem more plausible for the years to come. In this context, it is quite speculative to expect the divided and heterogeneous Jewries of Europe to grow out as a unified, or even a coordinated,

“European Jewry” that might achieve in the Jewish world a status and power equivalent to America’s and Israel’s Jewries.

Still another hypothesis for Germany’s Jewry is that it will develop into a self-sustaining community sharing its own unique features, that will get somehow afar from the central scene of world Jewry. This prospect as well is not sustained by our findings. For the time being at least, Jews and Jewish institutions in Germany are heavily dependent on outside Jewish centers for objective reasons—the recent character of the largest part of the Jewish population as well as the restricted resources in terms of Jewish legacies. Moreover, this prognosis ignores how far the world is moving toward intensified global connectedness and tendencies to transnationalization, shedding doubt on the capability of a community to move toward isolation. A more qualified—and generalized—version of this hypothesis was already formulated by “Heine’s Law” in the mid-19th century—and still endorsed by S.M. Lipset and E. Raab (1995)—is that each Jewish community becomes more and more similar to its host culture, which entails growing differences between Jews over the world. We should then expect that Jewry in Germany will become a community reflecting the image of the general German population. Even under this formulation, this expectation leaves room for doubt whether Heine’s Law can adequately describe significant developments in our world that is experiencing, as said in the above, a fast pace of globalization and transnational connectedness.

On the other hand, one cannot ignore that throughout the Jewish world endemic tendencies of divisiveness are expressed in the propensity of some communities to remove themselves from others. In the history itself of Germany’s Jewry one may easily find inner divisions that at diverse epochs led to the splitting of roof Jewish organizations. Well-known historical cases consist of the so-called “exit communities” founded by Hirsch and Hildesheimer in the nineteenth century as well as “Tora-abiding” groups that separated themselves from united Jewish bodies. Another episode is the establishment by the newcomers from Eastern Europe, the *Ostjuden*, of their own prayer rooms, the *Betstuben*. The present period also provides here and there evidence of a pluralism that may lead to splits of the Jewish public. These forces, however, are neither factors of greater assimilation to the environment nor of building an autonomous unified Judaism. They constitute marginal factors gravitating outside Germany’s mainstream Jewry.

In the context of these considerations, what is more likely to be expected in Germany—as well as in Israel or the USA—is the strengthening of RSJ transnational bodies which might take over some of the areas of action operated now by general bodies of the Jewish community. However, we may specify that according to our data, these transnational organs referring to the RSJ public conceive themselves primarily as a component of the all-Jewish world scene. Moreover, in Germany itself, the fact that the RSJ public constitutes the overwhelming majority of the Jewry means that any institutional crystallization on their side constitutes ipso facto a crystallization of a sort of Germany's Jewry as a whole. Hence, in last analysis, the most plausible outcome of such a development should come up to—and be confounded with—the strengthening of the latter's participation to the Jewish world.

*Jews in Germany: An Ethnocultural Judaism*

We saw that Jewry in Germany—composed of the RSJs and Veteran Jews—forms an intricate collage of identities and offers a diversity of tenets and social boundaries. As such, they are probably not a “different” Jewry, but an extreme one that gives saliency to identity issues which, in different degrees, are shared by other Jewish communities in today's Jewish world marked, as it is, by the transnational-diaspora model. It is an immigration model that in any event Jews exemplified in different forms long before it gained its present-day popularity among the immense population that migrates from place to place in our globalized era.

Jews in Germany, we have seen, do not show tendencies to merge into the non-Jewish environment, and their penetration into society responds better to the notion of insertion, that can assume different degrees and forms, according to factors like milieu, origin, age, and length of stay in the country. Here, Jews are undoubtedly a factor of multiculturalism. Nothing in our data has revealed a kind of rebellion or mere rejection of the culture prevailing in Germany, but RSJs in particular exhibit some reticence over seeing themselves “Germans,” and assert the retention of their original culture and language: and this in no way harms the establishment's policy vis-à-vis them, which shows great tolerance for their particularism. Jews are satisfied with this kind of *modus vivendi*, and with life in Germany in general.

From the viewpoint of the Jewish identity syndrome that they represent, this Jewry is mostly close to the ethnocultural cluster. As such, it is marked by a flexibility and permeability of social boundaries finding their expression in the numerous individuals of mixed parenthood and/or who live with non-Jewish partners. We see that thus far, this relative openness of collective boundaries has not caused irreversible rifts within Germany's Jewry.

In terms of our ethnocultural model of Jewish identity, we effectively found that Jews in Germany are committed to the Jewish collective—the locally settled Jewish community, and through it, the Jewish world. Solidarity is particularly explicit when it concerns relations with Israel—not in terms of Jewish nationalism but as a focus of identification and feeling of concern for Israel as a Jewish state. This emphasis is all the more significant, as we have seen the lack of identification with Germany as one's nation.

Bound to the ethnocultural syndrome, however, is the tough question of defining the collective identity of Germany's Jewry—with the exception of the orthodox minority. For many Jews in Germany it is difficult to clearly enounce what makes Jews a singular entity. Many would suggest solidarity with other Jews, attachment to some symbols, or periodical participation in synagogue services. For many individuals, it is a question of the well-known principle of "belonging without believing."

RSJs more specifically would add here some commitment to Jews who remained in Eastern Europe and elsewhere—which renders them a transnational diaspora of their own, within the Jewish world. Wherever it settles, that diaspora carries allegiance to Russian and the Russian culture, yet at the same time its members are always ready to learn the language and culture of their present environment—be it Hebrew and the Israeli culture in Israel, or English and the American culture in the USA.

Hence, transnationalism means for RSJs a kind of "Judaization" of Russian and its culture in circumstances where links to the past legacy have disappeared, but which, today is being gradually reconstructed on the basis of new cultural material referring to Jewishness, but stemming from different sources. It is in this that RSJs represent a kind of twofold transnational diaspora: as a part of the Jewish world and as part of a worldwide entity whose language and culture are Russian. This condition, however, only amplifies the vagueness of symbols, uncertainties of what Jewishness means, and the hesitations over



commitment which, in any case, are often the plight of Jewish ethnocultural entities. No wonder, then, that the issue of Jewish education wins acute importance here.

In this respect, again with the exception of the orthodox, it concerns a collective that turns to education for clarifying its collective identity and tenets. That education should teach—primarily the young but also adults—narratives, deepen historical and cultural values, introduce the symbols and notions of the ancestral religion—even in the absence of religiosity.

This syndrome, we have also seen, is antithetical to the notion of enclave. It is a syndrome that keeps the boundaries open and permeable in both directions—inward and outward. It does not over-penalize those who choose to make their life elsewhere, or to outmarry. Nor is it too hard as regards the collective's acceptance of people who outmarried, or are offspring of mixed marriages. All these, even at the cost of tension with orthodox institutions that protest on behalf of the holiness of Jewish law for all generations to come.

All in all, this Jewry witnesses a wide space of variance regarding the nature and essence of Jewishness. This heterogeneity is a weakness at the same time as it is a proof of vitality, and, after all, it is also one of Judaism's most longstanding cultural codes and a proof of its longevity—no less time-honored than education itself.

This latter remark is linked to the fact that, in tandem with the objective difficulties of providing the community's children across Germany with a comprehensive Jewish education, dissatisfaction with what is offered also responds to a cultural code. Notwithstanding the efforts invested in this area by a range of Jewish organizations, the importance that Judaism confers on education means that "enough" is never acknowledged in this respect.

In addition, it also appears that adherents of the Jewish ethnocultural syndrome—particularly the ones who have completely abandoned the religious principle—by definition attribute to education the duty of providing a corpus of knowledge and symbolic allegiances that make Jewish life meaningful, even without actually "believing."

## APPENDIX ONE

### LEADING FIGURES DISCUSS THE JEWISH AGENDA IN GERMANY

This part of the investigation aspired to factor in the feelings and analyses of leading figures in the present-day Jewish population of Germany, and their opinions about the “burning issues” on this population’s agenda. Below we present transcripts of 24 face-to-face interviews that were conducted from 2008 to 2010\*. They reveal the way in which, at the time of the research, the people in charge—Vets and RSJs—saw the major aspects of the development of Germany’s new Jewry, and which perspectives inspire them, as crucial actors in the scene.

**1. Toby Axelrod** heads the office of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) in Germany. She writes for the London Jewish Chronicle, Hadasah Magazine, The Jerusalem Post, and Golem; she also works as a translator. Mrs. Axelrod was a co-founder of Limmud Germany in 2006, and chaired the (German-wide) Limmud Festival in Berlin in 2009.

**2. Dr. Dmitri Belkin**, born in 1971 in Dnepropetrovsk (Ukraine), immigrated to Germany in 1991 and has worked on several joint research projects in Germany and the USA. He is a member of a Liberal congregation that belongs to the United Jewish Community in Frankfurt. Currently, Dmitri Belkin is the curator of a German-wide exhibition titled “Twenty years of Russian-Jewish Immigration to Germany.”

**3. Dr. Evgueni Berkovitch**, born in 1945 in Irkutsk (USSR) immigrated to Germany in 1995. He works as a computer specialist in Hanover and created the internationally known Russian language web portal “Notes on Jewish History” (Zametki po evrejskoj istorii).

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\* The interviews took place in the German language, and the text presented in the following is a translation that aspires to respect the people’s thoughts and feelings by giving expression to their original colloquial style. Hence, the authors made do with light editing despite the fact that in many instances, the formulations deviate from standard English.

**4. Benjamin Bloch**, born in 1943 in Jerusalem, has served as the head of the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWST) since 1987. He is one of the initiators of the Lehava project, that brings young Israeli volunteers to Germany to stimulate local Jewish Community work, especially youth work.

**5. Prof. Micha Brumlik**, born in 1947, lectures on pedagogy at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main and is well known as German Jewish publicist who deals with recent trends in German society and in inner-Jewish development since 1990. For years he was strongly involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue in Germany.

**6. Dr. Christian Böhme** is a political scientist, historian and journalist. He worked for several newspapers in Berlin, then moved to the Jewish weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine*. For several years now, Dr. Böhme has been editor-in-chief of the *Jüdische Allgemeine*, the only Jewish weekly published across Germany.

**7. Gesa Ederberg**, born in 1968, serves as a Reform Rabbi in the Jewish Community of Berlin. She also heads the (conservative) Masorti Movement Center in Berlin, and its Educational Center (Lehrhaus). Rabbi Ederberg is also a founding member of the General Rabbinical Conference within the Central Council of Jews in Germany (ARK).

**8. David Gall** is a clinical pharmacologist in Munich and a member of the Liberal Jewish Community Beth Shalom. In 1994, he created the first and best-known German-Jewish web portal Ha Galil. Ha Galil is an independent site providing comprehensive information on Jewry and current events.

**9. Mikhail Goldberg**, born in 1962 in Kiev (Ukraine), is the editor-in-chief of the monthly *Ebreyskaya Gazeta*, established in 2002. The *Ebreyskaya Gazeta* is currently the only German-wide Russian language Jewish newspaper. It is produced in Berlin and has between 30,000 and 40,000 readers.

**10. Prof. Johannes Heil** is Rector of the University of Jewish Studies (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien) in Heidelberg. Born in 1961, he is a well-known historian, with particular interest in Jewish history during the Late Antiquity period and the early Middle Ages. He is also deeply involved in research on anti-Semitism.

**11. Prof. Walter Homolka** is the director of the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, the first Rabbinical College for non-orthodox Rabbis in Europe. Rabbi Homolka, born in 1964, is also an adjunct full professor at the University of Potsdam and serves as a member on the Executive Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ).

**12. Kűf Kaufmann**, born in 1947 in Marx (USSR), has been the head of the Jewish Community in Leipzig since 2003. Kaufmann studied art direction and has also worked as journalist, cartoonist and satirist. He is the first Russian Jewish immigrant to be elected as head of a Jewish Community with more than 1,000 members.

**13. Dr. Charlotte Knobloch** is the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) and head of the Jewish Community in Munich (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde München und Oberbayern). Dr. Knobloch is also vice-president of the European Jewish Congress (EJC).

**14. Michael Kogan** works as a Rabbi in the Jewish Community of Düsseldorf. He was born in Moldavia, worked as engineer and theater director in the USSR, and later studied to become a Rabbi at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem. Now an Israeli citizen, he's been working in the JC in Düsseldorf since January 2005.

**15. Sergey Lagodinsky**, born in 1975 in Astrakhan (Russia), is a judge and publicist living in Berlin, where he is also an elected representative of the local Jewish Community. Lagodinsky studied law (in Germany) and public administration (at Harvard) and also serves as an advisor to the American Jewish Committee in Berlin.

**16. Arkady Litvan**, born in 1946 in Odessa, is a board member of the orthodox Jewish Community in Hanover (which belongs to the Central Council of Jews in Germany). Litvan was the head of the Jewish Community in Odessa from 1980–1990, before the family immigrated to Germany. In the early 1990's he was committed to (re-)building Jewish communities in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Eastern Germany).

**17. Jewgenij Singer**, born in 1983 in Ukraine, is a political scientist and businessman in Frankfurt am Main. For several years he has headed the Jewish Student Union in the federal state of Hesse (Western Germany), and he is also an elected representative of the Jewish Community in Frankfurt am Main.

**18. Tatyana Smolianitski**, born in 1963, she graduated from Moscow State University with a PhD in history and came to Germany in 1992. In the mid-1990s she co-founded the association "Gesher—Integration through Culture and Education" (Gesher—für Integration durch Kultur und Bildung) in Dortmund, which has proved highly successful in Jewish adult education, especially in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (Western Germany).

**19. Joshua Spinner**, born in 1971 in Baltimore, Maryland (USA) is vice-president of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and leads the Lauder Yeshurun Community in Berlin. The Berlin Center also comprises the Beit Zion yeshiva, and the Hildesheimer Rabbinical College which trains future orthodox Rabbis for Germany.

**20. Adriana Stern** is a German-Jewish writer from Cologne, and a board member of the Liberal Jewish Community Gesher le Massoret. Born in 1960, she became well known with several children's and juvenile books. Adriana Stern is also active on committees in several social initiatives and NGOs in Germany.

**21. Lala Süsskind**, born in 1946 in Poland, has been head of the Jewish Community in Berlin since 2008. She studied sociology and has been active in the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO Germany and Berlin) for many years. She is also a board member of the German Israeli Society (DIG) in Berlin.

**22. Yehuda Teichtal**, born in 1972 in Brooklyn, came to Berlin in 1996 and launched pioneering work for Chabad Lubavitch in the German capital. Here he has two functions: he is employed as a Rabbi of the United Jewish Community of Berlin, and at the same time is the head of the Chabad Lubavitch Center that was opened in 2007.

**23. Dr. Hermann Simon**, born in 1949 in Berlin, grew up in East Berlin (then Capital of the G.D.R.) and was a member of the local Jewish Community in East Berlin from the very beginning. Today, he serves as the director of the "Centrum Judaicum—Foundation New Synagogue Berlin."

**24. Heinz-Joachim Aris**, born in 1934 in Dresden, is the chair of the State Association of Jewish communities in Saxony; he is a member of the board of directors and the presidium of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and serves as the business manager of the Jewish Community in Dresden.

Figure 1. List of interviewees

1. *TOBY AXELROD, 13 May 2009, Berlin*

• *Mrs. Axelrod, you are strongly involved in the organization of Limmud Germany, this year as chair of Limmud.de and coordinator of the three-day festival. What's your main motivation?*

It was my intention to contribute actively to the vibrant Jewish life here in Germany, especially to a program without fences and borders, one including all ages and Jewish denominations. I was looking for a movement that reflects Jewish diversity, and that can bridge divergences.

• *What are the major challenges facing German Jewry today?*

Probably the biggest challenge is reaching out to the Russian Jews. This is, in my opinion, a twofold challenge. On the one hand, this outreach depends on interest and openness among the Jews of Russian background. On the other hand, it requires open doors in the post-

war Jewish establishment. And there are still prejudices that must be overcome on both sides.

- *Some voices are talking about a new pluralism of Jewish life in Germany. Do you share this view? And if so, what are the most essential components of this new German-Jewish pluralism?*

Yes, I think that expression of diversity is on the rise in the Jewish communities of Germany. Today, for example, you can find egalitarian and progressive congregations alongside the more traditional ones in bigger towns and cities. I've seen the development of Bet Debora,<sup>1</sup> and I was really impressed. There are also striking developments in traditional Judaism in Germany, for example in initiatives by Lauder and by Chabad. And concerning Berlin, I have the feeling that there's more life now in the new orthodox groups [i.e. Chabad, Lauder] than in the established communities. Perhaps it is because people are interested in something new. And competition between the old and new groups seems to have sparked a lot of creativity, which in my view should lead to positive developments overall.

- *How would you describe the current relations between German-speaking Jews and Russian-speaking (i.e. immigrant) Jews?*

There is still a lack of communication between both groups, and it seems to me that there are still some false expectations and mistaken attitudes on both sides. For some, the language problem remains. On a personal note, our journal *Golem* has been published in three languages—in English, French and German. I wanted to introduce the Russian language as well. On the other hand, there is a tendency among some in the “new” community to remain on their own. For example, the World Congress of Russian-speaking Jews (WCRJ) provides its own Russian language programs. For the established community, these programs can feel like another, exclusive universe in its own backyard. However, with *Limmud* we have a mandate to try and reach out to all groups, and have already seen some progress so far in our two major festivals. People from the old and new communities have met and formed new friendships. It's a start.

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<sup>1</sup> Bet Debora, a conference and network mostly of female rabbis, cantors and educators in Europe, was founded by Jewish women activists in Berlin. Conferences were held in Berlin in 1999, 2001 and 2003. The fourth Bet Debora conference was held in Budapest in 2006, and the fifth took place in June 2009 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

- *Please describe strengths and weaknesses of the current Jewish educational programs in Germany.*

I think it would make sense to provide more support for the Jewish adult education centers (JVHS), just to enable them to widen their offerings. It's definitely necessary. Seen from this point, Limmud also very much needs more support from outside.

- *Are plans for Limmud moving ahead in Germany?*

Yes. Aside from the three-day festival in Berlin, people are planning one-day-Limmud events in some bigger cities like Munich, Cologne, Leipzig and Hamburg. We can provide the initiatives with moral support, and we can also try to get sponsorship to cover their costs. But like us in Berlin, these activists are all volunteers. It's nice to see these fruits of the national festival. Limmud in Germany has already had a ripple effect. People came to us at the end of the Berlin Limmud weekend and said, "We don't want to go home now... Now we want to try to organize this in our town, too."

- *How many registered visitors were there at the recent German Limmud Festivals?*

In 2006 we had a one-day-Limmud festival in Berlin with about 300 registrations and many drop-ins; about the same number signed up for the 2007 one-day-gathering in Munich. For our first three-day festival, in 2008 [Berlin/Werbellinsee] we had more than 300 participants, and just now [May 2009] we had about 420 participants. We had to close registration for lack of space in the dining hall. I think it's not too optimistic to expect more than 500 participants in the coming year. We may have to rethink our venue options.

- *How would you assess the quality of volunteer work in the Jewish communities in Germany today?*

I can speak only for the Limmud movement, and here the voluntary commitment is impressive in quality, if not in quantity. We have volunteers in all age groups. The youngest is currently 16 years old, and the oldest is over 80. However, the core of activists are in their thirties, many are self-employed (including lawyers, doctors, journalists, psychologists) or students.

- *What do you think about the general media coverage of events that relate to Jewish life in Germany?*

My impression is that in the German media coverage there's an abundance of reports on the past, including local Jewish history. It's not bad, but it's a pity when current Jewish topics and issues are overshadowed.

owed by coverage of “dead Jews.” Of course, there is media coverage when new synagogues are opened or big Jewish cultural events are held. But in general, the amount of reports on current developments is relatively small.

Perhaps mainstream journalists should try to get in touch with local Jewish activists. I think that many people in Germany are aware that the Jewish communities have grown significantly in recent years. But their knowledge is rather vague. As a journalist, I once asked people near the *Mahnmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* [Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe near Brandenburg Gate] whether they knew how many Jews there are in Germany today, and what they knew about Judaism in general. I got all kinds of crazy answers about the number of Jews, but overall people seemed to know that Jewish life in Germany has grown. Finally, judging by the fact that the Jewish Museum Berlin is one of the most frequented museums throughout Germany, people seem thirsty for more information.

- *What do you think of the existing Jewish media in Germany?*

I can't give an overall assessment, but one remarkable fact for me is the huge number of non-Jews who work for or in the Jewish print media. I am used to it, more or less. But for many American Jews, this would seem rather shocking, and a reminder of the lack of Jews in Jewish space.

## 2. DMITRI BELKIN, 8 June 2009, Frankfurt

- *Dr. Belkin, were there any specific motivations for you to take over the organization of a broad exhibition on twenty years of Russian-Jewish immigration to Germany?*

No. It was the specific request of the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt. And I think it's a very good idea. This is, on the one hand, a very young story, and on the other it's already history, because there's a chronological order between 1991–2004/5 and you can say that this story is ending. The museum wants most of all to deal with contemporary current events. That was why they approached me.

- *You mentioned that you're also a member of the Jewish community in Frankfurt. Where would you place yourself within a specific denomination within Judaism?*

I prefer a Judaism that perhaps doesn't exist yet in Germany. I stand for a more Liberal interpretation of Conservative Judaism, for an egalitarian version. But here in Frankfurt my family and I are in the



United Community with the egalitarian minyan, that's a more Liberal version of Judaism.

- *Which are the most urgent problems that need to be solved in the Jewish community in Germany?*

Not long ago, for the first time after the war, rabbis were ordained in Germany. They are unmistakably orthodox. One of them is from this Ukrainian-Jewish milieu. This is exciting and an interesting development. I would like to see the two-three other denominations, which are a bit more Liberal, also receive new rabbis. Such rabbis would be able to take care of smaller communities as well, and I think that's important.

Then the youth work is still a central theme. How can we attract youth, the socially fully integrated Russian/post-Soviet Jewish youth to the communities? That's also a challenge.

And there's now for me personally an exciting challenge too. How do I construct a new German Jewish history? Or a Jewish history in Germany? This history no longer has anything to do with the traditional German Jewish history. We need to see how the post-Soviet Israeli and new German discourses can be connected.

- *Maybe as a part of the current collective identity?*

There isn't this kind of collective identity in Germany. There are different identities inside the wider community. And that's the way it should be in part. This is also a model found in Israel. Just here everything is very close on the one hand and on the other very diverse. There you've got to see what happens.

- *How would you describe current relations between immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the veterans in the Jewish communities?*

I would say in general, that there is still a pretty large distance between them. It is not growing smaller, in my view.

- *Is your and your family's closest social network still primarily Russian-speaking?*

No. I wouldn't say that. For my family that isn't so. Russian is spoken at home, and communicating with the older generation also takes place in Russian, but our contacts in Frankfurt are 2/3 German. But that's not on purpose, and there are also many former immigrants who see it as an exception to have German Jewish friends.

- *Less than half the FSU immigrants have joined a Jewish community, and probably on the veterans' side it doesn't look much better. Where do you see the main reasons for this?*

I think it relates to societal trends in general, not just among Jews. Christian congregations are losing members as well. People are arguing

that their religion is something private and personal, or they're atheists, or can't deal with structures or institutions, cannot identify with them. I think that's true for many Jews as well. Secondly, as I experienced in *Bad Sobernheim* [Educational Center of the Central Council of Jews in Germany], where I taught a seminar and met the young people there, the question was raised as to whether we should show our Jewishness in public? They answered with no. They're concerned that there will be anti-Israeli voices at work, anti-Jewish comments from their co-workers, and that's why they're saying to themselves, no, I don't want that. It's a typical reaction that they may have adopted from their parents in the FSU.

- *Is that a significant factor?*

I don't know if it's representative. I'm only speaking about three or four young people I met there and who have said that it was like this. These were mostly young people with university degrees, who are searching for their Jewishness on the one hand, but on the other don't want to show it publicly.

- *Because they fear discrimination?*

Because they fear discrimination, and because they don't want people staring at them at work or wherever.

- *Because of their Jewishness, or because of the Middle East conflict?*

As you know, both things are merged in most people's minds. That's very difficult to separate when the people don't take the time to deal with these things, like we are doing. There is a certain tendency to lump everything together: Israel, Judaism, the Jewish religion and so on. And there are pragmatic reasons. Young people think to themselves why should they pay the religious tax? Their money is tight anyway. As a young person you don't need a senior club to play chess and hear Russian lectures, you don't need that. You might also not even need religious services, not necessarily. And if you don't need any of that, what do you need from the community? The answer is: nothing. So people don't pay the tax for this simple, pragmatic reason to save money.

- *Do you think that Israel will retain the same importance in the Jewish communities and networks, could it decrease or even increase? What is your hypothesis?*

My hypothesis is that for this generation over 40, let's say, the significance will remain. In the future, though, this is my feeling, it will decrease, like it will decrease everywhere, in America as well. I can't imagine that this flaming Zionism that the veterans had 20–30 years

ago will now emerge amongst the new members, or among the Jewish youth in Germany in general. But I do think that the feeling of solidarity will remain and in politics it makes sense to show a bit of solidarity with Israel. In the Jewish school for every holiday the children have to wear blue and white, the colors of Israel. That's interesting, but more romantic. I'm for a pragmatic, still very patriotic and friendly, but basically pragmatic approach to Israel. Valuing the culture and visiting there will remain priorities in any case. But just to say that we're a branch office of Israel, that too will decrease a bit, just as it has in America. It's not as important there anymore as it once was.

- *Ok, that's the political level. But what would you say, in principle, regarding the cultural, religious and spiritual levels?*

It's not a dependency and it's not about a political survey, but that we're now in a post-Zionist era, where Jewish people across the world are saying that Zionism is one option among others. We're free to choose this, and it's fantastic that this choice exists. There are connections. I'm dreaming of spending a year in Israel, a half year in an ulpan and a half year doing something at the university. Many intellectuals are certainly doing that. That you now say, OK, that's our attitude, and maybe that's the future. That the curve is leaning towards this direction, no, I don't think so.

- *You previously said that you can place yourself relatively clearly within the Jewish community in Frankfurt. For you personally, what are the most important elements in contemporary Jewry?*

For sure certain elements from Jewish tradition. That you are responsible for a child and say, OK, I've got to make the decision of how to raise it. And that's the answer. It is a very strong motivation.

- *Are there still any problems with integration in the community? Do you think that now—regardless of age group—special measures are still necessary to facilitate integration?*

There is no growth anymore, no one new is coming. Those who were going to come have already arrived, and have been here for four or five years already. On the one hand, right now this question has been solved by the halt in immigration. On the other, I think that the communities should not take on this mediator function in the long term. The communities would then remain overwhelmed. The smaller communities have this classic situation with two veterans on the board and 30 Russian-speaking members. That can't work out. I think that immi-

gration should be considered more maturely by saying` OK, just like in America and to some extent in Israel there will be a short period with practical help, and then let them find their way. That would also spur people's motivations, allow them to mature and they will be able to do more. What existed in Germany in the 1990s was like a kindergarten for both sides. It wasn't always helpful.

• *Do you see significant lacks and gaps in the current spectrum of Jewish educational programs offered by Jewish communities and institutions?*

Yes. I can tell you, there is a lack of Jewish programs in English, in the Jewish school. The Jewish school is wonderful, but there is simply not enough English. Now we have Hebrew, Ivrit offered as the foreign language for at least two years. I think someone could come and offer courses, mandatory courses about Jewish topics in English, too. At the end of the day the kids also need to learn English and that's something that's missing. Not just English language courses, but good courses, maybe something cool and funny about Judaism, something with culture, but also in English. That's something I'd like to see. Otherwise I think that the programs on offer here in Frankfurt are sufficient. Concerning religious education, it would be nice if someone were to come to Germany and try, like we're trying here, this egalitarian Conservative Judaism.

• *What is your general feeling concerning the attitudes from the non-Jewish population?*

There's often a mixture that's atypical for other countries. There is a constant interest here [in Jewish issues] but you also often see the feelings of guilt and that can also be traumatic to experience. Then many are somewhat inhibited regarding Judaism. There's no free discussion. There are no possibilities, there's no place to talk about things. The topic remains traumatic. That's what it's like in Germany.

### 3. EVGUENI BERKOVITCH, 27 May 2009, Hanover

• *Dr. Berkovitch, you are one of the most vocal critics of the joint decision of the German government and the German Jewish umbrella organizations to implement new regulations for Russian Jewish immigration in 2006, regulations that, as we see now, seem to have brought RSJ immigration to Germany to an end.*

I would say that the process of Russian-Jewish immigration to Germany was stopped much too early. For forming a stable Jewish community

across a whole country like Germany you need a critical mass. Maybe in America the critical mass was reached a hundred years ago, but in Germany that wasn't the case. These 200,000 so-called contingency refugees who came from the former Soviet Union; many of them even non-Jewish or uninterested in community life, this number is simply not a critical mass for the specific conditions here. The new regulations have come too early, and that's a pity—it's dangerous. We cannot predict whether there will be a positive community development or not.

- *How would you describe the relationship between Russian-speaking and German-speaking Jews today?*

At the beginning there were very large difficulties, and very large differences. With the passing of each year, these differences and difficulties become weaker and less pronounced and things will probably be balanced soon. I have noticed that for some lectures in German more and more people are coming whose native language is Russian. The younger generation speaks German very well. I don't think the important problems are between Russian speakers and German speakers, but to get the new generation who can speak better German than Russian [to be] involved in the community or Jewish life, that's the more important thing.

- *That's the difficulty.*

But that's a different kind of difficulty than a conflict between two different groups. The older generation is going, new people are coming for whom the German language poses no problem. And therefore I think that the chasm between these two groups has already been bridged, or will soon be bridged.

- *Are there problems between religious and non-religious Jews? Or is there acceptance and understanding on both sides?*

The problem isn't on the inside, the problem is that these groups have too few connections and therefore both groups live separately from one another. That's the problem. There aren't any large conflicts, but the lives of both are led without contact or with too few contacts. Therefore, in my opinion, if the communities would host events aimed at both groups, it could be very fruitful. The religious events at the synagogue are attended by the religious people. The literary circles are attended by mostly non-religious people. Our community leaders should do something that could make contact between the groups.

- *So that would mean that something should be offered that's more interesting for secular Jews?*

Exactly. For example our Jewish library in Hanover, this is brand new in Hanover. There's a section for religious literature and lectures and so on. Just like in every library, this one has secular literature and they plan to hold events that are of interest for both categories. The library is located in the new building of the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover.

- *You are very much involved in Jewish intellectual networks, in Jewish culture, history and local Jewish developments. Was there a specific motivation for you to create the web portal *Zametki po evrejskoj istorii*?*

No, I would not say there was a specific motivation. Actually, all my life I've enjoyed learning something new, and there was also a great interest in history and then, increasingly, in Jewish history. I really enjoy reading and discovering stories and topics, to consider them a bit more profoundly, and then to forward them to other people. That is how I write my books. And this is also how I started with the *Zametki*.

- *The web portal *Zametki* is completely non-profit?*

Yes. It's completely non-profit. The authors do not get paid, and I have only invested my own money.

- *It's estimated that almost half of all Jews living in Germany eligible to be members are not connected with the Jewish communities. What do you think are the main reasons for this?*

The local Jewish community plays an important role, of course. When the community is attractive, then people come. The secularization trend is general, not just in Germany *and not just among Jews*. It's not a coincidence that the new Liberal Community of Hanover has gotten a building that just had belonged to a church community. In America, for example, in my experience, not all Jews are members of the Jewish community. That's life, that's modern life. That's the trend.

- *Would you say secularization is a normal trend?*

Yes. It would be funny to feel Jewish anyway. The religion says clearly that you're Jewish when you go to the synagogue, read the Talmud and so on. There's no other alternative. But you can still be Jewish when you don't go to synagogue every Sabbath. That's life. Alexander

Voronel<sup>2</sup> also said that he is a Jew, but that it would be too crude to say, for example to uphold the 613 Mitzvot. Almost no one can live this way, not all 613. It's impossible.

• *Would you describe the four Jewish communities in Hanover as proof of a new Jewish pluralism in Germany?*

Pluralism depends on who's providing the money.

• *What do you mean?*

I think Jewish pluralism is an important thing. But the community can only function when it has a good building, and a budget for events and to pay for a Rabbi. The Liberal community didn't have any particular financial backing for many years. Just recently a support association has been established. When the money is there, then pluralism can flourish, that's not a problem. When there's only one source, then it's complicated.

• *How problematic would you consider the integration of non-Halakhic Jews from the FSU into Jewish organizations in Germany?*

It's a very serious problem, especially for the children from mixed marriages. Let's take an example. Say you were a former Soviet citizen with the name Goldfarb. You spent your whole life in Russia and were considered to be Jewish by everyone. Now you're not recognized as Jewish anymore because your mother isn't Jewish, just your father. Your mother was Ivanova and your father Goldfarb. This is very painful for many immigrants to understand. The Liberal Jewish communities are taking steps for these people. They aren't being tossed aside. In the United communities they aren't considered Jewish anymore. They just want to work with "pure" Jews. That's why the new pluralism helps lots of people who feel Jewish anyway. That's important. Back to Goldfarb, if he feels Jewish, his kids can marry Jews and that's why his grandchildren can be Jewish. But if a line is drawn after him already, saying he's not Jewish anymore then the next generations are lost, too. In my opinion, to be a Jew, you've got to feel Jewish. That's the beginning. That's why it's a big mistake that these people are being cut off from the very beginning.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Voronel, a friend of Evgueni Berkovitch and former Soviet Jewish dissident, left Moscow/USSR in the mid-1970s and later became one of the best-known Russian Jewish intellectuals and publicists in Israel. He is, among others, editor of the Russian speaking literary journal "22".

- *How far is Israel central to Jewish life in Germany?*

Israel, for every Jew, is a home. Regardless of where you're living. When we were in Russia, Israel was still our second home, or our main home.

- *Emotionally?*

Yes, exactly. And that's the same in Germany. The problems in Israel are our problems, regardless of where we live, but I've heard many times in Israel at least, that it's a mistake for Jews not to live in Israel.

- *Sometimes there seem to be something like a family conflict between Israel and the Diaspora, but is it also a process of normalization?*

Yes, I think so, too. I mean thank G-d, Israel needs less and less help from outside. It's getting stronger and can probably help others. The donors don't have to choose between Israel or the Diaspora, they can be simply for Judaism. There were times when Israel needed the donations the most and now other times have come. Now we need to think about Judaism, and the weaker side now is the Diaspora. The new Jewish experiment in Germany, however, was interrupted before the critical mass was reached. Right now we have an experiment that hasn't been fully carried out and we can't say for sure how it will turn out at the end. Probably Judaism will be able to stay and become stronger, but there is still a strong possibility that there are not enough Jews, not enough people. If, for example, someone plants a flower, it needs to be taken care of for a certain time and not just forgotten. If you forget about it too soon, then the flower will die. Judaism in Germany after the 1990s is a delicate flower that has been planted. But it hasn't received any further care and that's why we can't be sure that it'll have a rosy future.

- *What is your impression on the non-Jewish media coverage of Jewish developments in Germany?*

First, I'd have to say that the representation is many-faceted. You can't simply say it's just one way or another. Most reporting on Jewish issues is very positive, I think. In the mainstream print media and in the Internet there's a real picture and there are positive attitudes. However, I've also read other things. I recently found a new magazine called *The Semite*<sup>3</sup> that's very anti-Semitic, although it's called Semite.

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<sup>3</sup> Evgueni Berkovitch refers here to the bi-monthly magazine *Der Semit* (The Semite), published by a German Jew and renowned for its anti-Zionist attitude.



Of course you can find anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli voices here, not only in newspaper articles. I've also seen several panel discussions with a pseudo-objective character. For example, there are two people pro-Israel and three-four against. You end up hearing or seeing 90% against Israel. However, during the Gaza conflict in December 2008 and January 2009, I had the impression that German media showed a lot of understanding for the Israeli military operations and for the background and causes that led to the Israeli military actions.

In general, I think that German media is striving for objective coverage. However, if you are looking for information about Jewish life in Germany, you do not necessarily depend on German authorities or German media.

#### 4. BENJAMIN BLOCH, 15 June 2009, Frankfurt

• *Mr. Bloch, what are the biggest problems the Jewish community in Germany is facing today?*

The main problem is that the 18–30 year olds are rarely reached by the communities. We are now looking for solutions to this problem; not just us, we are talking about it with all related Jewish groups and institutions, we're now looking into ways how to achieve this, how to recruit this age group. The communities are just not reaching them.

• *Why not? Is it because the people are too busy? Or is it due to what's being offered?*  
It depends, and there might be different reasons. The question is how the people were treated at the beginning, how were they integrated? People forget that, for example. Then it depends on what they are offering. Why should young people come? What are they being offered? Is someone having a party? There are more interesting places for that outside the community.

• *You say that the 18–30 year old age group is the most difficult to reach in all communities. Is this true also with the students?*

There aren't so many student unions. The BJSD exists on paper, but in reality it looks different. There's a group here and there, but imagine, there are thousands of Jewish students here in the bigger towns. Compared to what there used to be, there is no active student life here in Germany. There are various reasons for this, also laziness. The institutions had told the students they had funding available and didn't do anything with it. They've gotten a negative image over the

years that remained. Now Chabad comes and invites the students to Paris for a weekend, to a five-star hotel. That's not great student work. That's just a nice get-together.

Now it's really difficult. The Jewish community in Germany is facing the question that when it doesn't succeed in recruiting these young people, how should the Jewish community work in the long term and not just on paper?

- *Is the current weakness in young people's activity a specifically German problem, or have you heard similar problems from the French, British, or Dutch?*

I think it's more significant in Germany than in other places.

- *Why?*

I'm also responsible for Europe where we also try to do some things, and can say that in France and in England, the student movements are much more active than here. Or in Belgium. Much more active. This is a consumer society here.

- *Could you say some words about the contents and previous results of the Lehave program?*

This is a project of the Central Welfare Office for Jews in Germany. We began the project seven or eight years ago. We said that we wanted to bring young people here from Israel, put them in traditional homes, and try to assist the communities in creating and building up a Jewish infrastructure. To sell Jewishness authentically, not necessarily religiously. The next group of eight young Israelis will arrive in September.

- *Eight people?*

Yes, we used to have more, but now we're having eight. The Lehave people, there are now four centers where they're active; in Cologne/Düsseldorf, in Dresden, in Berlin, and in Munich. Those are the centers and from there they also outreach communities in the peripheries. That's a greater success. The main problem is the language. The people who came to Germany, there are some who speak Russian, and other languages, but none of them can speak German. They learn German here, we offer an intensive German course, but we also have found the ways and methods how we can overcome this problem. In any case, there are communities who ask that we send people, for example from Frankfurt/Oder [Eastern Germany] and from Dresden [Eastern Germany]. Besides this, we send people to vacation camps where we can prepare the children for the *machanot*, the summer camps. The Israelis stay here for a year.

- *Are there still problems in the relations between veterans and newcomers?*

Recently we've been hearing that the immigrants have a feeling of being alienated. Someone said yesterday in the commission that the veterans also have feelings of alienation. They have the feeling that not enough is being done for them in the communities, things are only being done for the Russian speakers. The seniors have the same problem, we have senior trips. But it also happens that the person responsible sometimes has programs for the veterans, where they can feel comfortable.

- *A separate event?*

In German, yes. In Frankfurt there's a meeting place for the veterans, the only group the veterans really attend. We organized it outside the community, but the veterans come. In Hebrew there's a saying, "Time will tell what you don't understand." There is something going on in the regions, in the youth work and in community administration. People who just came from Russia speak German so well; you wouldn't realize that they weren't from Germany.

- *So there are differences between the generations among the immigrants?*

We've got to break the silence between the generations. Sometimes the grandparents don't know any German and the grandchildren don't know any Russian, but somehow communication between the generations must be maintained. That's a problem.

- *Would you see a trend that it's easier to motivate the veterans or the immigrants for volunteer work?*

No, I can't say that. Both groups meet, and also meet outside the community, they occasionally meet outside. However, many people from Russia don't have any idea what a community is; they've got to get used to it. They don't understand it. It takes time, a long time, until they can even understand how the communities work here. What do they want, how do they tick? But today there is no other organization that reaches so many [immigrants'] children and families as we [the ZWS] do. Not a single one. This is also a framework within integration, you can't forget that making a vacation camp costs money and if they're on welfare, then they have difficulties. We can help them financially. For young people we have the project "*Brückenschlag*" ["bridging the gap"], running for groups of 30–50 people, and that's also a great success. There are four-five seminars a year on different topics. One is about Jewish history, one is about the Holocaust, one is about Israel,

one is about their own history; and then we visit a memorial site and go to Israel. From these people we also have a group where we do leadership training.

- *At which age group is the “Brückenschlag” project aimed, precisely?*

18–30 year olds, yes, and within it varies. Now we’re taking a group to Israel next month, also students who are studying Jewish social work with 22 people doing their BA at the University of Applied Science in Erfurt in Eastern Germany. Next year we’ll have the first group with an academic degree from this department.

- *There are very successful seminars for young people in Bad Sobernheim, in vacation camps, at meetings of librarians. Which of these is most successful in the 18–30 generation?*

It depends on the standards of the seminar leader and of the participants. Limmud is all right because it allows for independent work and people can exchange opinions and explore all kinds of directions. It depends on the quality of the seminar leader and the social mixture of the group, for example.

- *What about the middle aged generation and the elderly? Has everything possible been done for them?*

The communities have done a lot; they’ve really done a lot. Integration, when you examine the integration, you have to realize it’s been a success, not a failure. What else could be done is simply a professionalization, to improve the professionalism in approaches to problem solving. Sometimes that’s still a bit lacking. You can’t just do it on the side.

- *There are more than 100 Jewish communities in Germany today. But demographers believe that the critical number for ensured survival will be around 4,000 community members. Everything over 4,000 has a chance to still exist in 20–30 years, and these are in Germany only a half dozen of JC’s...*

This doesn’t matter for now. It’s simply a question of *how*, *where* and *what*. Just look, a community like Leipzig, even with 1,300 members, they’ve built a flourishing center. I think it’s amazing. But of course the question is what will happen in the future.

- *In bigger towns of Germany, and especially in Berlin, you can see the development of a new Jewish pluralism, not only in several congregations, but also in different infrastructures. Is it too early for such a structural pluralism, or is it in the right time?*

I think it’s ridiculous.

- *You mean, it weakens the structures?*

Of course it's causing a structural weakness.

- *Regardless if it's a kindergarten or elementary school? It's too early?*

No, it's just ridiculous. That will lead to a weakening; we don't have the resources to afford such luxury. It's better to work together, rather than have everyone doing their own thing.

- *A different question about dealing with German authorities and institutions. Is there a high level of cooperation?*

The ZWSt has good contacts. We can't complain. I hope they can't either. But Jewish professionals who are fluent in German are lacking. Maybe this will change in the next 10 years.

- *Do you have a certain professional group in mind?*

Rabbis. Last week there was the ordination [of two orthodox rabbinical students in Munich] and you see that what's happening. That's the right way.

##### 5. MICHA BRUMLIK, 29 May 2009, Frankfurt/Main

- *Prof. Brumlik, what do you consider the major challenges facing Jewry in Germany today?*

I think the main problem of German Jewry will be finding its own identity as a community in the diaspora. As yet it is not clear yet whether German Jewry has enough self-consciousness for an existence beyond the state of Israel and the adherence to it.

- *Do you see any other challenges or problems to be solved?*

I think the main problem has more or less been solved, and this was the task of the integration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, but this has already been done. Now we have to look how this new Jewish population and its younger leadership will take over functions in the communities and congregations.

- *Do you think that the current tensions between German-speaking and Russian-speaking Jews will be resolved the next generation?*

Yes, although I'm sure in some smaller Jewish communities there are still some veterans who feel a little bit alienated by the Russian influx. I think this problem will be solved in the smaller communities as it has been in the larger ones like Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Cologne.

• *Some voices are talking about the new pluralism in Jewish life in Germany. Do you share this view? And if so, what are, to your opinion, the most essential components of this new German-Jewish pluralism now?*

I think the main component of this new German-Jewish pluralism is that in most of the larger communities we have mutual tolerance of very different religious denominations. In a community like in Frankfurt you have Lubavitcher Chassidim, and you have a female rabbi, and the parties do not try to exclude the others. There is a very tolerant co-existence.

• *How far is Israel central to Jewish life in Germany? Do you think its importance to Jewish identity will increase, decrease or remain more or less the same?*

I think it will decrease in the long run; however, I do not have the impression that the leadership of Jewish communities has realized this already. On the whole, community leaders are having more and more doubts about current Israeli politics, but officially they still stand strongly behind it, and I think that this rather schizophrenic attitude is not going to last very long.

• *What do you consider as the most essential elements of Judaism today?*

I am convinced that the central core element must be the Jewish religion. Although I do know that there is a Jewish culture, Jewish movies, Jewish music and so on, but the core which unites them all, no matter to which denomination they belong; at the end of the day it's the Jewish religion.

• *That would mean that the synagogue will have the major role in organized Jewish life and networking?*

Definitely. The synagogue and Jewish learning. Not only praying. In Judaism learning is as important as praying. So the religious tradition must be studied and known.

• *You have been deeply involved in the German Jewish-Christian dialogue for decades. What were your motivations for your involvement?*

The original motivation was to do something against anti-Semitism by speaking about religious Christian anti-Judaism, to keep this in check. As the years passed I understood that the Christian faith is a different form, yet very close to Judaism and especially that original Christian writings and scriptures, the gospels, for example, are—as Rabbi Leo Baeck has said—testimonies of Jewish faith. By dealing with the Christian religion I have learned a lot about Jewishness and Judaism, at least at the time of Emperor Augustus 2,000 years ago.

- *You are an educator. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Jewish educational programs being offered?*

There is one problem. There is a lot for children and there is a lot for youngsters. But there is nothing for young couples with small children. For elderly people again you have clubs and other things, but this generation of young parents is not really accompanied well by Jewish educational efforts and organizations.

This is where something needs to be done, because they are young families with their children, I mean, they will be the foundation of the communities in ten years.

- *Many Jews in Germany are not involved with the local Jewish communities at all. What are the main reasons for that? What can be done about it?*

Let's begin with the non-members. It seems to be the case that except for the Israelis who are sure of their Jewish identity, and so might not think it necessary to become members of the Jewish Community, we do have a certain percentage of immigrants from the FSU with a different religious status according to Halakha. People who do not want to convert formally. The question is whether we have organizations which work with those people. In fact, we do have them.

- *Could the non-Halakhic Russian Jewish immigrants be integrated into the Reform communities? Do the Reform communities have an answer to this problem?*

No, they do not. In fact, if Jews from Russia become religious, it's been my observation that they rather tend towards an orthodox form of Judaism. If they do it at all, then they do it right. They often have an interest in the mystical as well. The question is whether liberal Jewish congregations in Europe should adopt the North American model, in which one does not have to be the child of a Jewish mother, but can also be the child of a Jewish father to be recognized as a Jew. However, in North America that means that the father has to educate his child as Jewish and this was probably not the case for the majority of Jews from the FSU.

- *So the American reform model wouldn't work here?*

Probably not.

- *Returning to Jewish education. How could these programs be best supported? Is there something that still needs to be addressed?*

It will become very important to have contact with the general German public. Firstly and most important is to establish what the churches and the political parties already have, that is, a *Jewish Academy*. The

Jewish Academy could or should have two functions; integration and education of the leaders and future leaders of the Jewish communities, but also addressing the non-Jewish public. It could also be a place for educational work with young families.

6. *CHRISTIAN BÖHME, 4 June 2009, Berlin*

• *Dr. Böhme, what do you think are the greatest challenges facing the Jewish Community in Germany today?*

Two things are very important. Firstly the so-called Russians, and secondly the youth. These are the two biggest challenges that the Jewish community faces in Germany, to the extent that it wants to be organized. Up to 95% of the communities are now made up of Russian-speaking immigrants and to be able to integrate them into the communities, to organize it so that they remain committed to the communities, that is a major challenge and a problem. It's very, very difficult to win over the Russian Jews as members, and that's connected to many different factors. They've come here as Jewish contingency refugees, but most of them are not familiar with their own Jewishness. How should there be a bridge between them and the veterans who cultivate their Jewishness? Then there are the differences in mentalities, these are due to their Russianness. This manifests itself, for example, very clearly on holidays. Not religious holidays, but secular holidays; 9 November—as the anniversary of the Night of Broken Glass pogrom—is a day that needs to be remembered. The veterans would say this, while the Russians would say no, that's not a special day for them, 9 May (Victory Day) is their holiday when they were the victors in history. That seems to me to represent the huge differences in mentalities that have a virulent effect again and again.

Then there is the constellation between the Russian-speaking immigrants and the veterans; a huge group, the Russians, meet a tiny minority, and that's very different to how integration usually works in Germany, where about 80 million Germans have to absorb three million Muslims or ethnic German repatriates, for example. That's nothing. Here there were maybe 20,000 veterans and 200,000 new people who needed to be integrated. That's a source of immense tension that manifests itself in everyday community life again and again. Those are the problems. You've got to admit, though, in light of the fact that these problems exist, I think many things are working out



very well. The Russians have received many educational opportunities, they seem to be taking advantage of them more and more; and, it seems to me, discovering their Jewishness. They need to overcome the language barrier, and they can do that in courses offered by the state or somewhere else. But these things are a conglomerate, a real challenge. I assume that only when the second generation of immigrants has grown up here, something will happen there. I think that we're going to have a very different Jewry here in ten years than what we have today. It will be represented very differently.

About the younger generation, the Jewish communities in Germany have a big problem, not with the very young, not the teenagers, but with the young people, who have grown out of their teenage years and are starting their careers, there's a problem to maintain the ties with these people.

- *You mean with the thirty-somethings?*

Yes, 30+. They are, I believe, largely lost to the community. The communities are not able to create their program in a way that's interesting enough so that these people stay. We know that people are entering a new period in their life at this time, they're having children and becoming established in their careers and so on and as I hear, they're leaving the community. They may have attended in their childhood and youth and were always in the Youth Center, but then there's the break in their biography and also a break with the community.

- *And that's a trend all across Germany?*

I would say so. The community really must try to get this generation 30+ to keep attending. I don't have the magic formula of how it can be done. Maybe you've just got to try to win them over, not with genuinely Jewish programs, but by trying to help out in their everyday lives or in bringing up their children or something like this. To do it a little more subtly than saying hey, why don't we sing some Jewish songs? No 30 year-old has time for that. That's a big problem that the community needs to solve. They need to get them to come. This is directly connected to the Russians, then that's the second generation of mostly Russian-speakers. They, in my experience, are incredibly eager to learn, they are very career-oriented and so on and successful. You've got to offer them something to make them stay. They've got other things on their minds. They want to be successful in their career and make good money and spend time with their families. This is the third level, if they didn't marry Jewish, which also happens, of course, then they're lost.

You've got to offer them something if you want them to stay. Otherwise the communities will simply grow old; this is an empirical, demographic factor. Much more needs to be done. This is a challenge.

- *What Russian Jewish leaders complain about is that they've been here for fifteen years, have competent people, but still feel excluded from the German Jewish establishment. That's why people are leaving. It's also causing tension. Do you think that all this will be solved in a generation if the younger generation remains?*

Yes. I think so. That's absolutely possible. I think we're experiencing the beginnings of this now, that things are starting to change. If my impressions are correct, then it's starting, in some individual communities, to take place what's been announced for fifteen years, namely that the establishment is stepping down. Partially they have to step down. That means that the Russians have now established themselves to such an extent that they're saying exactly what you're saying, that they've been here for fifteen years, they're successful, they're good, they're Jewish, there's no reason to exclude them. They're starting to replace the veterans. There's a change coming slowly. That's starting now in my opinion.

- *Do you have two-three examples of this?*

Yes, in *Kassel*, for example, and in *Erfurt*. These are small beginnings; it's coming on a small basis. I think that the pressure, the political, demographic pressure will increase starkly over the next few years, and in the long-term the establishment will either have to do something to remain integrated or the others will exert so much pressure that there'll be no holding them back any longer. The people are good and talented. There isn't any reason to keep them out. There will be opportunities as long as they want them. If they are disinterested in the Jewish community, and community life, organized life, then there won't be. But if the communities want them, because they're saying that's our future, then they must offer them something. And, for example, that means they have a right to have their say, and to be able to participate in decision-making. Their skills are needed because they are the majority. That's clear. You're right that there is a wide base, but there are also not yet enough people who are prepared to take on a leadership position, to take on responsibility among the Russians. That also is a part of it.

- *Some voices are talking about a new pluralism of Jewish life in Germany. Do you share this view? And if so, what are the most essential components of this new*

*German-Jewish pluralism? And is it viable for the long term, or just a temporary trend?*

It's not that bad. It still needs to grow, I think that's true, but it is unmistakably there. For many, this variety in mostly different religious denominations is interesting. Now, you can find everything in Germany. You can find what you need. There are the Liberals, Reform, Orthodox, the secular. I don't think it's temporary, I think that by now it is established. For example Chabad; they have cleverly used gaps in the communities' work and have filled them, and that's why they are so successful. That's going to be the case with the others, as well. Reform is getting better and better. There's a lot going on. And I think that this variety is very good for German Jewry. It isn't as deeply anchored as in the USA, where you have these powerful factions, but that's not possible here. To speak plainly, they didn't have the Shoa. They have a completely different constellation. I think that the new variety in Germany is a great advantage, as long as it doesn't lead to everything unraveling. That the particulars become so strong that it all drifts apart. I don't see that happening now, with all of the different groups, but it's still united, maybe that's too strong a word, but there's still a common denominator. You've got to make sure that it doesn't fall apart and be careful during the conflicts at the beginning. But if there is a common roof that everyone agrees upon, without limiting their religious preferences, then it can be something good that lives up to the term pluralism.

• *Which significance will Israel have for Jewish collective identity in Germany in the future?*

We will have to make distinctions, but Israel will play a large role in Germany in public Jewish consciousness. As a point of reference, the connection between German Jewry, organized German Jewry and Israel is much stronger, which is easily explained by the history, than in the USA, England, France or wherever. It's very different. This is one thing. It will definitely continue, because the German national interest will also continue to evolve and this is a part of that. On the other hand, I think that the significance of Israel as a point of reference will decline a bit in the long-term. For many Russian-speaking immigrants, Israel doesn't play a role. For them it's just a country like any other. From their point of view, it's also clear why this is so. They didn't decide to go to Israel when they immigrated, but rather they chose to come to Germany, much to the chagrin of the Israelis. It is

an avowal. We must give everyone the right to say where they want to live and with whom they have contact. I think among the Russian-speaking immigrants, at the beginning Israel was very important, but I think that's becoming less and less the case. The Middle East conflict plays a role here, but not such a strong one. It's more of a question of attachment, of the attachment that doesn't exist among Russian-speaking immigrants, and that can't exist. That doesn't have anything to do with being anti-Israel or anti-Semitism, but it's just not on their radar screen. It doesn't matter to them.

• *The Middle East conflict itself is not as significant?*

For the Russian Jews it may be more significant if Chelsea continues to be financed by Abramovich. It's just a different way of thinking. I think that plays a role. The Middle East conflict is, for them, at the end of the day, not the center of their universe. And of course there's always a lot going on in this area. The Middle East conflict is a dominating topic for some, Iran is a big deal, the threat of Iran, but that will all become relative over time. I will predict that in 10–20 years Israel will no longer play this central role as a kind of insurance. For German Jews it is still the case that they say they like being in Germany, but if something happens, they still have Israel. That's a strongly anchored belief.

• *It's no secret that many Jews in Germany keep their distance from Jewish community bodies. As far as you know, what are the main reasons for that? What can be done about it?*

I don't want to gloss over the issue. Two hundred thousand contingent refugees who came here as Jews, not all of them are; in all fairness you've got to admit that some of them came on the Jewish ticket. That means that they're happy that they could come here and enjoy the social welfare state and begin a new life, but they said at the very beginning that they don't want anything to do with the community. They've got this stamp in their passport, and as soon as they're finished with the paperwork, they're out of here, that's it. I don't think that's xenophobic to say, but a fact. It's really not explainable in any other way when not even 100,000 remain from 200,000 in the Jewish communities. It can't just be the ethnic question. What else? The secularization, of course. The Russians are coming from a secular world of communism, socialism, dictatorship. They had the Jewish mark in their passport, but some didn't even know what it meant. Then they come into a society that is also undergoing secularization. There is no

reason to annul this; they can continue to lead secular lives. No one demands it of them. They weren't obliged to join the community.

- *It seems that the German distribution policy was counterproductive. Do you agree?*  
I think the government had good intentions, I don't think anyone was acting in bad faith.

- *How would you assess the general cooperation between Jewish communities and organizations and state officials and politicians?*

I think that, by and large, the working together is productive. My impression is that it always depends on the local peculiarities. If there is good chemistry between community chair X and mayor Z, then the cooperation works much better. Then things can be regulated directly. If there's animosity, then it's much more difficult to get funding. My impression is that the states and the localities are prepared to help, there's no general attitude of refusal; concessions are made to support Jewish life. All states have by now concluded state contracts with the Jewish community and have even improved them, and gone further. Of course this is symbolic politics, but not only. The people are also doing it out of conviction, and it's also considered good form to support Jewish life. I think that, in general, it works out quite well. There are, of course, one-offs, where it doesn't work so well, but I think that by and large both sides try hard and that's why it works. It is always difficult when communities are short on money but tend to build nice, large synagogues and centers. The state supports them in this, as a rule. What wasn't taken into account by anyone are the resulting continual costs. Electricity, heating costs, maintenance costs. Then the state says that they already gave five million euros for the building, and now it's up to the community to make it work. The communities are small, the religious tax is decreasing and the influx of new immigrants is also not endless, so they're suddenly standing before a fantastic building, but no one's coming. That's one problem, how to secure the financing for the future costs. Those are real problems that none of those concerned had considered enough beforehand. There are prestige projects from Munich to Flensburg and it's the same thing. People aren't thinking about what will happen later. That's a concern. Both sides think they can build something. The thing is they've also got to plan how it can be financed in five years. Where will the money come from to keep it running? There I'm constantly hearing people say that they hadn't thought of that. It's true that they have a synagogue, but they've got to heat it as well. There was a certain naiveté and that has to change.

- *What do you think about the general non-Jewish German media coverage of events that relate to the Jewish world in Germany?*

They like reporting on scandals; Berlin is an excellent example of this.

- *Berlin also has enough scandals.*

There are enough, but whenever something happens in some Jewish community, then everyone's interested, right up to the *Spiegel* [well-known weekly newsmagazine]. Remembrance events are well covered. But everyday life has been suppressed more and more over the last few years. You read almost nothing about it. The most recent example of this is how little the German media reported on the ordination of the orthodox rabbis, some of whom were educated in Germany. I didn't see any significant articles about it.

It was a big deal in the *Jüdische Allgemeine*, of course, but for the others less so. That supports my hypothesis that they're all fixated on the days of remembrance. I notice this myself in my everyday life. Weeks can go by without a call, which is also OK, but then one of two things can happen; it'll be a day of remembrance and someone will call, "Mr. Böhme, could you please comment for NDR [public radio], how does Jewish life look today?" The other thing is the Middle East conflict. I think that's a shame. Why do I think that's a shame? Because interesting things are happening that are also relevant for the majority society. For example, how can I integrate people? That's a central topic. On the other hand, to be fair, you've got to say that Jews are such a small group in Germany, why should they receive so much attention? That's also unnatural. There I think that a certain quantum of normalcy is missing in the non-Jewish mainstream media reporting. I think that reports can be made beyond the days of remembrance, beyond the memorial culture. Let's show everyone that there's a living Jewry and how it expresses itself!

#### 7. GESA EDERBERG, 4 May 2009, Berlin

- *Rabbi Ederberg, what attracted you to Conservative Judaism, i.e. Masorti?*

I think locating myself within Masorti Judaism was really born out of two considerations: one is the modern, intellectual, very committed approach to Judaism. For me, Reform Judaism was not really an option in terms of commitment to Halakha, and to observance, and also to text-based knowledge. On the other hand, being a woman, Orthodoxy just was also not an option for me.

- *What is your feeling about the prospects of Jewry in Germany, with its unique composition, in the near future and in the long term?*

It is very important to acknowledge the specific mix, just to figure out target groups and the way we can care for them. For example, in the younger generation, let's say 30 and younger, it does not make sense any more to distinguish between Germans and Russians. Education should be in German for this group. It might include providing Russian learning options for the children of the Russian immigrants because they also have to study their mother tongue, but that's a side issue.

In general, that's a target group where we don't need to look at different backgrounds so much. Israelis and Americans also fit into this group, let's say 30–35 years and younger. It's completely different with the older generation. For the older generation, we need language specific educational programs. It doesn't make sense to try to integrate elderly immigrants into German culture. We should just provide them with Jewish knowledge and Jewish information as much as we can.

I would somehow put the focus on the younger generation, students and young families, because the middle generation, of the immigrants especially, are very busy in building their economic lives, and the chance to engage them in community life when they came here, this chance has already been lost. We might have been able to reach them, but that window of opportunity has closed. I would really focus on students, and on young families. Concerning the difference between the short-term and the long-term perspectives, currently we have a huge lack of teachers, educators, rabbis, and educated, committed people. That's something which creates a vicious circle, because by not having these role models, we cannot attract the people choosing a career to become a Jewish educator. One important long-term goal should be to qualify Jewish educators, rabbis, cantors and so on *from Germany*. We cannot start a successful school of Jewish education if we do not get the students. So in the short-term we need to import good educators, and we need to do so widely.

For example, there's this beautiful Lehava project which brings young observant Israel youth and kids to our communities. However, a big problem remains the language barrier. It's just until they can communicate in German, half a year is already gone. This exchange should be expanded. We need more madrichim, more shlichim, and that means we need a lot of preparation and education beforehand. A mentoring system would also be an important step. Another very, very important piece is *educational material*. Even an excellent teacher

will only be mediocre if there are no materials and you don't always have time to prepare new material.

- *How would you describe the current relations between the German-speaking and Russian-speaking Jews?*

This is a very complex issue and it's important to look at it closely and not to generalize it in two or three words. I'm just coming from the Limmud Festival in Berlin which was a celebration of Jewish pluralism, just like in the years before. Obviously, there are cultural differences and the participants might show it in their taste in music or literature. However, people are joining together, and it works.

In daily community life it's not that easy, admittedly. There are obvious tensions in some of the communities, especially when *veterans*, most of whom are themselves immigrants from the generation before, feel pushed to the sidelines by the newcomers. But my general impression is that in the last few years the relations have improved a lot. Both sides have understood that they need each other, and they're trying to work together. For example, in some communities people share a space for the Russian-speaking senior's club and the German-speaking senior's club, and there are also spaces where they mix. Only to focus on the Russian-speaking immigrants does not make sense because the anchor into the larger society is obviously the German-speaking population. To take an example from the community in Weiden:<sup>4</sup> there are very few German-speakers, but the president has always been a German speaker. This will change in the long run, because now the children of the Russian immigrants are German-speakers in every respect, and that's fine.

In the younger generation, people will just intermingle. There is considerable intermarriage between German-speaking Jews of German origin and of Russian origin. In the Jewish schools, mixing works very well. The problem of inter-cultural tension will become obsolete within the next 20 years, obviously.

- *Do you still see a difference in the religiosity in both groups?*

Yes, I would say so. Immigrants from the FSU came with very little religious background, even an anti-religious background, and some of them really regret that. There is a feeling that the damage has been

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<sup>4</sup> The Jewish Community where Rabbi Gesa Ederberg worked before she moved to Berlin.



done and that it cannot be repaired. For example, in Weiden I had a congregant, a Russian Jew in his late seventies, and he said to me, “Gesa, I will attend the synagogue every Shabbat to help to make the minyan, but I’m a complete atheist, and you don’t need to teach me because you will not succeed. Unfortunately, you will not make me a religious person, but please take care of my grandchildren.” I think that’s an amazing step of self-perception and of caring for the grandchildren and their children’s religiosity. And that’s my experience at large. Therefore it would be a great project to work with a grandparents-grandchildren combination, because both have time. Grandparents do care about Jewish continuity for their lives, not for themselves, but for their grandchildren, so that’s an important piece of work. Let me add another thing: there are also Jewish people with an East German background, and very often they find themselves in a coalition with the Russian immigrants in terms of socialist mentality and upbringing. But what I see more and more is also such people coming back to Judaism.

- *How would you describe the current relations between religious and non-religious Jews in Germany?*

Well, it’s a fact that most Jews will not describe themselves as religious. Look at the synagogues on Shabbat, that’s the obvious answer. We need to respect that in a full sense, which means to take a very intellectual approach to religion, and to accept where people stand and where they come from. That’s a main challenge, to really address religion and tradition on a high intellectual level, and also to accept that within the continuum of Jewish identity there is such a thing as non-religious Judaism. Some people might be interested in Jewish education, but not in religion. That’s OK, too.

- *Some people are talking about a new pluralism in German Jewry. Do you see this? And if so, what are its key elements?*

Yes, I share this optimistic view. I see that there is an enormous, growing acceptance in terms of pluralism. There are spaces like the Limud Festival, and I think it’s very important to create and to further develop these spaces. Places where people mingle and atheists will experience how it is if people don’t want to move on Shabbat. And you know the religious will have to tolerate that people walk around on Shabbat smoking. That’s an important point. For Berlin, Jewish pluralism is working quite well. From year to year or even in shorter periods it’s really improving, and the acceptance grows. But Berlin

has also always been pluralistic; it's an exceptional place within the Jewish landscape of contemporary Germany. In smaller places with small numbers of Jewish community members, Jewish pluralism is a big problem. For example, if different congregations and groups in small sized towns in Germany split up into several synagogues' *minyanim*, the problem might be that none of them will have a *minyan*. And to divide resources between fighting congregations, where each has only 150 members, like in some places in Lower Saxony, that's just stupid. That's just idiotic, stupid and I would love somebody to force them together. Obviously it's also very often personal differences disguised as religiosity pluralism, and that's a pity. So there is a clear limit to pluralism. But on the educational, on the national level we need a pluralistic structure and equal access to resources and funding for the different streams. But on the local level, it's much more about communication and getting along with each other, so supervision might be more important than teaching about religiosity pluralism.

• *How far is Israel central to Jewish life in Germany? Do you think its significance will grow or diminish?*

Well, personally I think the connection to Israel is very, very important. People need to feel connected and whenever they think about moving to go to study, to find their next position and so on, Israel is an option to be considered. Well, it wouldn't be my strategy to pitch for aliyah all the time, because that doesn't work. But it's important to create study opportunities and internship opportunities and the like in Israel. I think the German Jewish community has always been pretty Zionist; I'm talking about the post-war period. But what also happened is that many people from the generation that made aliyah in the 1960's, have come back disillusioned, because Israel was the Zionist dream but they had special expectations and the reality was different for them. However, the strong support German Jews feel for Israel has continued. And just in terms of Hebrew, it's really important to have the twinning between Israel and Germany.

• *What would you define as the most essential elements of Judaism today?*

Well, I think connection to Israel is very important, the relationship to Israel. There is also a strong Shoa-related identity here. There's nothing to say about it. I mean that's what it is and that's how it is. What I also see as a very important issue is to search for Jewish answers to general, global questions and challenges in ecology,

global warming, dealing with immigration in general, xenophobia and so on. Such things are done pretty well in America. For example, America's Jews have taken up the Darfur genocide as a very important thing, and that's something I'm missing here. What else is important? Education, equal access to education for everybody, I mean beyond the Jewish community. And within the Jewish community the issue which needs to be addressed and needs to get to a different level is Jewish identity. There's the who-is-a-Jew issue what is currently tearing the Jewish people apart by the different standpoints within the different denominations, and that's a serious problem. Because we either fall apart or there will be a different answer to that.

• *Are the services provided by the Jewish Community sufficient?*

It's not the issue to create any new programs and services, at least not in Berlin. The issue is much more about thinking a little bit more strategically, and always making Jewish content the underlying contextual goal of everything we do. So, the community provides social services and I think it should, and in Berlin it does it pretty well. But to bring in the Jewish component, this is a very important part. It's done, but it could be done even better. In a way, that social welfare, social caring, should really come from a more informed Jewish perspective. A very important focus is to train the already existing personnel, to give the professionals a different feeling, to provide them with another level of reflection, of supervision. Probably that's the main point: evaluation and supervision. To focus on quality and to rethink what our goals are and what our mission is.

• *What is the status of volunteering in the communities? Is more volunteerism necessary?*

I see it differently. For example, the Limmud Festival I mentioned, everything was done completely by volunteers, and it worked. But it's also because Limmud has a voluntary ideology. That's why it works.

In other situations and places, that does not work, and there is a lack of commitment. We should tell the people this, and stimulate an atmosphere of let's give something back. That means some thinking out of the box. However, lack of commitment isn't an overall problem. For example, the social welfare section of the Jewish community of Berlin, they have a book full of volunteers. I mean, there are 100 volunteers.

- *Here in Berlin?*

Yes, here in Berlin. But still, there could be more. There are other things which we are missing, but it's also a question of how to work with volunteers, it's a skill. This is something you can also train. We need volunteer training and counseling. I think the level of volunteerism depends on the structure and communication within the respective community and less on the people. If they are not asked to do something in the right way, why should they?

- *What are the main reasons underlying the fact that some Jews do not become involved in the communities?*

I think one reason is that the communities have very often been too self-sufficient, too established and not welcoming enough. Newcomers, and I have a lot to do with them, often lamented that they went to this synagogue and nobody even said "Shabbat Shalom" or just said "Shabbat Shalom" and nothing beyond that, so they never went back. Which is a legitimate reaction. I also know a really sad case, in which a family with special-needs children have been alienated and are now living somewhere else and are not part of a Jewish community at all.

- *But why?*

Because of prejudice, gossip, people saying how can you bring such a child into the synagogue? Really, really bad attitudes. On the other hand, you simply won't get everybody into the community. People might just not be interested; they may happen to be Jewish, but not be interested. There is a real demand to make Jewish community life more welcoming, and to make it intellectually more challenging.

- *Back to education. You said before that there is not enough personnel and teaching material is lacking. Do you have something specific in mind?*

The so-called Jewish bookshelves are pretty empty of books in German. Very often what's there is too simplistic, too quickly done and problematic. A German Jewish language needs to be developed, like how do you spell things, what marks you use with Hebrew words and so on. I think it's all over the field, but especially urgent with the young children, especially primary school age. For teaching adults and teenagers you can always use English language materials. But materials for the younger children, that's still a very weak point.

I think the most important thing is not to add quantity, but really to focus on quality, to establish programs which train educators, teachers

and to do that in a high quality. And to focus on the German language. We need to do some programs in Russian, that's true, but I think we will need German language materials for the future generations to build community life.

If we want to have a longer impact, to do something sustainable, then it needs to be of high quality. Because, and that's the point, it's not compared to other Jewish programming, but by general programming. That's especially true for the Russian population. They go by educational quality.

#### 8. DAVID GALL, 28 May 2009, Munich

- *Mr. Gall, what are the most important intentions of the German Jewish Web portal Ha Galil?*

At the beginning of the 1990s I already knew how you can publish and influence things in the Internet, how community building and these things work, it was clear that something like that was also needed for Judaism. Ha Galil was also the first site that could be seen as an antidote to the anti-Semitism in this country. We also wanted to bolster the self-confidence of young Jews, to give them something to find, and also to facilitate communication among Jews in general in German-speaking areas, this includes Yeckes in Rio de Janeiro of course, who are looking for a Siddur in German, and now they can find it. It's not really commercial, although, of course, at the beginning there was less on offer. There were also the forums, but the main thing was the informative educational offerings, covering a wide area about religion, Israeli history, Jewish history, Jewish languages, Jewish cinema and so on. Everything that belongs under Jewish education, that's how the religion came into being popular. Right now the emphasis is on current events with reports updated daily, but adapted to our special needs, not just reports that you'll find everywhere else anyway, but reports, maybe on the same topics, but from another angle. From many different points of view, also to make it clear that there are different positions within Judaism.

- *How is Ha Galil financed?*

The current financing isn't purely from donations, there's also a bit from advertising, but most of it is from donations. There are two people who work on Ha Galil full-time and then there are many freelancers

all over and independent of one another in Paris, Budapest and so on, who do mostly work for free, out of necessity still.

- *How many hits are there at Ha Galil per day?*

I don't know off hand. The weekly hits are more significant. There are 400,000 different users a month. Four hundred thousand people, who apparently speak German. And half of those come directly to a topic via a search engine and the other half, the smaller half, comes regularly.

- *What do you see as the major challenges facing Jewry in Germany today?*

As the major Jewish challenge I would say *simply the vitality*. It's not just about the numbers to be found in the community registers and building large synagogues where 2% of all registered members can go occasionally. But it's about a return to vitality, that it will be clear that there are many different Jews with many different interests, and who have something to say about many different things. Such a vitality could allow and encourage a certain creativity which will also be useful in dealing with all of the other problems.

- *Would you say that the time is ripe for a strong, new pluralism within Jewish life in Germany? Or is it still too early?*

The current Jewish pluralism, it's new in any case, the question is if it's strong. Because Jewish life in Germany itself is not strong. It can't be strong. For these reasons it's also necessary to support and also signal a greater strength than what's there, simply to fend off certain opponents. The support that comes is a little one-sided, especially in Berlin, where you have, for example, Chabad Lubavitch. Chabad Lubavitch is generally very strong. They are also viewed as authentic Judaism by many because they are very striking and picturesque to look at. But a vital Judaism is, of course, something a little different. And Chabad Lubavitch also has a political agenda, that's clear.

- *What kind of political agenda?*

Regarding the Middle East conflict, for example. The message of Chabad is clear on this point, there should be no peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

- *But do you think this is a priority issue here, in Chabad's daily work in Germany?*

Just that I see things from the Israeli point of view, when I say left-wing, right-wing, then I usually mean the Israeli coordinates. Left-wing people support the peace process. Rabin's ideas, for example.

And the other side, which is prejudiced against the peace process, includes the Chabad movement.

- *How would you rate the treatment of Jewish organizations and structures by German bureaucracy or authorities?*

I think the Jewish community and the German authorities work well together. I assume that this functions well. Just everything that goes beyond this doesn't work, and Judaism also exists outside of the community. But Judaism isn't something that only exists in the community center or in the synagogue. Judaism is actually more of an attitude towards life, a culture. It can't be limited to these areas and that is something that German authorities have problems with. But the inner-authority level works well. There's also a common interest. No German authority wants to have it said that they do not also take good care of the delicate flower that is Judaism in Germany at the present. They might treat individual Jews badly, but not the officially defined representatives.

- *German Jewry is very busy with Holocaust remembrance and solidarity with Israel. Beyond this wouldn't you agree that there are a lot of fresh, new, innovative projects at least in education and Jewish culture?*

Maybe so, but these are all things that are coming from outside. If something seems to question the established structures, it has to go without support by the leading bodies. If something like Limmud has reached a certain size, then they'll open the community center for a couple of hours. Ha Galil is a similar story. If something has a fresh impetus and continues and is successful, then it will be somehow involved. But these are all things that have come from individuals and been developed further. All of these things are moving in the direction of pluralism. That means that they were naturally *not* initiated within the established structures. I've said myself that normality and Jewish life vitality in Germany can only exist then when Jewish initiatives are seen as Jewish initiatives in Germany, as part of German society and also the support and sponsorship is direct and not over established Jewish institutions.

- *The demand for communication inside and outside the JCs is growing, isn't it?*

In the community the main thing is getting the bulletin together, making sure the people who attend synagogue have a version in the language they need, that there are some yarmulkes around. In larger communities they might need an old people's home or a kindergarten. Each community does this for itself.

But the importance of Internet use is growing here, as well. The main thing, of course, is Jewish education, which is a value in and of itself. It's useful to those who have it because they are enriched. However, mostly in the area of discourse, Judaism lives from debates. The Talmud is nothing but a protocol of an enormously long debate. The big conflict was about the writing it all down, the Oral Torah, because it was forbidden to copy it because things become set after having been written down. The written word carried more weight than the spoken word. On principle, this debate has to continue, also using the medium of the Internet, which easily lends itself to open debate.

9. MIKHAIL GOLDBERG, 6 May 2009, Berlin

- *Mr. Goldberg, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing Jews today in Germany?*

Judaism itself, or the people in this group. Because Judaism in Germany is very heterogeneous; the different groups have different interests and abilities and customs and not necessarily the debating style needed to be able to solve problems amicably. Secondly, due to the state financing, the effect has been created that German Jewry is delicate and vulnerable.

- *Delicate and vulnerable?*

So to speak. The communities which have to organize their own community lives are a bit immune to small problems. The Jewish communities in Germany don't have this. They either get money from some source, and then they use it as they please. When they don't get any money then they don't function. When they don't get enough money then they don't pay what's really necessary for the community, but spend money on things that aren't that necessary.

- *So the Jewry here has to sort itself out first?*

Yes, of course.

- *How significant is Israel for Jewish life in Germany today? Do you think that the connection to Israel is getting weaker or stronger?*

Israel is important. I can't say whether its importance is becoming weaker or stronger here. I think it's always been important and it will remain important. Recently new nuances have been added, due to all of the various military activities and social opinion, but in general I'd



call it an identification point. There is a lot of room for improvement in the way Israeli politics presents itself in the media.

- *You are strongly involved in Jewish networks in Germany. What are your main motivations to do so?*

Firstly, I'm not a religious person, but I am interested in Judaism. Secondly, I saw the possibility to more or less help a particular group of people in everything; in finding themselves, integration or their personal problems.

- *How interested are Jews in Germany today in community service programs and in Jewish education?*

A lot depends on the people themselves. If the program is interesting, modern, and well-made, then it's well-received. If it's offered by unqualified people then it's not well-received.

- *Do you think that there are enough educational programs?*

When we're talking about Berlin, then there are even too many and there are very many things that are offered twice, that overlap; there's no well thought out system. If you take *jüdisches Berlin*<sup>5</sup> and look at the calendar and see how many lectures about the history of Judaism take place every week, there are at least 10 lectures at different places on completely different topics. And this could be good pluralism but it's just the same thing. For example, at Passover there are ten lectures on Passover, and all ten are mediocre. And five to fifty people come to each one.

- *What do you think are the most urgent measures needed to improve Jewish immigrants' integration into Jewish communities in Germany?*

I can't really do much with the phrase "integration into Jewish communities." The biggest problem when talking about integration and what the federal government considers to be integration is that no one has a clear idea of what exactly they're talking about. How can you integrate 90% into 10%?

- *What would be necessary to motivate the migrants to commit to the existing structures, the communities and other Jewish organizations?*

I don't think you can control that from above. This is possible in the communities when the leadership has the right quality to work not

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<sup>5</sup> The Jewish Community Journal of the JC Berlin (also a monthly).

for themselves, but for the community. When the community board and chair have the community's interest at heart and not their own, then they can also motivate people to get active. If the board is just thinking about itself, and tries to exclude everyone else from participating or sharing, whether it be money or information or whatever, then of course it won't work. Then there's dissatisfaction, squabbling. If everything, and this works particularly well in small communities, when everything is discussed and it's not always the same people in control and the community chair tries to have someone new take over each project, then it slowly starts to work. Another difficulty is the idea behind what Mr. Kramer<sup>6</sup> meant when he said that the Russian Jews are still too far from leadership positions. However, we have lots of examples to show this is wrong; for example, the community of Bochum-Herne-Hattingen.

- *How would you describe the general attitude from the side of the non-Jewish population?*

Either disinterest or negative interest. Naturally, as the Jüdische Zeitung reports, there's also positive interest among church people, educational leaders, but this is the minority.

- *What do you think about the German media coverage of events that relate to the development of Jewish life in Germany?*

Very one-sided. Either they report about the holidays and high holy days or if someone's involved in a scandal, and this scandal will be more or less covered and not always competently, but OK. Only very rarely will there be any correct research when reporting about the content of community life. In the best case the community chair has been spoken to, and the official view is taken, but only rarely do they try to get to the bottom of the story. And that's also understandable, because it's not really of the utmost importance for the majority of readers, but really competent reporting is rare.

- *What do you think of the development of Jewish media in Germany?*

There is no independent Jewish media in Germany now. No chance. It would be really, really difficult. The Jüdische Zeitung showed that the interest is there to be competitive, but especially in these times of economic crisis, if only one paper is supported by the Zentralrat

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<sup>6</sup> General Secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

(Central Council) which gives a lot of money to a rag like *Zukunft*<sup>7</sup>, which translates three-week old articles from the community, you can't talk about real competition.

10. *JOHANNES HEIL, 8 June 2009, Heidelberg*

- *Professor Heil, what do you consider the current major challenges/difficulties facing the Jewish communities and organizations in Germany?*

As you know the majority of Jewish communities consist of a Russian speaking majority now, most of them immigrants from the Former Soviet Union who came here during the 1990s. Some of them have a very strong religious consciousness, but a vast number of them lost all contact with the Jewish religion and tradition during Soviet times. The basics have to be imparted to create a European Jewish identity in the community. It is important to have qualified personnel at the local level, in order to form stable Jewish communities, and first of all to find a way how to involve more young Jewish people.

- *You were the Rector of the University of Jewish Studies in Heidelberg for two years. What is your general experience with German public?*

Well, we have full support from the federal government, the local government and the University of Heidelberg. Some have the impression that official policy is simply to provide financial support in an attempt to try and repair what happened to the Jews in Germany in recent history, at least to repair symbolically, and that they would actually not intend to do that much. On the other hand, there seems to be a kind of conviction that our university can give something back, not only to the narrow issues of Jewish communities and towards Jewish and non-Jewish religious forums, but also to play an important role in social, political and cultural life.

- *What are the current proportions?*

The share of Jewish students has grown during the last few years but still hasn't yet reached 50 percent. And not all the non-Jewish students are Christians. We have a lot of students here who are without any religious affiliation, especially among those from East Germany, and

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<sup>7</sup> Small journal of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

there are also students with a Muslim background. So you see, our university is definitely not fixed on a Jewish microcosm.

- *What are the proportions between Jewish students originally from Germany and Jewish students with migration background?*

It's rather a question how you want to define it. For example, we have many Jewish students here who came with their families from another country but who have been living here for a long time. We can even say they're already a new generation of Jewish students. All in all, we have fourteen different nationalities here among our students. There are also a few Israelis; we have students from China and Egypt. I have doctorate students from Tunisia, and there are Americans. The majority of the Jewish students come from Eastern Europe and have a Russian-speaking background. However, many of them received their schooling in Germany.

Generally, we welcome each student who is going to study at our university. Of course, then there's the question about what to do with the degree in their future professional life. And here we have two major directions. One group of the graduates tries to enter the field of research, and the other group is prepared for professional work in the Jewish communities. I can't say that all of the Jewish students direct themselves to the community oriented programs. Some of them are more motivated toward research. And, indeed, we feel obliged to fulfill this role as well, to be a center of Jewish studies in Europe, if not *the* center in Jewish studies in Europe, and that means also being expected to provide a major contribution to international academic life and the scientific world.

- *What about the graduates who go on to work in a Jewish community, what kind of positions are they in?*

They're working as teachers, community workers, administration workers and in the future maybe also as rabbis. Aside from this we have also a program component for *hazanut*, so there are different possibilities inside the same program. Teachers, *hazanim* and future community administration workers all get a basic religious education, an academic religious education, but also on specific community-oriented issues. For example, those who're aiming for a future community administration job are then provided with classes in accounting and public law as well, but these are logically not subjects for students who aim to start a research career.

- *The students who prefer the research world, what do they tend to go into?*

It's up to them and to our program, of course. Some fields where we combine lecturing and research are, for example, Jewish history, Bible studies, Talmud, art history, or Israeli literature, just to mention a few.

- *How many students are currently studying at the university, and how many people are on the staff?*

At the moment, there are about 150 students. The university has eight different chairs. Aside from this we are permanently working with fifteen teachers and five lecturers, the latter, for example, to guarantee a high quality and quantity of Hebrew language teaching. Of course, you have to add the university rabbi and a few clerks in administration.

- *This new idea of a Jewish Academy in Germany, does your university support it unreservedly?*

Yes, why not? I think we are past the times where we thought in terms of concurrence. There is plurality now. There are different Jewish interests and different needs, and the more necessary things we can now develop in cooperation with one another. There is no single institution that would be able to cover all the new educational demands. I want to emphasize that *we* are not a rabbinical seminary, our profile includes community orientation on the one hand, and research orientation on the other. Other centers and institutions do it differently, with their own focus and demands, and thus it makes a lot of sense to cooperate. So, I am optimistic that we can complete each other and provide real variety in the future.

- *Can you say something about future plans of your university?*

Let me mention intensified cooperation with several universities abroad, and here especially in the form of student exchange programs with the Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva and with the University of Graz, but also with other institutions in Europe and in America, which enables a *network Masters program*. Such a network permits students to go from one university to the other, but still remain based in Heidelberg.

Now we are also in talks with the University of Heidelberg about a school which focuses on relations between Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

- *What additional impacts could be set by the University of Jewish Studies, straight into the Jewish world?*

There are also ideas to develop the University of Jewish Studies much more as a place where Jewish students find their center and their opportunities even when they are not enrolled here. We think its time

to establish a Jewish kindergarten here in the old city for all the Jewish parents studying or living in Heidelberg. We have a kosher kitchen here, a kosher cafeteria, a university rabbi, and a good Jewish background in general. This could be the basis for starting a Hillel Student Center here, maybe reaching the people in the wider Main-Neckar-area from Heidelberg to Karlsruhe and Darmstadt.

11. *WALTER HOMOLKA, 28 May 2009, Berlin*

• *Professor Homolka, as a leading rabbi in Germany and as the rector of the Abraham Geiger College at Potsdam University, where do you see the greatest difficulties or greatest challenges for Jewry in Germany today?*

I think the single most difficult issue is will we be able to offer a meaningful explanation to all those who have immigrated to Germany as to why they should associate with the Jewish community. The primary initiative was social. People needed help to set up housing and to find a job and maybe also to mingle with other immigrants, but that, of course, cannot continue to be a positive stimulus of identity for the next couple of years. So we are already very late in providing a meaningful framework for the next generation that will lead second-generation immigrants to becoming more engaged in Jewish communities, and not only for social reasons, but also for religious or educational reasons. I think a part of the solution is the rabbinical seminary [Abraham Geiger College], because, of course, you need change agents in the congregation, professionals that can develop Jewish identity from the perspective of our tradition and maybe offer a stimulus for such an identity in a contemporary fashion. We have experienced that the cantorial program at the college has been particularly helpful because not many immigrants see themselves immediately as a rabbi, which can also be explained by a certain lack of role models. But many candidates are musically inclined, and therefore we have a real run on the cantorial program. Both rabbinical and cantorial tracks provide professionals who will be able to serve as change agents in Jewish congregations and communities.

The third aspect is the “Ernst-Ludwig-Ehrlich-Studienwerk” [scholarship foundation]. We are in the fortunate situation of being able to organize an institution that looks after young secondary school graduates who are likely to become the lay leaders of Jewish communities in the future. We can provide them with the incentive of a scholarship; in return they will have to attend Jewish programs, e.g. summer

academies. They will be challenged by interesting people and projects in which they can evolve. I hope that through this incentive mechanism the scholarship holders will identify more closely with Jewish thought.

- *From the viewpoint of the communities of the Union of Progressive Jews, do you find generational differences when it comes to interest in community involvement?*

First of all I think there's no difference between Union congregations and those of the Central Council. There is a great interest in the elderly population because they see it as a safe haven and a focus forum for their social contacts. It's not necessarily a religious urge, but a social and cultural one. We have great difficulties in getting young people into the religious instruction programs, and I must say that some very pessimistic voices assume that we may only retain 3–5% of the immigrants in the midterm. Which means that of the 120,000 only 20,000 or 30,000 will remain in Germany, in which case there is no Jewish renaissance, but merely a small firework.

- *To clarify, you mean just 3–5% from all generations?*

Eventually, when the first generation will have died, only 3–5% will remain. This means that we have not yet found a mechanism in the Jewish communities to interest the younger generation. I think one argument can be that, for example, we do not have young professionals who can relate to families, young rabbis who also have children and young families. Currently we only have 70–80 year-old people, and this definitely has to change. I am sure that one of the next issues that we have to target is youth work, and we need to find independent operators. We need organizations that can provide such camp experiences for the 10–17 year olds, and then Limmud can do something for the 16–30 year olds. With rabbinical and cantorial training, and with the scholarship foundation, we can then provide an additional tool to bring all those who have become interested in their earlier years more solidly into the Jewish community. In the whole program that I have described, what we are missing most definitely is a mechanism to interest the 8–20 year olds. One good program is “Jung und Jüdisch” [Young and Jewish, connected with the Union of Progressive Judaism in Germany] where I can see that the 17–25 year olds are very, very active and I think one should copy and widen that experience. We need to find another step, a basic program, and I think a camp experience can be very valuable for younger Jews.

• *A couple of years ago we had a broad discussion of language differences and cultural barriers between German speaking and Russian speaking Jews in Germany. Do you think these problems are getting better now?*

I don't think that these problems are diminishing at all. Well, I have very positive examples for the integration of Russian leaders. They are successful and absolutely unproblematic. But there were also problems mentality-wise; for example, that Russians are used to having everything organized for them. And they find it awkward that they should suddenly take an active role and responsibility. Our students, for example, never say, "You know, I have a problem here or there," but they always paint a very positive picture, so a clearer analysis is necessary to find out whether they actually have problems or not. They would not air these problems themselves. So there are mentality differences. I don't think that they are getting better, but I do think that within the next generation that has been educated here, we will see a great improvement on this specific level. But I also think that immigrants are still underrepresented in Jewish leadership positions, e.g. in the Central Council. The current representation is not really influential enough to shape the policy of the Central Council in a significant way. This is why I think the main focus of support and stimulus for the Jewish community in Germany can be found in the creation of independent change agents.

• *Undoubtedly the communities are working on programs of strengthening Jewish identity of the average members. In this context do you think that the significance of Israel, as a modern Jewish state and as a contemporary center of Judaism, will remain the same, or that Israel may even increase its importance in the collective identities of the communities here?*

Looking at the fact that it is difficult to get the younger generation involved, one way of getting people interested is, as I mentioned earlier, the camp experience. Another way could be a program like Birth-right Israel, the American program that provides a direct experience of the state of Israel for its participants. There are a lot of Russians in Israel, and I think one could focus on the fact that this is also an interesting source of identity. So far, however, I find that the topic of identifying with Israel is being neglected. Our experiences with Birth-right Israel in Germany show that a lot can be achieved, especially when followed up back home.

I think it would be a necessary component of youth work to integrate the experience of two-three weeks in Israel. If one had a structured



approach, a camp experience could be provided for the 8–14 year olds, a camp in Israel for the 15–18 year olds and then youth activities much like those practiced in America. These activities have to be conducted with a long-term perspective.

I think projects are also best done independently. They need to have self-governing structures and one should not have the feeling that they are yet another group of programs with a top-to-bottom approach. We should establish a bottom up approach, and here Limud is also an interesting experience. I think everything we do needs to be judged by how much responsibility people will be able to take in the Jewish community.

- *There was a comprehensive survey in the Jewish community in Berlin whose results were published in the community journal Jüdisches Berlin in 2003. According to the survey, 52% of the respondents considered the JC primarily as a place for religious ceremonies, whereas the other respondents valued things like social and entertainment activities. Do you see a problem in this constellation of religious and non-religious interests?*

If I look at the figures, I would assume the interest of 52% of the immigrants in religious issues is highly exaggerated. About four years ago the number of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs that were held in the Jewish community of Berlin was so low that only a quarter of the kids eligible actually had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Since more engaging rabbis took office in Berlin, this figure is now rising.

- *A quarter of the registered members?*

Yes. That's very low. Therefore 52% with religious interests seems to me to be completely exaggerated. I would say the share of religious interests is probably 12–20%. But then, what does religious interest mean? I think my experience of the debate of the denominationalism in Judaism in the last fifteen years has shown that people, especially Jewish people, don't identify themselves by saying, I'm a faithful Jew. They identify themselves culturally. Our attempt should be to say to the FSU immigrants, for example, Passover is exactly your experience. You went out of Egypt into a new country, and now you have positive and negative experiences.

By studying the tradition of the rabbis, one can create a dedication in these people to say you know, this experience of transience, uncertainty, and redefinition is a Jewish experience. Then there is also more room to use other forms that can be employed when establish-

ing a dialogue with other religions. But if you are absolutely unable to express yourself in Jewish terms, because you have not acquired the necessary language for this, I think most people would say I'm not in touch with my Jewish tradition. I think that Judaism does not expect an expression of faith, saying I have a personal relationship with God. The urgent question is whether you live your life according to the three dimensions that are on offer—which are social action, Torah study, and prayer. Certainly the social action aspect, especially in youth work can be a very powerful mode of change and of creating loyalty to the Jewish people. You can always study even if you don't believe in God; you can still be interested in the Jewish tradition and can study Jewish texts. At the University in Potsdam we have 400 non-Jewish students who study Judaism. So obviously there must be something in it.

Then there is the third aspect, that of prayer, that of course can also build on the youth experiences. I find it an interesting observation that in youth work one instills interest in the spiritual side through night walks, sensitivity, or guitar playing at the lake; whereas you actually need to enable a knowledge of other dimensions that make you more literate in expressing yourself in religious terms. If you have no literacy for these dimensions you cannot expect that people will use or even understand this language. It's something that you have to get used to. In our discussion we have built a kind of modular prototype of how one can go about helping the current calamity, and therefore I would say the bad news is that we have only 20% who are actually expressing a religious interest. We have perhaps only 3% who will remain in the communities if we don't do anything substantial within the next 10–20 years. Given the fact of how much money the German government has pumped into immigration and integration, we will have lost millions and millions and millions of euros for a small percentage of Jews that have actually stayed in Germany. If we carry on the way we are now, within ten years, we might have as many Jews left as we had in 1989.

- *That would be horrible.*

It would be indeed, and we can only change this with a structured approach to youth work in the way that I described. The trouble is that any activity must be almost totally financed by the organizations because there is very little that these people are willing or able to contribute.

But we have to offer people professional choices so that they get committed to their communities. Again, I think the leading argument is responsibility. As long as we're not prepared to shift responsibility to the Russians, to the majority of our congregants, we will not succeed.

12. *KÜF KAUFMANN, 17 June 2009, Leipzig*

• *Mr. Kaufmann, there's an obvious trend in German Jewry now towards more pluralism and diversity. What can you say, in this context, about Leipzig?*

I've said it once and I'll say it again: Leipzig is not a battlefield where people fight each other because one is orthodox and the other is Liberal and the third is clueless because they're from a country where there wasn't any sensibility for religion. Leipzig is a fertile ground where all plants can grow. Look at our logo! You see our coat of arms, and it looks like something to do with Saxony, and then a Magen David underneath to show the Jewishness and a bouquet above for Jewish unity. There are different flowers and plants together. It says every Jew is unique and can find his or her own way within Judaism, but we belong together.

• *Are you cooperating in the infrastructure with other Jewish institutions in Leipzig? Lauder has the Talmud Torah center here. Are you working together?*

We aren't doing anything against each other. The Israelite Religious community in Leipzig is the only Jewish community here in Leipzig. And this will remain the case. Everyone else is our good, strong, or not so strong partner. Of course Lauder is here, they have helped us enormously. The Lauder Foundation is continuing to work here in Leipzig. But this is the Jewish community in Leipzig with support from Lauder, from the Zentralrat, from the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany [ZWSt], and if Chabad, then also Chabad. They [Chabad] were also working on the Jewish kindergarten in Leipzig, but they quit. The financial situation changed and they quit from one day to the next. It was a difficult trial for us, but we managed to keep the kindergarten afloat financially. I hope that in the future we will continue to be able to do so, but it's difficult because we don't have a budget for the kindergarten, and also not for this social center. That's why we need partners, partners who support us and our projects. We are looking for partners. Fortunately the Rothschild Foundation supports our cultural projects this year, but next year, we don't know.

- *Where do you see the biggest gap in the educational programs? Where do you need the most support?*

I think we need more support for projects that already exist or have been planned for Jewish culture and tradition. Because these tracks or windows will allow us to reach those people more easily who are still distant from religion and have unfounded fears of religion. People who think to themselves that they're Jewish, but don't want to join because they don't like the restrictions. We need to show people that Judaism has a 5,000 year old tradition and can adapt to modern life, and that it in no way would stand in the way of success. With such programs, we could really reach these Jewish people. I think that it's also important, through the cultural events, lectures, podium discussions, seminars, to show ourselves open to non-Jews as well. We are not a closed sect, nor have we ghettoized ourselves. We are open for everyone; we have the courage to debate issues with people. We are able to hear different opinions. I'm talking about people with a positive approach, not hostile. Such projects that are dealing with culture and tradition are also dealing with religion anyway. They are important; this is a large gap that needs support.

- *How far will Israel remain a central element in the activities and the collective identity of the Jewish communities in Germany?*

Personally, I think that if nothing stands in our way, it will become even more intensive. It won't decrease. I think our community in Leipzig is doing a lot in the direction of working together with the Israeli side. Last year I was in Israel twice with a Leipzig delegation including the mayor. Our goal was establishing a twin city. It will work out with Herzliya. In our social center we're opening an office for the permanent representative from Herzliya to Leipzig, a kind of cultural attaché. An office that is within our competence, it was my initiative. The city of Leipzig strongly supported the idea and now it's being worked out that we will have a permanent exchange of people from all age groups, and artists in the center. There will be projects, concerts, exhibits. But also the city of Leipzig, for fifteen years or almost fifteen years, has been inviting people from all over the world who are from Leipzig, including the "Association of Former Leipzig Residents in Israel." These people who had to leave this town as sad children, return as happy children, because they can once again see their hometown. They see it through a child's eyes. They are the best ambassadors for Leipzig in Israel. They're fantastic.

- *So the twin city project is on with Herzliya?*

Yes. Every community member has relatives in Israel, almost every family visits Israel once every two years. They visit Israel and return here. The purely Zionist idea, that all Jews should live there, is foreign to me. I also don't think that all Catholics should live in Vatican City. I'd rather have even more Jews living all over the world. Of course Israel is an important point in our consciousness, but where a person lives, thank God, we have the possibility to decide ourselves. Not like in Tsarist times, when we needed to live in the Pale of Settlement or even worse, in the ghetto. Of course we, as Jewish people, look in the direction of Israel with concern and heartache about what is happening there. And of course everyone wants there to be peace. Unfortunately, the powerful don't have any vested interest in there being peace. But this is also a personal problem for me. Of course I'm on Israel's side, of course I care what happens there, of course I want peace. I want the world to read about Jews with delight, not that some soldiers have shot some Palestinian child, or the other way around that some terrorists have killed some Israeli children. However, it is not uncommon that we are mixed up with Israeli citizens here.

- *What do you mean by that?*

Let's take an example. If I voted here, in Germany, for the liberals and when the liberals didn't get into power, then I know why. They didn't receive enough votes. Then I'm in the position, completely legal, no one kills me, no one is screaming at me that I should be ashamed of myself. When I criticize the government, it doesn't mean that I'm criticizing Germany, but just the government. But I don't vote in Israel. I'm here. I'm not an Israeli citizen, although people often come to me and say: "*What are you people doing there?*" I'm not doing anything there. I also don't vote there. I don't even have the minimal influence of being a voter. Nonetheless someone comes and then I have to defend and support everything in Israel. That's a little strange. I'm taken hostage by Israeli politics.

- *As an Israeli outpost...*

Yes, an Israeli outpost. I saw a TV program, it was really embarrassing, not just anyone was sitting there, but former Minister Norbert Blüm, a clever person, and Friedman [a German Jewish journalist] was there as well. Blüm was constantly attacking Friedman: "You people have done this and that there..." And Friedman answered:

“Wait a minute, I haven’t done anything. And who is meant by ‘you people’? The Jewish community of Frankfurt where I’m a member? I want to clarify...” And then the same discussion again... It makes one nervous.

13. *CHARLOTTE KNOBLOCH, 19 June 2009, Munich*

• *Dr. Knobloch, what do you feel are the greatest challenges and/or problems facing Jewry in Germany today?*

One major challenge is the integration of the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union into the Jewish communities and the majority society. The Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*) and the Jewish communities offer support programs for the new immigrants where they can learn German and more about the Jewish faith, as well as offering concrete help for problems occurring in everyday life. These programs are widely accepted. Another major challenge is the fight against latent anti-Semitism, which has long established itself in the center of society. Today anti-Semitism is often expressed in codes or disguised as criticism of Israel. Here I would like to stress that objective criticism of Israeli politics is completely legitimate; one-sided sweeping and biased judgment of Israel within the Middle East conflict is not.

• *How would you describe the current relations between Russian speaking Jews and German speaking Jews in the communities?*

The relations between Russian and German speaking Jews are good. In the past few years there has been a coming together, also due to contacts in the communities, or volunteer projects where Russian and German speaking community members worked together. Learning the German language has also facilitated the process of getting to know each other and allows understanding on a deeper level.

• *Which measures that improve the integration of the Jewish immigrants into the communities and Jewish organizations in Germany remain urgently needed?*

The most important integration measures for the Jewish immigrants are learning German and strengthening their Jewish identity. The Central Council and the Jewish communities offer a variety of programs that will continue to serve as the main integrative measures in the future.

- *How serious is the much discussed problem of winning over the younger generation for a continued commitment to community work?*

In German society as a whole there are young people who are more socially committed than others. The situation is no different in the Jewish communities.

The communities try to forge a bond with young people with attractive programs and incentives. When they can see that their commitment is valued and that they can contribute their own ideas, then they have more of an incentive to be active in the community.

- *There are those who are talking about a new pluralism of Jewish life in Germany. Do you share this view? And if so, what does this mean for the concept of the United community in the long term?*

Both variety and diversity have belonged to Jewish tradition for centuries. Pluralism is nothing new. In a certain sense the pluralism within Judaism is part of the concept of the United community. For the orthodox-leaning united communities in Munich and Upper Bavaria, for example, every community member is welcome to use our facilities such as the school, kindergarten, or cultural center. Everyone is welcome to attend the religious services, regardless of how they practice Judaism as long as they follow the Halakha. We have had a positive experience with this practice and will continue it in the future.

- *Will the connection to Israel continue to play a central role in the Jewish communities in Germany as it has over the last 60 years? Or do you see changes in this relationship on the horizon?*

Israel will continue to play an important role for the Jewish communities in Germany in the years to come. Israel is the only refuge for the Jewish people in the diaspora, and will always keep its borders open during an existential threat. We can count on Israel, and Israel can rely on our solidarity, especially in hard times when public opinion has conspired against Israel and self-proclaimed do-gooders stigmatize the Jewish state as the scapegoat in the Middle East conflict.

- *To what extent do most Jews in Germany consider themselves to be a part of German society and nation? How will this feeling develop in the future?*

Those Jewish citizens who were born here and grew up with the German language and culture consider themselves to be a part of German society, as Germans of the Jewish faith. We give those who have immigrated here the feeling that they've found a new home in Germany. We also shouldn't forget that much has changed for the better in the

60 years since the Federal Republic of Germany was founded. As opposed to the early years, German *raison d'état* is now committed to the responsibility resulting from the Shoa and to carry out political action accordingly.

- *Many Jews in Germany seem to keep their distance from the Jewish communities and organizations. What do you think are the main reasons for this? What do you think can be done to change this situation?*

First of all we should give the Central Council of Jews in Germany credit for uniting almost 120,000 Jews from 107 communities. There are still too many Jewish people who do not feel that they belong to any community or organization. However, I'm hopeful that we can win them over by offering attractive programs.

- *What do you think of German media covering Jewish life here in the country, worldwide and concerning events taking place in Israel?*

The reporting about the new community centers and synagogues that were built in the last few years was particularly good. Another positive development is the trend that Jewish programs have become established brands in non-Jewish media. Developments in Jewish life worldwide do not receive much attention, with the exception of the threat to Jewish life by anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism. But in general German media reports very one-sidedly about Israel and the Middle East conflict. Through emphasis and the choice of content it's subtly suggested that the state of Israel is solely at fault for the Middle East conflict. Inner-Palestinian conflicts, anti-Semitism in the Arab world and the fact that the Israeli population is constantly vulnerable to a terrorist attack are all largely ignored. Positive news from Israel is generally found in small print on the margin. Negative headlines are on the front page in bold print. The one-sided and often tendentious or ideologically colored coverage by German and Western media plays a major role in the one-sided picture of Israel found in German society.

#### 14. MICHAEL KOGAN, 12 June 2009, Düsseldorf

- *Rabbi Kogan, you're working as a Conservative rabbi in a United community which is actually orthodox...*

I haven't closed myself off to the movement here; I am doing everything that's going on here. More like the Liberal orthodox. I haven't had any problems with how things are here.



- *Where are the greatest challenges, difficulties or problems in the communities in Germany which need to be overcome?*

If we're talking about German communities, even though we call them German, the majority of those coming are new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. These people who attend the community have very different cultural needs. I would say the problems are in human relations. If I'm talking about the board or the community leadership, those are the people who were either born here, or came here after the war, or many years ago. But the people who come, who belong to the community are new immigrants. Regardless of the fact that everyone's Jewish, whether Russian or German, they have absolutely different mentalities.

- *You would say that both groups are under a single roof of the community, but they coexist?*

Parallel to one another.

- *And that's in every age group? Even with the young people?*

I hope that in the meantime the situation is a little different for the young people. In our youth center or student unions, that's another mentality. But these relations take place outside the community. I mean that the young people who come here, they use this community as a building, as a space or event location. They come here to put on things and aren't community members in this sense. They don't live a Jewish life every day. This is a meeting place for them. They come here to events, but don't live as community members to change anything.

- *What can be done about it? Do you have any idea?*

First, I think that the community leadership and board should realize that this is a real problem and a serious problem; that the young people are not committed to the community. The community board is made up of people who have been elected. You probably need to search among the young people for those with ambition who want to have these positions in the future. There should be younger board members to speak with young people, students, not necessarily the same age, but younger. They want this location, not to use the community, but to call it their own. It doesn't have to be in this religious direction. I think that the young people should also find a connection to Israel as well and should participate and establish themselves in these different events; cultural, sports, other things, and should find

something there for themselves. Religious, as well, but that's not the main thing.

- *Do you see a healthy pluralism developing in Jewish life in German, or is it simply too early and rather weakens the entire community?*

What I'm now saying is absolutely just my personal opinion. Of course the various movements within Judaism are on something of a confrontation course with one another. Each movement thinks it's the main one, and unfortunately sometimes it is not so good to the others. I think for the future, for our religion in general, regardless whether in Germany or in Israel or England, that is not very good. I don't think it's good. There are little fights in our Judaism; that's not good, that's not tolerant. They can't even come together at one table, and that's bad.

- *Does that mean that the negative aspects of pluralism outweigh its positive aspects?*

Yes, of course. People are conducting small wars—that's worse. That there is pluralism, that's not bad. If you say that this synagogue is orthodox, what does that mean? That means either the rabbi, or someone from the community leadership is orthodox, because practically all the others, almost 90%, are atheists because they're from the Soviet Union, because they're new immigrants. But I think that the people who are in the leadership; they are the ones involved in the conflicts, not the normal members. The members have no idea what's going on. Just the people in power.

- *How can you make the community more attractive for those who don't have any connection to the communities?*

I'm talking about the second generation. Probably the second generation will have an easier time of it, that means the children of the immigrants and the children of the veterans; they will have an easier time of it and will live together within the community. If we're talking about the second generation, when our children enter the community, what we've already talked about, that first we need to give these young people reasons. Cultural, and so on. Then these people will most likely discover something within themselves that connects them to Jewish life or the community.

- *Is Israel a very important part of young people's Jewish identity?*

I know that there are many different programs from the Sochnut (Jewish Agency) and so on. There they have young people who go to Israel to study or work and get to know different things and they

have a connection to Israel. Some of them go for a month, some for up to six months.

- *What Jewish educational programs would you say are missing here in Düsseldorf?*  
What I would say as a rabbi is that here in Düsseldorf there's no school for our kids from kindergarten till graduation, a secondary school. There is a connection when they attend the Jewish kindergarten and the Jewish elementary school, but when they go to secondary school with Germans this connection isn't so large anymore. This relates back to what I've been saying, the basis of this important connection for young people must be a normal elementary school and secondary school. A secondary school emphasizing the Jewish religion with Jewish education, history, languages, and then the children are connected and know that they are community members.

- *You mean there are good things on offer but only up to the fourth or sixth grade [in Düsseldorf]?*  
We're starting to see this happen; that the children are slowly leaving. There are, of course, different Jewish summer camps, but not so many, and then the connection gets lost.

#### 15. *SERGEY LAGODINSKY, 11 June 2009, Berlin*

- *Mr. Lagodinsky, what would you say are the main challenges and main difficulties to be overcome for Jews in Germany in the short-run and in the long-run?*

In the short run, creating competent leadership, definitely. There is a gap and a lack of Jewish politically savvy and politically effective leaders who understand the community as well. In the long run the main task is keeping identity, the Jewish identity.

- *In many places we've been told that it's very hard to get young FSU immigrants committed to continuing Jewish community involvement. You have worked for several Jewish institutions in Germany. Do you agree with this assessment?*

Yes. I see the problem, I understand the problem. I think the problem is not the people, but the ways to recruit them and to work with them. The problem is the overall image of the community. Why should people come and commit? I mean, they live here, they're well integrated into German society; basically we're losing these families. They have to pay extra taxes if they join the community; this is one of the big problems for them.

• *So you would say this is a natural trend, also occurring in France and Great Britain? It's not a specific German problem?*

No, I think it's a specific German problem. I don't know the situation in France or in Great Britain. But I know that here the community is very bureaucratic, and in many cases does not have the means or the imagination to work with them. It's a very closed community. For example, if there are younger fathers who outmarried, they're automatically excluded. Why should a young father be a member of this community and pay the extra taxes for it if his children are not accepted as full-fledged members of the community? So it all hangs together. Also there are no ways of looking at the American experience. How can we bring programs from the United States to Germany? This is what we are trying to do with Rabbi Gesa Ederberg's help here, who is very open to American ways of recruitment and we're hoping that we can use some of her techniques.

• *How would you describe the current relations between religious and non-religious Jews in Germany? Are there problems, or is there an acceptance of one another?*

I mean in cities like Berlin, the secular-religious relations are not a problem. It's actually quite normal. But in cities like Kassel, where I come from and where my brother is now, I think that there isn't a broad acceptance in the community. I mean the rabbi there is the one who's orthodox and there are a couple of people who are orthodox, but otherwise everyone is Russian. And I think it doesn't matter what means you employ trying to get them interested. Many Russians have a problem with reform movements, they have a problem with female rabbis, but these are questions of working with them and educating them and showing them the plurality of their Jewish life.

• *Would you say that most Russian Jews who came here, and who have started to really be interested in religion, turn to orthodox Judaism? This seems to be the situation in Israel, for example.*

I think if you don't work with them, yes. But you have to work with them to explain the beauty of the diversity. And you see this in Berlin, actually, where many Russians go to Rabbi Teichtal [Chabad Center], but not so many go to Gesa Edelberg [Masorti], or to Oranienburger Strasse [egalitarian minyan]. But now Rabbi Ederberg has started working with them and reaching out to them. In general, I think that the candidates for reform and conservative movements are mostly people who are well integrated, and who feel German. So it needs more of an effort to get them on board. I think Russians do have

the potential for joining the reform movement as well; you just have to activate it. You know we're coming from a secular but conservative society. It will take some time for quite a few of the immigrants to accept a woman being a rabbi.

- *Looking at the educational programs offered in the Jewish communities today, what programs are still missing?*

Conversion courses. They may be in Russian, for Russian-speaking people. I think what is also missing is a targeted effort of communicating religious values and religious content in a way that Russians understand, which is on an intellectually higher level. Also I think what is lacking is an intergenerational approach, for example, for grandparents and grandchildren, something which brings two generations together, which acknowledges the biographies of the older, but frames it within the new narratives of the younger. Something like that. I think this would be an interesting approach. Also because due to the immigration and the integration process, these generations live in different worlds. You have in one family two different worlds; the younger world and the older world. And the community could be the bridge between these two worlds, bringing them together and saying your Jewish identity is something which links you together.

- *Do you think the communities could offer more to the elderly?*

Again, I think a great thing would be to bring them together with younger people, bringing younger people to talk to them about religion, for example. I think that they're living in a bubble and it's sad. I don't blame them, it's not their fault. I think we should be trying very softly and kindly to find ways for them to communicate with the world based on things other than their past. Acknowledging their past, but bringing them back to the real world. I think this would be nice. Maybe it's too abstract. But something in that direction.

- *Should there be some kind of political support from the community in order to improve the social situation of the elderly immigrants in Germany?*

Well, I'm lobbying for this.

- *What is your impression about non-Jewish German media coverage on developments in Jewish life here in Germany? Is it objective?*

Very short-sighted, and also, I think, promoted by many community leaders, focused on integration problems. Also basically equating integration problems of Russian-speaking Jews with Russian Germans, equating them to Turkish immigrants. Saying they have the same problems, which is not true. Though there is a new trend now of

reporting with a bit more nuance about our people. Another issue is understanding the difference between the several Jewish identities and accepting the secular Jewish identity. This you will not find. You will not find this in the press. For them it's like a church, for them it's about religion and you have all the problems stemming from that. This way of thinking is also applied to Israel and the Middle East conflict, where they reduce the conflict or reduce Israel to a Jewish religious state, which is simply not true.

- *This is the mainstream media?*

Yes, I would say so. Some papers cover Jewish religion equating it with the Sharia, and the Jewish state then becomes something like a Jewish Sharia state, but it has nothing to do with that.

16. *ARKADY LITVAN, 27 May 2009, Hanover*

- *Mr. Litvan, what would you say are the major challenges facing Jewry in Germany in the next 10–15–20 years?*

Jewish life. Let's say the closeness to the community. Admittedly, some things are still a bit different for all the Jews who participate in organized community life. The so-called Russians, or some of them, still have to establish themselves a bit more in society. But in fact those who will become established have already done so, or are at least on their way to doing so. The entire Jewish population, I mean Russian-speaking, or formerly Russian-speaking, will split up along age lines. There is a part that's still active or has to become active and there's a part, let's say of people who came when they were 55 or 60, and you can't really expect much from them. But the other part, the younger generation, they can speak German so well by now that sometimes you can't even tell the difference. The really young, there's no difference from those of native families. Sometimes they have more problems with Russian, but that's also a shame. And a real difficulty for the very young generation is to involve themselves in current community life. That's a Jewish problem. The other problems will be solved in some way, in any case.

- *You mentioned earlier that it's difficult to offer what's attractive for young people, especially young immigrants. Has the community tried to work together with Israeli initiatives, like Lehava, for example?*

Yes, the Lehava project was very active in helping us out. But the thing is, they aren't an institute which can really develop activities. They do

help us and participate, recently not so much, but they were really active. But they help us, work with us, are an accomplice, so to speak.

- *Do you think that the relationship between Russian-speaking Jews and veterans has normalized, or are there still major cultural, lingual barriers?*

First I want to mention that I can only talk about the community in Hanover. I'm not that familiar with the situation in other communities. Here the situation is that we have hardly any German Jews, as good as none. Two-three families, relatively old, and they seldom attend. There are a few more, but also not so many, who have lived in Germany for a long time, Polish and a few others, but also not so many by number. There are maybe 100–150 veterans out of 4,000 members. And otherwise there is no tension, probably because the veterans are relatively old and usually don't come.

- *Do you see a new pluralism in Jewish life in Germany? In Hanover alone you have the United community, the Liberals, the Independent Bukharan and Chabad.*

All of this exists, there's no doubt. Everything that you listed is here and they are all active. Some are more and some are less active, some are more and some are less successful. I'm a little careful in my assessment.

- *Do you think that in the next 20–30 years, the significance of Israel in community life—or for the identity of the members—will remain the same as it's been over the last 30–50 years?*

I think it will remain the same, yes. Maybe the emphasis will shift, because up to the 1980's, or maybe even later, the Jews living here in Germany, they saw Israel as where they'd be living in the near future. They all bought apartments there and saw their life here in Germany as something temporary, short-term. Now this has all changed. The majority assume that they'll stay here in Germany, or try to stay or want to stay. But Germany remains and is and will be their home. However, the spiritual, the religious-spiritual center will be in Israel. That's why I said that the emphasis will shift a bit, and is shifting already. The connection to Israel will remain. I don't want to compare, but it will be something like, Mecca for the Muslims. The center stays in Mecca.

- *If you don't have many employees here in the community, you've got to make do with few material resources, but you still, I presume, offer a pretty wide range of educational programs, including Hebrew courses?*

Yes, we have all of that.

- *Would you say that this is readily accepted? Or would you say, there could be more interest?*

Some people who are interested are intensely interested, but that's not the big crowd. It's just like with attendance at religious services. Those who come are really interested, but that's just the *hard core group*.

If you ask how many members are active in the community, I can't say. Some people attend meetings, twice a year. Some just come to the religious services, but not to the meetings. And there are those who just come to the cultural programs, and that's also a mixed group. Not every cultural event is the same. There are, for example, dances and there are some people who just come to the dances. But altogether many people come to the community, just not to everything. And maybe that's better, because we wouldn't be able to fit them all in the same room. I mean we have almost 4,000 members.

- *Let's speak about the youth center. Do you have a social or pedagogical worker there? Or is everyone working on a volunteer basis?*

No, it's mainly volunteers and there are young people who volunteer in rotation at the center to make sure it works. It's not completely volunteer work, but it's also not a real job, there's a small allowance for it.

- *You already mentioned a kindergarten project under construction. Could you say something about it? How big is the kindergarten?*

We're planning to open a kindergarten for 40 children. There's a baby group and the three and over group, until they go to school. And we have the kindergarten in the former youth center. We've rebuilt, and added on.

- *Another youth center?*

Our youth center, because now we have the possibility to add onto it. It's a single-storey building. And that's where the youth center will be. I don't want to go into details, but the money to build the kindergarten has been promised, and about 90% is there. Not that only 90% was promised, it was 100% promised. But 90% of the costs are covered, and now things have somewhat come to a halt because there's just not enough money to finish the construction work.

- *How do you see the development in Jewish media here in general?*

Sometimes I read the *Jüdische Allgemeine*, and regularly the *Evreyskaya Gazeta*. The *Evreyskaya Gazeta* is very professionally done. I actually know the people who work there. They were at the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*



in Russia, the Soviet Union at that time. That still exists and was really well done. If you look at the paper it's obvious that it's well made.

17. *JEWGENI SINGER, 8 June 2009, Frankfurt*

- *Mr. Singer, where do you see the largest difficulties and challenges for organized Jewish life in Germany?*

Basically I think that now a very important, you could even say historic, time has come, where there's a change going on in many different organizations. Also due to the aging process, many Jewish immigrants are taking on leadership positions in the organizations and the problem is that, for example, now the youth groups all across Germany are having trouble attracting enough qualified people. The problem isn't that such people don't exist; they certainly do. They just need to be motivated in the right way because the communities have failed to include people in Jewish life from an early age on or from the moment they came to Germany. There's now the problem of actively including people between 20–35 years old in Jewish life. Many communities have given up because they think they won't be successful anyway. I think that the problem is with the concepts. They need to change their concepts and change the motivations of people.

- *What do you personally think is missing in the communities?*

That in every community, or Jewish organization, but we're talking now about the community, there should be a single person responsible for the people between 18–35–40 who is working and responsible for the young adults. Many communities have adopted the practice of handing over this task to the youth leaders, which is a step in the right direction, but the problem is that these people already have enough to do with children under 18 and these are two different worlds. You need one concept for the children between 6–18 and another completely different concept and approach for young adults. That every community would have a person, or that every institution install someone specifically for this, that would already be a step in the right direction.

- *Would you say that there's something like a healthy pluralism developing in Germany?*

My honest opinion: we must differentiate between two things. My attitude towards the other congregations is very critical. This is due to the simple reason that the experience in America and other coun-

tries, also in Germany, has shown that this kind of development leads to assimilation. In America a study has shown that some too liberal congregations facilitate the assimilation of Jews. Many Jews, to put it bluntly, were lost because they became completely assimilated. That's the one thing.

The other thing is if you want to offer things along with the religious events, I'm completely for this. You should just separate this. You can offer a get-together, you can offer a non-religious event. But the orthodox religion itself, the laws, should not be questioned. I personally am very critical of the Liberal denominations. Because of the question of assimilation mainly.

- *You see the danger of assimilation in Germany, too?*

Yes.

- *But if you are a member of the community board in Frankfurt, that means that you support the model of the United community on some level?*

If the question is what my opinion about this concept is, then you need to understand that I don't approve of everything that happens in Frankfurt. On the other hand, that is a very difficult, and in fact a very important question for the Jewish community in Germany, how to deal with such questions in the future. There is the concept of the United community and there are other concepts. Basically, I think that religious life should be religiously organized in the community; religious in the sense of the orthodox congregation. You can quibble about the terms, but you know what is meant here.

The other things, as I've said, can have a completely different focus. You can have a culture club; celebrate Victory Day on 9 May, that doesn't have to be directly connected to religion. You need to differentiate between different levels. Many say that they're a Liberal community and have so many members. The question is, are they members because they're convinced of the concept; if they understand this deep and philosophical concept of Liberal Judaism? Or do they just find it more comfortable that you can speak German and not have to pray in Hebrew?

- *Let's talk about BfSD (Federal Union of Jewish Students in Germany). How long have you been in it?*

I have to distinguish between the Federal Union and the State Union here in Hesse. I was first a delegate from the Hessian Union four-five years ago and attended the national meetings.

- *Did you have a specific motivating factor?*

The important thing is that you do the work, regardless in what form, based on your convictions. My motivation was the fact that I wanted to represent the idea of Judaism and Jewish life eloquently because I knew that in the Soviet Union it would not have been possible. Here when you receive the opportunity to do so, it would almost be criminal not to take advantage of it. I would like to actively engage others. I wanted to make up for what has been lost and animate others, especially immigrants. I still want to animate them to become much more active in the Jewish community.

- *Could you please say a few things about the current composition of the BJSD? Who are the most active, how many are veterans, how many new members? Programmatically speaking, are things getting better or worse?*

The economists would say that the market exists. There are people who are interested in these events, and not just in the BJSD, but in many organizations dealing with young people in Germany. I don't know what it's like in other countries, but I've heard that it's similar. That's why you need people with leadership qualities. You need leaders, people who create and form. The demand is there, the market is there, just there aren't enough leaders and this is because no one tries to engage such people or to hire them or mentor them. That's a large problem. There aren't enough suitable people, because on the one hand no one tried to engage those who are suitable and on the other hand because in many communities and organizations there wasn't sufficient incentive to deal with this age group.

- *Sounds very counter-productive.*

It is counter-productive. This age group is not very interesting for the elections, when we want to really almost over-simplify. That's why people aren't concentrating their energies on them.

- *You mean in the communities?*

For the community board election, for the chair election, and so on. Most of all, this group is very mobile. They're in a certain city first, and then move on to go to university and so on. That's why they're not interesting, politically speaking. That's the problem. This group isn't politically interesting; but they have the intellectual potential to change things, they know the system well. They could also change something in the political structure, but they don't have the motivation. This motivation can only be generated through active work, but

then you again need these leaders who can lead and organize the people. They need to be more intensively trained and engaged. The largest problem is that there aren't enough competent and motivated people in the next generations. A lot of people are competent, but no one is able to really motivate them.

- *How many members does the Federal Union currently have?*

As far as I know according to the last lists there are around 5,000 members. You also need to see that there are direct members, but there are also those in the State Unions and they are also automatically members. So there are over 5,000 now who really can be reached. There are also many, many more which could potentially join. I can say that the Hessian Union has about 500 members. In the two years when I was chair of the board, we almost doubled the number of members, but this is still too low, because I know that in Hesse there are about 2,000 people in this age group. I ask myself where all the others are.

- *How did you succeed in doubling the membership in two years?*

First of all, we were more active and did more. The more you do, the larger resonance you'll find. Like in advertising.

- *What did the content of work look like?*

Our content was different ideas. We had, let's say, three areas, although that might sound too ambitious. One area is the religious, we do Kabbalat Shabbat together, Kiddush, we celebrate Jewish holidays together and so on. The second area is Israel, the actual political problems; we watch movies, discuss the political situation. The third area is just for fun. We have parties, go out for drinks, watch movies. This doesn't have anything to do with Israel or Judaism. We divided everything into these three parts and were willing to try anything. Although I have to say we consciously laid the main focus on the religious things and events, because I knew that that's where the largest deficit is. You can see movies in every theater. But Pessach, many don't celebrate it at home, so that's why we invited them to us.

- *Are leadership seminars missing?*

Practically speaking, yes. The first important steps have been taken in some large communities in Germany. They have someone specifically to take care of this age group's needs. Event manager, call it what you want. Someone who is in charge of taking care of this age group. They organize programs for them, leadership seminars, movie outings, gatherings.

- *If there's funding for it, then should there be one young adult supervisor in every community?*

Yes, but someone just for this age group 18–35. A person who's professionally trained, paid accordingly, with a university degree, who's competent, who knows what they're talking about.

18. *TATYANA SMOLIANITSKI, 12 June 2009, Düsseldorf*

- *Tanya, when did you start the series of your well-received lectures on Jewish history and culture, offered in many towns of North-Rhine Westphalia?*

It started with my lectures in Dortmund in 1996, and I still do it there once a month. The Gesher project was established when people came from different towns and asked me why are you giving lectures in Dortmund but not in Recklinghausen? And not in Münster? I began to receive invitations from different communities. Then I started to offer the same courses, but in different locations.

- *How did things continue, and how did the Gesher association come into being?*

After a few years we understood that the lectures weren't enough and then we came up with the idea together with many people we knew in Israel and in Russia to do a book presentation. A Jewish book presentation, right where I give lectures. There is a huge publishing house in Israel, run by Dr. Michael Greenberg, the *Gishrei Tarbut Association*. Michael Greenberg got an invitation to the Frankfurt book fair and after talking to me personally, he invited us to work with them and to present the books he would bring. After the Frankfurt book fair, we did a small book presentation in five different communities in Germany. That was the best 101 books in Russian about Judaism. Then we realized that we shouldn't just do this as private people, we should start an official association for integration, culture and education. And so we established *Gesher—Integration through Culture and Education*. This was in 1999. Rabbi Henry Brandt supported us, and he is on the board till now. He lends his ideas, name and spiritual support.

- *You combine education and family work?*

I give my lectures on history and literature, but we also do things for children, small children, for children between 6–12 and so on. That's one part of my job for the community; another is with Gesher and lectures for adults, and the third part is the work together with the

Joint. There we are usually involved in three large projects: the project for librarians, family seminars for families in different communities in Germany, and the *Jewish Book Festival* who is held once a year in Duisburg. This is a wide array, but everything I'm involved with is educational; partially with adults, partially with families and young people.

In the family program, we take families for one day, or six hours and work with them together; the main thing we do is give the families a common experience within a Jewish framework. The format is that we usually have a group activity for the whole family and then different things for the adults and children and then we learn and play together, eat together, and do things together. And we are combining the topics as much as possible with related things in everyday life. We have one cycle about Jewish life, from Brit Mila to Bar Mitzvah, from Bar Mitzvah to burial. In Recklinghausen, for example, that was the first time in fifteen years that there'd been a real chuppah in the synagogue.

- *The main audience in the Gesher lectures for adults are 40+?*

40+, 50+, but in Bielefeld, for example, that's a liberal community, there's a university in Bielefeld with a historical and political institute. Students from the university who are studying history come to me and so there's the students plus a few adults who are interested.

- *How are the educational events for librarians organized?*

Every [Jewish] community has its own solution. That's not my business, how they organize it. Our idea is education. In this project with librarians it's being financed again and this year we're giving a summer school for librarians. That's going to be for two-three days, maybe in my community, maybe with overnight stays for the librarians, because this project became well-known throughout the country.

- *The books they provide are mainly in Russian?*

Yes, and in Hebrew. That's one direction. The second direction, the lectures I give, is the main thing. My projects in adult education, overall, that's also very mixed. For example, now in Bochum we've been giving seminars for adults for eight years already. In Dortmund we've been holding seminars for adults for the last thirteen years. It used to be once a month, but with 100 people, now every week we have a stable group of about twenty people. Some former participants have died in the meantime, unfortunately, but now there are new

participants. I was very pleased with the development. It used to be twice a month, and that was enough, but now for many people it's part of their lifestyle—so we meet here every Tuesday.

- *You're using different literature than in a religious ceremony, but it's sounds like people are getting nourishment for their body and soul...*

Yes, it's like getting special nourishment, it's part of the lifestyle for these people. I know who they were before and I tried to open them up to different directions. To Limmud.de, or to other seminars in the community. To go on trips with them, or when we have the Jewish Book Festival in Duisburg then my students and their friends from different communities go to Duisburg. I am sure Jewish life is not limited to a community. The Jewish world is wide.

- *You are strongly involved in Jewish networks in Germany. What are your main motivations to do so?*

The Gesher association is an institution that offers the possibility to enter the Jewish world, not only for the participants, but also for me. I appreciate my group, the possibilities I have for self-realization. We've been in this country for thirteen years, I've met many people. But the original impulse was the birth of my son Alex. Immediately I started to think where can he have a place to feel at home. Step by step I discovered Judaism and Jewish education. This was my idea, originally for Alex, and this changed everything.

- *When talking about identity, collective identity, or the future identity of the Jewish community in Germany, do you think that Israel will continue to have the same meaning for the communities?*

Yes, this covers different philosophical questions for every local community. Some communities say we're in a Jewish community in Germany. We're not an intermediary sending people on to Israel; we should develop as a Jewish community in Germany. The people themselves, especially those from Russia and the former Soviet Union have a great interest in Israel and I'm trying to organize a project where we study the history of Jerusalem and of Israel for a year, and then take a trip to Israel.

- *Have you ever done something like this before?*

We're planning it together with Rabbi Michael Kogan from Düsseldorf and others. People want to see Israel through his eyes, or through my eyes. They have faith in us and want us to make this program. They trust us that it won't be bad, but interesting. So we'll first have

the history and then take this same group to Israel. I think that's very important, also for the middle generation.

19. *JOSHUA SPINNER, 6 May 2009, Berlin*

• *Mr. Spinner, this question may sound a bit strange, but what motivated you to go to Germany of all places in 1997?*

It already made a lot of sense at that time to consider Germany. There was already a significant number of FSU immigrants in the country but only a very few, if any, rabbis and teachers who were Russian speakers. If I remember correctly there was at that time only one Russian-speaking rabbi in Germany, and this was Rabbi Marc Stern in Osnabrück who taught himself Russian, but the general community had already received about 70,000 immigrants, so it really made sense.

• *Do you speak Russian?*

Yes, I do. I am even more comfortable in Russian than in German. Thus, the reason why I am in Germany is because I speak Russian. No, seriously, I had no connections to Russia or the Russian language before. But when I went to Minsk, it seemed to me to be the right thing to do to learn Russian, thus becoming able to address the people in their own language.

• *What is the defining problem, or the greatest challenge, for Jews in Germany today?*

I would say that the defining problem as a unique situation especially in Germany is that of centralized communal funding in an immature and undeveloped communal context. Because the number of community members increased immensely [1991–2004], there will be different people doing different things; and there will also be different organizations, different movements, different ideas which will enhance natural processes to engage, but also instrumentalize people. And the challenge will be to find out how it's possible to enable Jewish life in Germany to broaden itself, to stabilize itself and to establish an internal engine of viability, without creating political conflict and strife which automatically will aim to effect the funding directly. Seen from this perspective, the German situation is indeed very unique. On the one hand there's huge state funding, on the other hand you have a very rapidly shifting and growing dynamic development. So you have a very big pot, but structures of Jewish life that are not yet consolidated. The critical challenge is how is this process going to work?



Will the forces of instrumentalization and of self-interest win, or will the broader perspective which is definitely good for Jewish life in Germany, irrespective of denomination or position, win?

- *Former empirical studies showed that the level of religiosity among the Russian Jews in Germany is distinctly weaker compared with the Jewish veterans, and it is expected to become very difficult to attract Jewish youth for community commitment in general. How do you tackle these problems?*

These studies are wrong, because they measure religiosity or observance as snapshots; stagnant rather than dynamic. This is, of course, not at all how religiosity or observance works. Most of the immigrants when they arrived knew nothing, observed nothing, and believed nothing. This was not by choice, but by circumstance. The question then becomes—what happens when opportunity knocks? In all probability, there will be some immigrants who are deeply interested, some who are mildly interested, and some who are not at all interested. And those who are deeply interested will outpace the veterans you refer to in their observance, religiosity and any other quantifiable factors. Anyone who doubts this should visit our projects in Berlin or Leipzig, or go to synagogue in Frankfurt or Cologne and look for the observant-looking under 40 crowd. Veterans or immigrants?

As a starting point, you could also take the reverse perspective, just to realize that we are here now, and there will be Jewish life in Germany in the long run. Therefore an investment must be made to make sure that the community structures are strong, successful, attractive, and viable. What we have now is a situation in which a lot of resources are spent to encourage people to participate in—nothing. Is it important to play chess or engage in sports outside or inside the community, what does it mean for Jewish life?

I'd rather think we have to care for good schools, attractive and interesting, age-relevant education offerings, synagogue services with a wide range, open to people who don't know much about it, in other words, there has to be quality! And if you have quality, you can also attract people. That's the way we try to do it. The strategic model is to build up a young, engaged *Gemeinschaft* (community) with no political pretensions.

- *Can you just say a few words about the beginning of the Lauder activities here in Berlin?*

We started in September, 2000, with nine students in a small yeshiva program in the front annex of the Rykestrasse Synagogue in the former East Berlin, and in the following year with a similar institution

for women, a midrasha in Frankfurt am Main, that eventually moved here, and today we are in this neighborhood [Prenzlauer Berg, in central Berlin] with the yeshiva and midrasha. We have a core community of about 30 young, observant families; a kindergarten; a primary school which attracts kids from a much wider range, and that's my point, we can offer a highly qualitative Jewish experience, because there is a core of people who really want it. And from this base, we can tell people, look, this is a great school, and it's worth sending your kid to this school and not to a non-Jewish school.

• *Can you just give a short overview of the programs now offered by the Lauder yeshiva in Berlin?*

There's a wide-ranging program now in the yeshiva, starting with beginners, attended mostly by high school pupils or university students, they study here in the evenings. There's also a full time program, usually for people who are post-high school and pre-university. They study full time, for one or two or three years. At the end of the third year we encourage the people to continue their education at a college or university except of those who intend to join the Rabbinical program. Now there's something that is actually a new and independent institution, it's called the Rabbinerseminar zu Berlin, which is the historical name of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary. This will be then a German-wide federal institution in the Brunnenstrasse, which is where the Lauder yeshiva is.

• *How many students are visiting now the Rabbinical program at the Rabbinerseminar zu Berlin?*

There are nine at the moment, including two who are about to be ordained.

• *How many of them do you think intend to work after ordination as rabbis in Germany?*

I can't give a guarantee, but I guess all of them want to be rabbis in Germany.

• *Where do the participants come from?*

It's a very interesting mix. Of the two graduates now, one is from Budapest, and the other one is a former immigrant from Russia. One will serve, in the future, as a rabbi in Leipzig, the other one will serve in Cologne. And the other students, one is an American who came here with a Fulbright scholarship, there's another native German Jew, and the rest are immigrants from the Former Soviet Union.

- *Are there other projects in German towns that are supported by the Lauder Yeshurun community?*

Yes, Lauder Yeshurun is committed to projects in Leipzig and Hamburg, and separately, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation supports the Lauder-Moriah-School in Cologne and the Lauder Kindergarten of the Jewish community in Hamburg.

- *The Jewish population of Berlin is very heterogeneous now, not only by denomination but also by geographical background, duration of stay here and so on. If you take all the institutions that Lauder Yeshurun is running now in Berlin; the kindergarten, school, yeshiva, midrasha and family services, would you say that there is a certain subgroup which dominates? Let's say the Russian speakers, or the Israelis, or American Jews?*

No, not at all. It's a very diverse grouping, that's right. You can meet here four different groups; Israelis, somehow German-speakers, Russian-speakers and English-speakers. It's a mix of it all, and that has a kind of neutralizing effect. However, you have to be careful with all the subgroups. For example, we have sensed that if you succeed in identifying yourselves sufficiently as a non-Russian speaking environment, you can lose the Russians completely. The major issue is how to keep a neutral balance while still being sufficiently attractive for all groups, including the Russians. That's a challenge.

- *So you don't have all these cultural quarrels and fights which prevents a creative cooperation in many local Jewish communities?*

When I first came here I really spent a lot of time mediating socio-cultural conflicts. As a person from the West I understood and identified with the local community members, but as a Russian-speaker I was also able to relate to the immigrants. Here we don't really have these problems. There are three reasons for this. First, we are so heterogeneous that there is little subgroup definition. Second, our community is very young, and so a lot of cultural differences are softer and less pronounced. Third, and this is the most important, in this community we have a defining authority. The defining authority is the Torah and Halakha.

- *Do you think that the Jewish communities here could develop a much more self-contained identity and become an independent center equal to Israel and the US?*

This idea is premised on such a hopeless optimism about the European Jewish condition, that it's almost laughable. To think for a minute that Europe and the Europeans are going to allow us Jews to become so comfortable here that we don't feel a need for identification

with somewhere else—forget it! On the contrary, if Jews are feeling threatened in greater numbers here in European countries, that could cause more distance. And do not underestimate when politicians, and social groups, church groups and labor unions call for Israel boycotts. If you look carefully, you realize that these activities are not the issue itself, rather it serves their own interests, and this is not a basis for positive identification. Another thing that I do not see is a real common sense that would unify all European Jews in a specific, European Jewish identity.

- *What do you think about the general media coverage of Jewish life in Germany or in Berlin?*

I think that media has an important function in our context because it is important that people here in Berlin become familiar and comfortable with Jewish life in their neighborhood. Not because it's Jewish life, but because it's life. Some people will perceive it in one way, and some people in another. We can also do something ourselves to encourage uncomplicated contacts. For example, at the Rykestrasse we recently had a block party which was deliberately non-political. It was only publicized in the neighborhood and we just sent out invitations to people in the area. Because we are neighbors it's important that *they* get familiar with the spaceship that landed in their midst, and it's not a political issue. It's important to be in touch with the people who shop in the same places, and buy the same tomatoes.

20. ADRIANA STERN, 22 June 2009, Cologne

- *Mrs. Stern, is your Jewishness an important aspect in your literary work?*

Yes. One thing that shocks me is that there is for all practical purposes no youth literature about Jewish life in Germany. There is one book, thank God, "Prince William, Max Minsky and Me" by Holly-Jane Rahlens, but that's the only book for young people describing Jewish life in Germany today. Every other book has ended with 1945, which I think is horrible.

- *With "Hannah and the Others" you wrote your first novel for young people in Germany about multiple personality disorder. How were the book reviews?*

If there were criticisms about the book, it was that it's a great book, but why did the caretaker have to be Jewish? I think you can encounter something like that only in Germany. That really made me mad.

- *Part of the abnormality in the present relations between non-Jews and Jews in Germany?*

Yes, but there are more difficulties. For example, if you aren't a member and don't go to a synagogue, then it's very difficult to meet other Jews in Germany. That's a problem. I think that's a reason why relatively many Jews go to the synagogue, or belong to a community. Even if they don't go to the synagogue, they're members.

- *You are an active member of the Liberal Jewish community Gesher la Massoret in Cologne. What do you think are the largest problems or challenges currently facing German Jewry?*

Opening to different movements. That's the greatest challenge. Orthodox, Liberal, Conservative, Progressive, that they can exist on equal footing in Germany. That's the greatest challenge.

- *And that's now not the case, I mean structurally speaking?*

Not at all. It's being fought actively. The Central Council doesn't look good here. It's so sad because it also frightens away many Jews.

- *The conflicts themselves?*

Yes.

- *But Jewish pluralism in Germany has a future?*

Yes, I could imagine. Leaving aside the possibility that things could take a turn for the worse in this country under times of very bad political and social turmoil, I think there is even a chance that Liberal Judaism could become much stronger than orthodox here. That the tide could change. There are a lot of things supporting this idea. That's also why I think the resistance in the Central Council is so strong, because it can't be repressed. They're trying everything, but I think this is the way of the future.

- *Do you think that the connection or the sense of identifying with Israel will remain as strong over the next 20 years as it has been during the last decades?*

Yes, I think so. Absolutely.

- *Which Jewish groups are you active in other than Gesher la Massoret?*

In Yachad, that's a nationwide group for gay and lesbian Jews.

- *Are you also involved in political groups in Germany?*

I've tried several times to become active in a political group, but the problem is in leftist groups everything falls apart when it comes to Israel.

- *You mean that anti-Semitism rears its ugly head?*

The leftist anti-Semitism is really horrible. When you go to a demonstration and you see all the Palestinian scarves and the slogans against Israel, then I just can't take it.

- *What was your specialty within the Cologne community when you were on the board?*

Working with children and young people.

- *Where do you think are the largest gaps in the educational programs on offer? The question also includes materials—are there enough educational materials for preschools, are there materials in the necessary languages, are there good materials for adult educational programs? Where are the gaps in your community itself, or also in Germany?*

In Germany as a whole I'd say there isn't enough for children and young people. In general work with children and young people isn't emphasized enough. I think that in Germany it's strange that children and young people are always treated as if they were almost outsiders. In general, and also in Jewish institutions. I think that's extremely sad. Almost everything is missing for children and young people.

- *And when you think about Cologne? What would you organize first?*

Regarding materials, I think there's a lot missing in many areas. Books that are also interesting for children and young people, computer games. Dealing with Judaism age-appropriately, there aren't nearly enough materials for that. Places where children and young people can get together.

- *What do you think about the future perspectives of Jewish media in Germany? Is there enough pluralism, and can the structures be optimized?*

I think what is really missing is sufficient media that reflect present Liberal Jewish life and activities. There was a great start with the family magazine "Familienmentsch" a couple of years ago, but now they had already to reduce it to an online magazine. This is a sign that Liberal Jewish media in Germany is still on weak legs and need much more support in the future. I also would like to see a lot more Liberal contributions for kids on platforms like Ha Galil.

## 21. LALA SÜSSKIND, 6 May 2009, Berlin

- *Mrs. Süsskind, how would you assess the relations between the German speaking veterans and the Russian speaking immigrants in the Jewish communities?*

There's a different situation in every community. But in general, I think the older generations do not have much in common, this is simply due

to language barriers. I don't think this is such a tragedy. Older people want their familiar networks and cultures on both sides, and there isn't so much interaction between the veterans and the newcomers. If the immigrants prefer to be in their clubs of 'Odessans and 'Muscovites,' why not? However, I don't think that this is so important for the middle-aged or younger generation, and here we hope for much more interaction and exchange between the two groups.

- *Are there any problems in the relations between observant and secular Jews in Germany?*

I don't see any problems in Berlin. Here we have pluralism. On the one hand you can find different denominations gathered within the United community, on the other side there are movements and centers which are totally independent. The Lauder Yeshurun Center for example, the Chabad Center and here next door to us in the neighborhood there is also Adass Jisroel [orthodox]. I don't see this plurality as a weakness, but rather as a strength. And still, if someone doesn't feel strong enough, they still can be backed by the *Einheitsgemeinde*.

- *There might be a considerable discrepancy between the number of Jews who are registered members and those who are not organized at all. What are the main reasons for this, and what is to be done about?*

Yes, there is a big gap between members and non-members, but so what? I don't see it as such a dilemma. There are huge numbers of 'Sabras' and of American Jews permanently living in Berlin, but so what? Of course, I would be happy if they would be members of the community, but if they are loosely connected with the community, that's also fine. Admittedly, some have left the community because they don't like having to pay community taxes. On the other hand, some Jews outside the communities are just strong individualists who would feel it as a problem for themselves to be organized or registered anywhere. I have no problem to accept this, but of course I am also happy if some of them, especially if they are wealthy, find ways to donate to a Jewish project in the city.

- *Will Israel retain the same high level of importance in community life as it has had?*

I think so, yes. For my generation, for example, I lived in a kibbutz for a while during the late 1960s and the importance of Israel is unquestionable. Even if you don't live in Israel, it's a great feeling to know that there is a Jewish state which will host you in any situa-

tion. You will never be alone, and the times of being a marginalized, unprotected minority in the world are over. I think many Jews in the Diaspora have learned this lesson, and so have our children. I don't know how deep it will affect the awareness of our grandchildren, but there are programs in the Jewish schools and kindergartens which do a thorough job of dealing with Israeli topics.

- *If you just consider the spectrum of programs and services offered by the Jewish communities and organizations do you think there is something that still needs to be addressed?*

I think most of the community programs and services have grown on the basis of supply and demand. If there are things missing, people will express their wishes and demands, and if it's possible and we can finance it, the community will develop an appropriate program. I think about 80 percent of our community members' demands have been fulfilled in special programs. But it's normal that the times are changing, and people are changing as well. Educational programs have to be modernized and to be varied. We have a well organized, flourishing adult educational center in Berlin, and they're now trying to build up a new series of Jewish learning. However, you probably won't find any place in the world where Jewish educational programs have a 100 percent perfect profile.

- *Do you see any gaps in the curricula or a lack of teaching materials or personnel in Jewish school programs in Berlin and in Germany?*

As I said before, I think the basic needs in Jewish education are covered in Berlin; for kids, for the youth and also for adults. Of course you can raise the question of *how optimal* the programs are, and we try to undertake the necessary improvements. For example, I am personally very much in favor of upgrading the Hebrew teaching. Many of our students, young and old alike, are well qualified in *reading* Hebrew texts, but much less qualified in Hebrew *conversation*. And that's a pity for two reasons; on the one hand, public communication in Hebrew is missing. On the other hand, it's a pity when people do not succeed in praying parts of the liturgy in Hebrew. I mean, Hebrew is our language of prayer.

- *What do you think about the general media coverage of events that relate to the Jewish condition in Germany, the Jewish world and Israel?*

Obviously, the non-Jewish German interest in Jewish people and issues is nowadays disproportionately large, and this is reflected in the



established media as well. It is my impression that TV and print media cover Jewish issues much more than they do in comparison with other minorities or religions. In general, I am not sad about this, at least not if there is a real, objective interest. But what makes me nervous sometimes are these kinds of subtle searches for sensationalism. If a Jew in Germany is convicted of a major crime, let's say robbery or bribery, then there's a huge big bang of coverage in the media. The media would not specifically report on a *Catholic* fraud or the *Protestant* Mafioso, so why do they do it with the Jews? That's something that seems strange to me.

I'm not saying that the majority of media reports are knitted using this pattern. There are also lots of articles and reports which have a very positive tone; for example, in radio contributions by the Deutsche Welle or Kulturradio. You can feel that the journalists are accompanying the new developments in Jewish life positively. These radio stations have to serve the interests of their listeners as well, and have to take care of their ratings. If they regularly send such profound, objective reports on Jewish life in Berlin or from other places in Germany, that's a good sign.

- *What do you think of the existing Jewish media in Germany?*

There is a small spectrum of nation-wide Jewish print media, with the weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine* on the top. To my knowledge, the readership is not that big, but the *Allgemeine* is also a good source of information for non-Jewish, interested people.

Besides this, most of the local Jewish communities have their own journal so that the members have all the necessary information about what's going on in front of their door. Some of the community journals also report on national or international issues, and I guess that's enough for many Jews in Germany, at least for the time being. In Berlin we have Babel TV, a Jewish station that broadcasts twice a week on a local Berlin TV channel. Compared with the Jewish media landscape in France or Great Britain, this is not much, but for the time being, I don't see it as a big problem. Some public broadcasts have special Jewish programs on Friday night, and those who are not satisfied with this, they still can listen to Kol Israel or watch Israeli TV which is now available via satellite. An attractive solution, of course, would be to have the Israeli programs here in German.

22. *YEHUDA TEICHTAL, 10 June 2009, Berlin*

- *Rabbi Teichtal, you work for the Jewish community in Berlin?*

Correct. We have been working in Berlin for thirteen years and have seen an enormous growth. I have two functions here, one as a rabbi in the Jewish community [the official United community of Berlin], and one as the head of Chabad in Berlin. And we also deal with many, many other cities around Berlin.

- *What do you think is the main challenge facing Jewish people in Germany today?*

The greatest challenge facing the Jewish people today in Germany is education. We have today over 200,000 people that are Jewish in Germany, although the official numbers are about 130,000. We are in a situation where we have to invest time, energy, efforts and resources into education. If we give our youth, our children, our students and even adults a proper education, then we ensure a strong future for Judaism in Germany.

- *How would you describe the current relations between Russian-speaking immigrants and German-speaking veterans?*

There are some challenges of true acceptance of one another. However, the main challenge which I see is not in the fact that veterans should just say: 'We accept someone who is from Russia or from Eastern Europe.' Many of the immigrants from Eastern Europe have already been here for 20–30 years and have children and some of them have grandchildren who were born here. However, the challenge is to truly give the people what they need. Not to negate what they are, not to tell them that they're different, that they have to forget what they were and become new people. That will not work. We have to embrace them, we have to give them love and care and warmth and joy and celebration and understanding. By embracing them we have to truly accept them, every person for what they are. And not try to change people, but to accept people.

- *Is there a difference among the different age groups regarding how often they come to the Jewish Education and Family Center of Chabad Berlin?*

We have very strong growth and very strong connection with younger people. There are some synagogues in Berlin where the average age is over 60. Here the average age is well under 40. Maybe 30, well, between 30–40. There are many young people, and young families especially. One of the areas we're very active in is with young families who are involved. So to answer your question directly, yes, definitely.

Younger people are frequent visitors here and feel also responsible to create the future and to create as a partner and affect the future of Judaism here in Germany. But there are also a substantial number of elderly people who meet in clubs and gatherings here, and very many frequent the Shabbat Baguette Program in our center which makes it possible for them to receive kosher food for Shabbat.

- *You have to work a lot with German officials here in Berlin, and with German politicians. Have your experiences been mainly positive or negative?*

Here in Berlin we have a very positive relationship on a local, borough level, on a city level, on a national level. We have very good cooperation on all levels. Of course, it's individual, some German people will do it more as a moral responsibility, and others will do it because they truly care. Sometimes you can see it on the people. It doesn't mean to say that there's always cooperation that works well. There are times when there are challenges and there are times when it's not simple. And there are times when we're not always satisfied. But generally speaking I can say, on the political level there's a general interest, a general preparation to work together and that's the way in Berlin. In many cities it's that way, but not in all cities.

I think the way it is here, that all political parties and camps are committed to a functioning cooperation, is unique to Berlin.

- *What is your impression of the non-Jewish mainstream media? How do they cover Jewish developments in Germany today? And how do they cover Israel and the Middle East?*

Unfortunately, the reporting about Israel is not objective at all. It is against Israel. Clearly.

- *You mean in the German mainstream media?*

Well, there are exceptions. There are some media that are more positive, generally speaking, like Axel Springer [one of the leading publishing houses, located in Hamburg and Berlin]. But many times you read things in the media and you're surprised that it's presented. You know, we just recently had the war in Gaza and you can have the Kassam rocket that falls on Sderot and the reaction. But the report will be first the reaction and then—at the end—it will be, 'A Kassam rocket has been fired...' As I said, there are exceptions, but on a general level I think there's a need for improvement. That's as far as Israel is concerned. As far as Judaism in Germany is concerned, it's a lot lower. In other words, sometimes I get the feeling when I'm speaking

to journalists, even sometimes to politicians, that they are very officially, they're very like *pro-Jewish*, but they're anti-Israel. But when they speak about their anti-Israel opinions, they speak with such a fire in their eyes that I truly wonder to myself, are they also truly pro-Jewish? Or is it just more politically correct to present themselves this way. In other words, sometimes anti-Israeliness could really be anti-Semitism.

• *Looking at all of the Jewish educational programs in Germany, do you think that there are still needs that are not being met in the long run? If so, what?*

Yes. Absolutely. There are two answers to this question. One is quality and one is quantity. In terms of quantity, there's a great need to reach many, many more young people. You have to realize that although there are programs going on for youth and children, it's a drop in the ocean. There are so many more people that we are failing to reach. We are trying to, but we have limited resources.

I will give you three examples. We have hundreds of youth that we are in contact with in small towns. Just this past weekend we had about a hundred youths from all around Germany who were our guests for the weekend [in the Chabad Center celebrating Shabbat and getting to know the Center]. We do it once a month. But we don't have the resources to reach all of them on a regular basis. Each one of these places [JCs in small towns] we could make youth centers, we could make Sunday schools, we could give an ability to grow. *Second example*, here in Berlin and in many other large cities across Germany, there's a great need to help these people, children and youth, to get a proper Jewish education. This is probably the greatest challenge. A proper Jewish education means three things: Firstly they should know how to read Hebrew. Secondly they should understand and know and be aware of the Jewish holidays, not only in an external way, but truthfully. Study Jewish holidays and customs and traditions; whether the people are religious or not; later on, that's their decision, or the decision of their parents, what to do with it. But we should at least give them the ability to know what it's about, to know what Judaism is, in a formal education. We have many, many children waiting to come to a traditional kindergarten and school. But we have limited resources. Right now, we have 140 children. The third thing is informal education. Here a lot could be done as well. Youth centers, Sunday school, camps, book clubs, youth clubs, learning about the holidays, helping disabled children. So many things that have to be done. *The third example* where we put strong efforts is adult education. Today we have

many hundreds of adult Jews in Germany learning about their heritage. But many of them are embarrassed to do it openly. They are embarrassed to stand or sit in a synagogue, for whatever reasons. We try to reach these people as well. And even if they are not in the younger generation, I see it as important to provide them with Jewish educational programs appropriate to their interest and knowledge.

23. *HERMANN SIMON, 9 April 2010, Berlin*

- *Dr. Simon, you worship at the Rykestraße Synagogue in the former East Berlin. Is that a conscious personal decision, or just a coincidence?*

The Jewish community in Berlin considers itself to be a unified community, which is not necessarily unproblematic. Still, I think it's a good choice. The unified community has different synagogues from Liberal to orthodox and, in general, most people stay committed to just one synagogue. Of course, historical developments also play a role. I personally grew up in the former East Germany, in East Berlin, where there was only one synagogue anyway, and that was the one in the Rykestraße, which is also still the one closest to where I live today. It was the synagogue I knew from my childhood, and that's where I stayed. In this way I worship at the synagogue in the Rykestraße, but naturally as a member of the Jewish community in Berlin.

- *It took many people a long time to mentally arrive in reunified Germany. Was this the case in the East Berlin Jewish community as well?*

I have the impression that quite a few Jews from both sides of the city have not yet arrived in the "new" community. And there are good reasons for this, because you see at first, both sides lost something old and familiar. For the West Berliners it might have seemed at first that nothing would change for them, but at the end of the day, *everyone* had to accommodate the new conditions.

- *The unification of both communities, like so much during the period after the Wall came down, seemed to happen at warp speed...*

No, on the contrary, the unification of the Jewish communities in *Berlin* was even a bit delayed and took much longer than the fusion of the Jewish state organizations or the non-Jewish associations. They really did take their time with that, which was, of course, not the wrong thing to do.

- *Did a feeling develop among the active Jews in East Berlin at the beginning of the 1990's in the communities or also outside of them, that their concerns and ideas got a bit lost in the fusion process?*

For that you'd need to define what our special ideas and concerns were. I don't think that we had any. And the Jews from West Berlin were very suspicious at first, but this dissipated over time. But a lot was unspoken at the beginning. Later discussions made clear to me that there was and is a cliché that the East was just a complete religious wasteland and the West was a religious oasis, but this absolutism is really just that, a cliché. To maintain the same metaphor, the communities in the West were also cooking with water. There are numerous problems and challenges inherent in *all* synagogues which have next to nothing to do with the social framework. There is a common German-Jewish prehistory, and this includes what happened to the Jews in this country during the Nazi dictatorship. And we're not finished with this; it still affects the life in the communities now. Returning to Berlin in 1990, the East Berlin community had a total of 200 members at that time, and in West Berlin they had a few thousand, but no one was talking about a flourishing Jewish life; not here and not over there. Now we have about 12,000 members, and this is naturally a kind of opportunity, there are new conditions and possibilities, and we need to make something out of them. This includes questioning much that has been established and this naturally includes not letting things continue on autopilot. It's time for the appropriate committees to start thinking about how the Jewish community could look in the next 20 or 30 years.

- *Do you have ideas for making the Jewish communities attractive for Russian speaking and German speaking non-members?*

There is a demographic stabilization of the JCs in total numbers, sure. If there has been a true stabilization for the *long term*, there I have my doubts. When we look at the age structure of the community members and compare the death rate with the birth rate, then no growth is expected, just the opposite. And there's not going to be another substantial immigration from Eastern Europe. The question is now if it makes any sense to build more synagogues. Aren't the existing ones sufficient, and shouldn't the focus be put on other things? These would be, I'll repeat, important topics for a future planning committee, which unfortunately does not exist.

- ...that would also deal with religious topics?

Yes, why not? If you want to stir up interest in the religious communities among non-members, then you might also have to change some things in religious life, so that it becomes more interesting for the others.

- *The Jewish community in Berlin enjoys an excellent infrastructure compared to others in Germany. There are several Jewish kindergartens, schools, a prep school, a Jewish adult education center and other institutions. But when we take a community like Frankfurt/Oder, which has almost nothing other than the building itself, how is this kind of community supposed to guarantee survival for the second generation?*

Of course the community in Frankfurt/Oder is standing at square one, but exactly here extremely motivated immigrants have come together and are intensively working through the history of the pre-war community. These people are investing enormous amounts of energy to reconstruct local Jewish history and this connects them, this is also community life! Concerning the perspectives of the second generation, I think that the communities must become open for children with a non-Jewish mother but other Jewish ancestors. I think that there's a great potential here and I know that there are certainly people who *want* to come to the communities, but they're not being accepted! This is absolutely incomprehensible for me.

Of course the communities there are struggling with a weak infrastructure, also after the immigration wave during the Nineties. But just like in relatively strong big city communities, much depends on the local rabbis and cantors. Take William Wolff in Rostock und Schwerin. He took Russian courses at an advanced age, looks after various communities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, he approaches people, has vision and is establishing a successor. This is how it should be, and not just resignation that "after me comes the Flood."

- *How important do you think it is for communities in the East with around 500–800 members to establish a Jewish kindergarten, even when the number of girls and boys would remain very low?*

You'd first have to examine the local conditions. In some cases it's delusional to open a complete kindergarten. But a regular afternoon daycare can also achieve a lot when it's done well. Of course there's a limit to what can be done when the families themselves are not the ones showing interest in being involved. You can't demand that the families carry out certain Jewish traditions at home. But inspirations can also be brought by the children into the families.

- *A not insignificant number of kindergarten projects has been established by “outsiders,” including Chabad Lubavitch and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. What is your opinion on this development?*

As a Liberal, I do not have to conform to the content of these movements, but I respect their commitment. This commitment becomes more significant because the government support for the Jewish communities in Germany will hardly be able to continue in the future in its present form. The Lauder Foundation offers people a lot in Jewish education, not just for children and teenagers; it’s investing in many different levels. There’s an idea behind it, and their people are motivated.

#### 24. HEINZ-JOACHIM ARIS, 5 May 2010, Dresden

- *Mr. Aris, since 1991 there has been Russian-Jewish immigration to Dresden, the capital of the state of Saxony, which soon outnumbered the local Jewish population. How did those few locals react to this?*

Among the veteran members, many of whom, after all, had already reached an advanced age, there was a fundamental open acceptance of the new challenge, which can also be easily explained. On the one hand, not a few of the local members had themselves arrived here as Eastern European immigrants; they had simply come a few decades earlier. We still had immigrants from the Baltic states in the late Fifties when there was still some movement within Eastern Europe. And I have to give our community credit that the realization was that without immigration there would be no future. In 1989 we had just *one* child member and only 61 members in total. Everyone understood that the demographic development would lead to the end of the community, hence new members were welcome. Moreover, mental affinities towards the Russians—and Eastern Europeans—here in East Germany did, in fact, exist. Many of the local community members had experienced the “Russians” as true liberators at the end of the war.

- *What is the demographic make-up of the Dresden community today?*

We profit from the fact that the city itself has a generally positive pull on people. This includes the fact that we have a number of converts in the community, and they are in general very active, particularly in religious life. We can attest that they play an important role in community life. In addition, we are fortunate to have a high number of



mostly highly qualified West German Jews who have moved to the city for professional reasons and became members of the community almost at once. All this has had the result that around half of the board members of our community come from the German-speaking groups mentioned above, and the other half is made up of the new immigrants. We have professors, artists and doctors and our own Jewish Chamber Orchestra has been founded. Taken altogether, I'd call it a good symbiosis of community members from very different areas.

- *Do you think that the practical side of integrating the Russian-Jewish immigrants in the Jewish communities has been solved in the meantime?*

I would have to strongly disagree here. In the Jewish communities in Saxony, the average percentage of people in the age-group of 61 and above is around 47–50 percent. Some people from this group visit the community every day; you can imagine just how comprehensively the assistance program offered must be organized. These are people who objectively will continue to need support. I've always said that with the first generation of immigrants we'll experience a considerable quantitative improvement, and with the second a qualitative one. But concerning the first generation, helping them to integrate will remain necessary also in the long-term, even if most of them are highly-qualified academics.

- *Is the organization of the religious services secured each week?*

Kabbalat Shabbat takes place every Friday evening; it's led by a very active prayer leader. Shaharit is held on average every three weeks, here is our State Rabbi (Almekias-Siegel) officiating, and on such weekends he also leads the Kabbalat Shabbat. Naturally, there is also rabbinical support secured for the high holy days as well.

- *A Jewish kindergarten was established years ago. Which plans exist now to enlarge the chain of educational facilities to include other age groups; for example, schoolchildren and high schoolers, in the foreseeable future?*

Our community has around 700 members today, almost half of them are senior citizens, and we don't want to get carried away with our future planning. The project of a Jewish elementary school is still quite delusory at the moment. The Jewish kindergarten is run by Chabad Lubavitch, and it is very well accepted.

- *The community does not have its own kindergarten. Isn't this a contradiction?*

I don't see this as being a contradiction. Chabad participates in community life, without maintaining their own members. On the contrary, we consider projects that have been established by other Jewish

movements—like Chabad—by all means as positive, particularly as we don't have the capacity for them ourselves. The Jewish kindergarten in Dresden, as far as I see, is one of very high quality.

- *As a member of the board of directors of the Central Council, you are presumably a supporter of the model of the unified community. Do you see any danger of fragmentation if different movements come from outside and establish projects in Germany which can have an absolutely competitive character?*

Flexibility is the most important thing here, and a certain minimum consensus. Of course we could close ourselves off to the new movements coming here, but why? There used to be reservations not only concerning Chabad, but also against the Lauder Foundation and the Union of Progressive Jews. I think that all of the movements mentioned will gain in resonance and strength. Why should we block something that's going to grow anyway? At the moment I don't see any irreconcilable differences in this new pluralism, and also no threat. I think this isn't just true for Germany, but for a lot of places in the Diaspora. The individual Jewish movements are simply not strong enough to afford the luxury of competing with or even being hostile toward one another. I am profoundly upset when some people and groups do not straighten things out internally amongst themselves, but carry everything out in the non-Jewish German media. This causes considerable damage to the public image. But this is already another topic.

- *Which educational and cultural facilities, other than the Jewish kindergarten, has the Dresden community established?*

We have a Sunday school and a youth center here for all of Saxony, both have a weekly program and are also supported by the Central Welfare Board. In youth work we also have the resource of young Israelis within the framework of the *Lehava* program. The community provides the *Lehava* activists with their own apartment. There are also a whole set of associations with an artistic and historical orientation (e.g. "Amcha"), a Jewish theater group (*Kunstarche/Art Ark*), a choir, an engineer's association, a Maccabi association, a chess club and much more.

- *Around 50 percent of the new immigrants do not have any connection to the local Jewish communities after their arrival in Germany. Do you have any ideas how community life could be organized so to make it more attractive for non-members as well?*

The percentage of non-members you stated seems to me—at least for Saxony—definitely too high. The immigrants do find the way to the

Jewish communities by almost 100 percent, at least in the initial stages of integration. Most of them also become members of the JCs, though, for individual reasons, there's not a general active participation. However, with respect to the reason of [RSJ] immigration I anticipate the JC membership.

## APPENDIX TWO

### JEWISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN GERMANY (2010)

This appendix presents the list that was compiled by the research team on the basis of a thorough inquiry but it does not include projects in development. It is not to exclude either that some frameworks escaped the researchers' attention.

#### By cities

##### A) BERLIN

- 4 Jewish kindergartens  
(JC, Chabad, Lauder, Masorti)
- 3 Jewish Elementary Schools  
(JC, Chabad, Lauder)
- 1 Jewish Religion School/Sunday  
School (Chabad)
- 1 Jewish High School (JC)
- 1 youth center (JC)
- 1 Tora College for Teenagers  
(Chabad)
- 1 Jewish Adult Education Center  
(JC/Municipality)
- 1 Family & Education Center  
combined (Chabad)
- 1 Beit Midrasch (Masorti)
- 2 Rabbinical Seminaries  
(UPJ, Lauder)
- 2 Yeshivot (Chabad, Lauder)
- 1 Midrascha (Lauder)
- 1 Academy for Holocaust Studies  
(Touro College)
- 1 Independent Network for Women  
with Conference Projects  
(Bet Debora)
- 1 Jewish Cultural Association  
(German Speaking, independent)

##### B) WEST GERMANY

- Aachen  
1 youth center
- Bamberg  
1 Beit Midrasch (Lehrhaus)
- Bochum  
1 youth center
- Cologne  
1 Jewish Day Care Center  
(Kindergarten)
- 1 Jewish Elementary School  
(Lauder/JC)
- 1 youth center
- 1 Active Students Organization
- Dortmund  
1 youth center
- 1 family center
- Duisburg  
1 youth center
- 1 Research Institute for Jewish  
Studies (Steinheim Institute)
- Düsseldorf  
1 Jewish Kindergarten
- 1 Jewish Elementary School (JC)
- 1 youth center
- 1 Jewish Academy for Children &  
Youth (in coop. with JC)
- 1 Department of Jewish Studies  
(University)

Emmendingen

1 Beit Midrasch

Essen

1 Jewish youth center

Frankfurt am Main

1 Jewish Kindergarten

1 Jewish Elementary School

1 Jewish Religion School

1 Jewish Youth Center

1 Jewish Adult Education Center

1 Yeshiva (Chabad)

Hamburg

1 Jewish Kindergarten (Lauder)

1 Jewish Elementary School (JC)

1 Jewish Religion School (Chabad)

1 Active Jewish Students  
Organization

1 Independent Center for Jiddish  
(Salomon-Birnbaum-Society)

Hanover

1 Jewish Kindergarten (UPJ)

2 Jewish youth centers (Central  
Council, UPJ)

Heidelberg

1 youth center

1 Jewish Student Organization

1 University of Jewish Studies  
(run by Central Council & State)

Lübeck

1 Jewish youth center

Mainz

1 Jewish youth center

Mönchengladbach

1 Jewish Kindergarten

1 Jewish youth center

Munich

1 Jewish Kindergarten

1 Jewish Elementary School

1 Jewish youth center

1 Adult Jewish Education Center

Münster

1 Jewish youth center

Regensburg

1 Jewish Children Playgroup

Straubing

1 Jewish youth center

Stuttgart

1 Jewish Kindergarten

1 Jewish Elementary School

1 Jewish Religion School

1 Jewish youth center

Wiesbaden

1 Jewish youth center

Wuppertal

1 Jewish youth center

Würzburg

1 Jewish youth center

**C) EAST GERMANY**Chemnitz

1 German-Jewish-Israeli meeting  
center

Dresden

1 youth center

1 intercultural/educational center  
(independent/Municipality)

Erfurt

1 Department of Jewish *Social Work*  
(in cooperation with local University)

Halberstadt

1 Research Institute of Jewish  
Studies (Mendelssohn Academy)

Halle

1 Department of Jewish Studies  
(University)

Leipzig

1 Jewish kindergarten

1 Tora Center (youth & adults,  
Lauder)

Potsdam

1 Department of Jewish Studies  
(University)

1 Research Institute of Jewish  
Studies (Mendelssohn Center)

Weimar

1 International Jewish Music  
Festival (2 times a year, with  
course system)

**D) NATION-WIDE PROJECTS**

- Lehawa (offices in Frankfurt and Berlin)
- Limmud Germany (mainly based in Berlin)
- ZWST youth department (based in Frankfurt)

### By type of education

#### **Jewish Educational Institutions in Germany Today—An Overview**

- A) Jewish Kindergartens/Day Care Centers
- B) Jewish Elementary Schools
- C) Religion Schools for Children & Youth
- D) Jewish Secondary Schools/High Schools
- E) Youth Centers
- F) Student Organizations
- G) Jewish Adult Education Centers
- H) Batej Midrasch (Lehrhäuser)
- I) Rabbinical Seminaries/Yeshivot
- J) Academic Institutions of Jewish Studies
- K) Independent Frameworks

#### *A) Jewish Kindergartens/Day Care Centers*

##### **1. Jewish Kindergarten of the JC Berlin**

The kindergarten of the Jewish Community of Berlin was founded in 1946. Upon its establishment, the kindergarten was one of the first Jewish institutions to open its doors after the war. It is considered one of the catalysts reigniting Jewish life in post-war Germany. The founding principles of the kindergarten are to convey Jewish values to Jewish and non-Jewish children ranging in age from 7 months to 6 years. All children are welcome irrespective of religious upbringing. The kindergarten is also open to non-Halakhic Jews and non-Jews. One of the school's priorities is giving its children insight into their Jewish religious, traditional and cultural roots. According to Ms. Vera Caro, director of the kindergarten, religion is the basis for everything the kindergarten does. It supplies the children with the basics of Judaism; a kosher kitchen, Jewish holidays and Shabbat. The kindergarten observes and celebrates all Jewish holidays. Parents are also invited to share and experience the holidays together with their children. The kindergarten also offers sports, music, art and Hebrew in its curriculum.

**Facts**

Employees: 25 (consisting of:  
1 director, 22 teachers, 1 intern,  
1 caretaker)  
Volunteers (estimated): 1–2 interns.  
Number of children: 130  
Funding: Berlin city government,  
Parental fees, Jewish Community

**Contact Data**

Kindertagesstätte der Jüdischen  
Gemeinde zu Berlin  
Delbrückstraße 8, 14193 Berlin  
Tel: +49 (0)30-89 16 7 48  
Fax: +49 (0) 30-89 40 84 93  
Director: Vera Caro  
Website: [www.jg-berlin.org/  
institutionen/bildung-erziehung/  
kindertagesstaette.html](http://www.jg-berlin.org/institutionen/bildung-erziehung/kindertagesstaette.html)

**2. Masorti Kindergarten Berlin**

The Masorti Kindergarten in Berlin-Wilmersdorf was originally founded in September 2004 with seven children. It is designed for Jewish families seeking an environment in which Judaism is lived as a matter of course. Programming is based on elements of Montessori pedagogy, and the team aims to promote integration. Jewish topics reflect a commitment to egalitarianism. An important element in the concept of the Masorti Kindergarten Berlin is bilingualism. The Hebrew language is not only applied to religious topics, to Jewish music, finger games and reading. It also is incorporated into daily life, with help from Israeli staff. Since the autumn of 2005, there has also been a German-English bilingual group. The Masorti Kindergarten is cooperating closely with the TALi Foundation for Jewish Education in Israel, especially with regard to developing new teaching material and to further training of employees. According to Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, head of the Masorti Center in Berlin, another 40 children are on the waiting list. And so “we are thinking about new premises, for example, to open another kindergarten,” says Rabbi Ederberg. “We want to keep the existing one small because the family education aspect is very important.”

**Facts**

Employees: 10 (full and part-time)  
Volunteers: 20–25  
Number of children: 45  
Funding: Senate of Berlin, Masorti  
Movement, Private donations,  
Parent’s fees.  
Pincus Fund (in the initial stage)

**Contact Data**

Masorti Kindergarten Berlin  
Director: Dr. Rachel Herweg  
Masorti e.V.,  
Eislebener Str. 4, 10789 Berlin  
Tel: +49 (0)30-21016551  
Fax: +49 (0)30-21016552  
Website: [www.masorti.de/  
kindergarten\\_de.html](http://www.masorti.de/kindergarten_de.html)  
email: [kindergartenmasorti.de](mailto:kindergartenmasorti.de)

### **3. Kindergarten Gan Israel/Or Avner Berlin (Chabad Lubavitch)**

The kindergarten Gan Israel, organized by Chabad Lubavitch Berlin, was founded in 2004 and today is attended by 50 children. Gan Israel focuses on the promotion of individual development and on playful learning. According to the team, Gan Israel aims to guarantee a “creative, warm and protective environment, where—aside from promoting the general learning process—knowledge of Jewish traditions and rituals is transmitted, may be adopted, actively designed and embraced.” Each child is encouraged to make decisions, to develop respect for him-/herself and others, and to deal actively with the environment. The team considers the development of self-confidence and a healthy independence to be crucial. The stimulation of playful learning guarantees optimal preparation for the next stage in their schooling. Boys and girls learn and interact with the environment for the most part in age-specific groups. Regular activities with kids from other age groups help children develop leadership skills and hone their identity as a role model.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1 director, several  
Germany-based educators;  
1 educator from Israel; trainees  
(from the US, France, Israel);  
1 cook (kosher cuisine)  
Number of children: 50  
Funding: Senate of Berlin, Private  
donations, Parent’s fees

#### **Contact Data**

Chabad Or Avner Kindergarten  
Spandauer Damm 20,  
14059 Berlin, Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)30-3267-8601  
Fax: +49 (0)30-3267-8833  
Director: Ms. Annette Lentz  
[www.jkindergarten.de/](http://www.jkindergarten.de/)

### **4. Lauder Nitzan Kindergarten Berlin**

The Lauder Nitzan Kindergarten Berlin was founded in the center of the city by the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation in 2006 and offers place for 30 children (boys and girls aged 1–6).

According to Rabbi Joshua Spinner, head of the Lauder Yeshurun Community in Berlin, “the kids in the kindergarten come from at least three different backgrounds. Firstly children who stem from core families of the Lauder Yeshurun Community Berlin, secondly children from Jewish families in the neighborhood who probably would never have sent their kids to a Jewish kindergarten if there hadn’t been an option close to their own neighborhood. Thirdly, children from Jewish families and parents from around Berlin who don’t identify with



orthodox Judaism at all, but who want the educational experience we provide.”

### **Facts**

Employees: 6  
Volunteers: 2  
Number of children: 30  
Funding: Berlin city government,  
Kindergarten fees  
The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation

### **Contact Data**

Lauder Nitzan Kindergarten  
Brunnenstr. 33  
10115 Berlin  
Tel: +49 (0)30-4050 4690

## **5. Franz Herschtritt Day Care Center in Cologne**

The Franz Herschtritt Day Care Center has a long tradition and was founded before World War II. Now, the institution is interested in attracting children of the Jewish Community in Cologne and those with an immigrant background. The center is open to non-Jewish children.

The top priority is to impart appreciation for Jewish religion and tradition. Children learn about all holidays and celebrate them together. They learn prayers and songs, and blessings are recited before and after all meals. The kitchen is kosher. A Kabbalat Shabbat is offered each Friday, where a Torah story is told and songs sung. In this way the kids can become familiar with Jewish tradition. In addition, the children (many of whom come from families from the FSU) receive instruction in German and a basic general education. The institution also teaches about Israel, but its main emphasis is on life in Germany. The Franz Herschtritt Day Care Center is closely connected with the Synagogen-Gemeinde Köln, the biggest Jewish Community in Cologne.

### **Facts**

Employees: 12  
Number of children: 66 between 3  
and 6 years  
Funding: Cologne city government  
Jewish Community in Cologne

### **Contact Data**

Franz-Herschtritt-Kindertagesstätte  
Elisabeth Frey-Salz (director)  
Ottostraße 85, 50823 Köln  
Tel: +49 (0)221-71662-300  
[www.sgg.de/home.htm](http://www.sgg.de/home.htm) (JC Cologne)  
Email: [synagoge-koeln@netcologne.de](mailto:synagoge-koeln@netcologne.de)

## **6. Jewish Kindergarten, Düsseldorf**

The foundation of the Jewish Kindergarten in Düsseldorf was closely connected with the reestablishment of the Jewish Community in Düsseldorf about 40 years ago. The non-orthodox institution offers its ser-

vices to children between the ages of 3 and 6; many have parents from the FSU. There are four mixed-age groups and two toddler groups. A special emphasis is placed on Jewish education and language teaching; education in music and rhythm, handicrafts, drawing and gymnastics are also offered. The day care center aims to inculcate the values of kindness and helpfulness. Imparting Jewish religious and traditional values is also key. Children learn about Jewish holidays, and parents are invited to holiday-related presentations. Parents also learn about holidays through brochures distributed some weeks beforehand. In addition, the institution is committed to building strong connections to Israel. The head of the institution says the main goal today is to maintain the standard; she, the children and their parents are pleased with the program. The center would like to expand into larger premises; there currently is a long waiting list for admission.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 20  
Volunteers: 2  
Number of children: 110  
Funding:  
Düsseldorf city government  
Jewish Community of Düsseldorf

#### **Contact Data**

Kindergarten der Jüdischen  
Gemeinde Düsseldorf  
Zietenstraße 50  
40476 Düsseldorf  
Tel: +49 (0)211-86 32 32 40  
(nursery school phone)  
Website: [http://www.jgdus.de/  
Kindergarten.htm](http://www.jgdus.de/Kindergarten.htm)  
email: [info@jgdus.de](mailto:info@jgdus.de) (JC Düsseldorf)

### **7. Kindergarten Bereshit, Frankfurt am Main**

The Bereshit kindergarten in Frankfurt/Main was founded 30 years ago. Today Bereshit is one of two Jewish kindergartens in Frankfurt. The mandate of the kindergarten is to convey basic Judaism to Jewish and non-Jewish children between the ages of 1½ and 6. The kindergarten welcomes all children without consideration of their religious background, and is explicitly open to all, regardless of Halakhic status. As Bereshit is a kindergarten of the Jewish Community, preference is given to children of Community members. There are two main emphases of the kindergarten. The first is to teach Jewish values, traditions and religion. The second is to teach the German language, as a very wide array of foreign languages is represented amongst the kids. In addition, the kindergarten offers music classes, speech therapy, cooking and baking workshops, children's reading programs, swimming and horseback riding lessons. Bereshit sometimes cooperates with

Chabad Lubavitch and the project Lehawa. There is no cooperation with non-Jewish organizations. Israeli topics are integrated into the work with older children.

### **Facts**

Employees: 16 (no volunteers)  
 Number of children: 45  
 Funding:  
 Frankfurt city government  
 Parent's fees  
 Jewish Community of Frankfurt

### **Contact Data**

Kindergarten Bereshit  
 Röderbergweg 29,  
 60314 Frankfurt am Main  
 Director: Shira Malloy  
 Tel/Fax: +49 (0)69-4 97 07 39  
 Website: [www.jg-ffm.de/web/deutsch/erziehung-bildung/kindergarten-roederbergweg/](http://www.jg-ffm.de/web/deutsch/erziehung-bildung/kindergarten-roederbergweg/)  
 email: [kiga-bereschit@gmx.de](mailto:kiga-bereschit@gmx.de)

## **8. Ronald Lauder Kindergarten, Hamburg**

The Ronald Lauder Kindergarten of the Jewish Community in Hamburg was established in 2000 by Daniel Ajzensztejn, a member of the Jewish Community's executive board. The kindergarten promises to teach basic Judaism to Jewish and non-Jewish children between the ages of 1 and 6. The kindergarten welcomes all children regardless of religious background. There are two main emphases of the kindergarten: the first is to teach Jewish values, traditions and religion itself; the second is to teach the German language, as many other languages are represented amongst the children. In addition, the kindergarten offers Hebrew classes, music classes, speech therapy and support for pre-school children. All classes are planned in advance; the kindergarten also has a curriculum. The institution's main priority is to impart Jewish religion and tradition. Jewish culture is taught to older children. According to the director of the kindergarten, Ms. Judith Jacobius, the kindergarten provides the basics of Judaism: it has a completely kosher kitchen, it holds religious services and boys wear a yarmulke. The kindergarten is described as "religious" by Ms. Jacobius. The Lauder Kindergarten Hamburg is the official kindergarten of the local Community, is located in its building, and runs its finances through the Community.

**Facts**

Employees: 10  
 Volunteers (estimated): occasional  
 interns/volunteers  
 Number of children: 41  
 Funding:  
 Hamburg city government  
 Parent's donations  
 Lauder Foundation

**Contact Data**

Ronald-Lauder-Kindergarten  
 der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Hamburg  
 Grindelhof 30  
 20146 Hamburg (Rotherbaum)  
 Ms. Jacobius  
 Tel: +49 (0) 40-43 09 45 25

**9. Tamar Day Care Center in Hanover**

The Tamar day care center was founded in September of 2007 by the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover. The center is for children between the ages of 1 to 6, particularly those whose families belong to the Liberal Jewish Community, and for children whose Christian parents want their children to get to know another culture. The primary emphasis is on imparting Jewish values, religion and culture. Teachers aim to foster individual abilities. Jewish prayers are recited before and after meals, and Torah readings are held. The school has its own Torah Scroll, it's a children's Torah edited by an American writer, which the children may then illustrate. Each week, children have a pre-Shabbat celebration, including baking challah bread, singing songs and learning prayers. Another focus is assistance in German language acquisition, as many children come from an immigrant background. Early music education is offered as well. There is also a weekly excursion to familiarize the children with their neighborhood. In addition, the institution strives to impart competent knowledge about Israel and the Russian-Jewish Diaspora. They celebrate the anniversary of the founding of Israel with a birthday party. The school does its part to forge close links with Israel.

**Facts**

Employees: 5  
 2 full time teachers, 1 part time  
 1 teacher (job creation), 1 trainee  
 in social work  
 Volunteers: An Israeli artist offers  
 art classes.  
 Parental involvement.  
 Number of children: 21  
 Funding: Parent's fees;  
 Hanover city

**Contact Data**

Kindertagesstätte Tamar  
 Fuhsestraße 6A  
 30419 Hanover;  
 Tel: +49 (0)511-7 63 65 10  
 Website: <http://www.ljgh.de>  
 (JC Hanover)  
 email: [LJG.Hannover@t-online.de](mailto:LJG.Hannover@t-online.de)/  
[gemeinde@ljgh.de](mailto:gemeinde@ljgh.de) (Jewish  
 community addresses)

**10. Jewish Kindergarten Leipzig Info:**  
**Tel. +49 (0)341-980 02 33**

**11. Jewish Kindergarten, Mönchengladbach**

Mönchengladbach's Jewish Community's kindergarten was founded in 2004. The founding principles of the kindergarten are to convey Jewish values to Jewish and non-Jewish children ranging in ages from 3 to 6 years. Currently 17 children are enrolled. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The kindergarten is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. The kindergarten has two priorities. The first is teaching the children Jewish values, traditions and religion. The second is getting the children's parents more involved in Jewish Community life. The kindergarten seeks to develop and deepen the children's understanding of their Jewish identity through games and other fun activities. Hebrew, music, choir, dance, Russian literature and art classes are offered. The kindergarten is an official institution of the Jewish Community of Mönchengladbach. It often cooperates with other Jewish Communities and other Jewish organizations. There is no cooperation with non-Jewish organizations. The kindergarten, aiming to develop closer cooperation with the local Rabbi, is always seeking more financial and individual support from Jewish organizations.

**Facts**

Employees: 1 (director and teacher)  
 Volunteers (estimated): No  
 volunteers (but parents help out)  
 Number of children: 17  
 Funding: Jewish Community of  
 Mönchengladbach

**Contact Data**

Jewish Kindergarten Mönchengladbach  
 c/o Jüdische Gemeinde  
 Mönchengladbach  
 Albertusstr. 54; 41061  
 Mönchengladbach  
 Telephone: +49 (0)2161-238 79  
 Fax: +49 (0)2161-146 39  
 email: [juedischegemeindemg@t-online.de](mailto:juedischegemeindemg@t-online.de)

**12. Alexander Moksel Kindergarten, Munich**

The Alexander Moksel day care center is the kindergarten of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Munich (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde—IKG). It is the only Jewish kindergarten in Munich or southern Bavaria and has been open for over 50 years. The kindergarten is also open to non-Jewish children. Children of families from the former Soviet Union are given extra language support in Ger-

man. Mutual tolerance and cooperation between children of various religious and ethnic backgrounds is a central focal point of the center. Both the Jewish and non-Jewish parents of the children have demonstrated their dedication to the well being of the school. Among the kindergarten's main mandates is passing on knowledge of Jewish religion and traditions. The children celebrate Shabbat and Jewish festivals together. A teacher from the local Jewish Community School has been appointed to teach basic Hebrew to the children. The children are provided with kosher lunches from the Community's restaurant. Shaped by history, one main goal of the kindergarten is to educate the children that people with different backgrounds need to live together peacefully rather than just coexist.

### **Facts**

Employees: 18  
 Volunteers (estimated): One parent, who works in the theater, organizes a theater group in the afternoons.  
 Number of children: About 120 (between 2, 5 and 6 years).  
 Funding: Jewish Community of Munich (taxes); Donations; Munich city government

### **Contact Data**

Alexander-Moksel-Kindergarten  
 c/o Israelitische Kultusgemeinde  
 München und  
 Oberbayern K.d.ö.R.  
 St.-Jakobs-Platz 18, 80331 München  
 Kindergarten director: Ms. Alfred  
 Tel.: +49 (0)89-202 400-411  
 (Ms. Alfred: -409)  
 Fax: +49 (0)89-202 400-421  
<http://www.ikg-muenchen.de/index.php?id=60>  
 email: [info@ikg-m.de](mailto:info@ikg-m.de) (central address  
 JC Munich)

## **13. Jewish Playgroup Kohavim Ktanim ("Small stars"), Jewish Community of Regensburg**

The Jewish playgroup of the Jewish Community of Regensburg was founded in 2007. It was an initiative of the parents and the current director of the Jewish playgroup, Sina Alber, who is also a board member of the Jewish Community of Regensburg. The playgroup reaches out to preschool children and has a deliberate focus on the bi- and tri-lingual approach, as many children speak Russian and German and are learning Hebrew as well. The group meets once a week for two hours. Jewish children have the chance to get to know each other and to learn about Jewish traditions, religion and holidays in a playful and accessible way. The group is open to all children: Halakhic and non-Halakhic Jews and non-Jewish children too. The group started out with eight children and now has 15 to 20 kids. There are two main

emphases of the playgroup: the first one is to teach Jewish values, traditions and religion; the second emphasis is to help children integrate into the German school system. In addition, the children learn Israeli and Jewish songs and dances; they make creative holiday decorations and thus learn about the Jewish calendar and holidays. The group undertakes theater trips and reads German children's classics, so children will find it easier to integrate into German schools.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1 director  
 Volunteers (estimated): The parents volunteer and help as much as they can.  
 Number of children: 15–20  
 Funding: Jewish Community of Regensburg, (small) membership fee

#### **Contact Data**

Jewish Playground Group Kohavim  
 Ktanim  
 Jüdische Gemeinde Regensburg—  
 Kindergruppe  
 Am Brixener Hof; 93047 Regensburg  
 Tel: +49 (0)941-57093  
 Fax: +49 (0)941-53640  
 Director of the playgroup:  
 Ms. Sina Alber  
 Home: +49 (0)941-27 02 67

### **14. Jewish Kindergarten, Stuttgart**

The kindergarten of Stuttgart's Jewish Community already existed before World War II. The new concept was finally developed in 2000 when the current head of the kindergarten, Ms. Sabina Morcin, came from Berlin to take over the reigns. Among some of the kindergarten's major issues result from the fact that many of the children stem from immigrant families, mostly from the former Soviet Union, in which German is not the primary language. Also, children coming from multi-faith homes are not uncommon. For this reason, the kindergarten is also open for non-Halakhic Jews and non-Jews. The kindergarten's priority lies in instilling a feeling of belonging to the Jewish Community. This is achieved through courses focusing on Jewish religion and traditions as well as by programs in culture and art. The children learn about religion in the form of songs and stories in both Hebrew and German. They are expected to bring home what they learn and to teach their parents. The kindergarten's learning program is very school-preparatory. Religion, Hebrew, German, dance, music, and art are taught in a structured environment. Results of the children's creativity are presented in a gallery located on the premises. The children also learn a lot about Israel, first hand from Ms. Morcin, an Israeli.

**Facts**

Employees: 6  
 Volunteers (estimated):  
 A few parents volunteer regularly.  
 In general the director prefers to work with professionals.  
 Number of children: ca. 60  
 Funding:  
 Stuttgart city government  
 Jewish Community of Stuttgart  
 Subsidies for projects (from the city/other sources)

**Contact Data**

Jüdischer Kindergarten Stuttgart  
 c/o Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft  
 Württembergs  
 Hospitalstrasse 36; 70174 Stuttgart  
 Head of the kindergarten:  
 Sabina Morein  
 Tel.: +49 (0)711-228 36-23  
 (kindergarten)  
 Fax: +49 (0)711-228 36-18  
 (Jewish Community)  
 Website: [www.irgw.de/](http://www.irgw.de/)  
 (Jewish Community)  
 emails: [verwaltung@irgw.de](mailto:verwaltung@irgw.de)  
 (Jewish Community)

**B) Jewish Elementary Schools****15. Heinz Galinski Elementary School, Berlin (HGS)**

The Heinz Galinski Elementary School was founded in 1986. It began with a student body of 25 children. The school's main objective is teaching its students the German school curriculum which is set by the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg. The school observes all Jewish holidays and celebrates Shabbat. The HGS is a privately run institution yet accredited and funded, in part, by the state. This accreditation requires it to be open to non-Jews as well. Currently, 12% of the student body is not Jewish. The school functions under the auspices of the Berlin Jewish Community. According to HGS director, Dr. Noga Hartmann, the school's very warm atmosphere is its biggest achievement. The team of teachers has grown together over the years and works together excellently. The school hopes to be able to continue to improve and to be able to give the very best education that each child deserves. Dr. Hartmann has placed a lot of hope into the newly developed Smart Boards form of education which she believes will refreshen instruction methods. Furthermore she hopes to strengthen the school's English language program. Her dream would be for the HGS to become an officially recognized bilingual or even trilingual school, offering German-Hebrew-English.



**Facts**

Employees: 46 consisting of:  
 1 school director; 30 teachers,  
 12 educators; 1 staff coordinator; 1  
 caretaker, 1 secretary  
 Volunteers: 5;  
 number of pupils: 264  
 Funding: Berlin Senate; Jewish  
 Community of Berlin and fees

**Contact Data**

Heinz Galinski Grundschule Berlin  
 Waldschulallee 73-75; 14055 Berlin  
 Tel: +49 (0) 30-30 11 94-0  
 Dr. Noga Hartmann  
 Website: [http://www.heinz-galinski-  
 grundschule.cidsnet.de/index2  
 .php?page=start](http://www.heinz-galinski-grundschule.cidsnet.de/index2.php?page=start)  
 email contact:  
[noga.hartmann@jg-berlin.org](mailto:noga.hartmann@jg-berlin.org)

**16. Jewish Traditional School Berlin**

The Jewish Traditional School of Berlin was founded in 2005 and then quickly expanded to go up to the sixth grade. It is part of the efforts of Chabad Lubavitch to bring Jewish tradition and education in a systematic way to several towns and centers in Germany, but also fulfils all requirements of the Senate of Berlin. Therefore it is accredited as an officially approved private school in Berlin, which enables partial funding by the Senate of Berlin. In addition to the official Berlin curriculum, the Jewish Traditional School offers a wide range of Jewish education, adding 10 hours per week (2 hours per day) to the schedule. Classes in German, Hebrew and English begin in the first grade. Alongside the comprehensive curriculum there are after-school-activities, and the school has a kosher kitchen. The main target group is children of Halakhically Jewish parents, but the school must be open to children from other families as well. According to director Heike Michalak, a wide spectrum of (Jewish) families send their kids in the Jewish Traditional School, consisting of veteran German Jewish families, Russian Jewish immigrants and also Israeli families living in Berlin.

**Facts**

Employees: 10 teachers (including  
 the director and school rabbi;  
 6 teachers for secular/4 for  
 Jewish subjects); 2 educators; 1  
 administrator, 1 technical director;  
 2 cooks (kosher kitchen)  
 Number of pupils: 60  
 (spread over 6 grades)  
 Funding: Berlin city government  
 Private donations

**Contact Data**

Jüdische Traditionsschule  
 Director: Heike Michalak  
 Spandauer Damm 220; 14052 Berlin  
 Tel: +49 (0)30-32678897  
 Fax: +49 (0)30-32678833  
 Website: [www.jschule.de](http://www.jschule.de)  
 email: [schule@chabadberlin.de](mailto:schule@chabadberlin.de)

### **17. Lauder Beth Zion Elementary School, Berlin**

The Lauder Beth Zion elementary school was founded in Berlin in autumn 2008 with a 1st and a 2nd grade class. Beth Zion works under the auspices of the Jewish Community of Berlin and is accredited as an officially approved private school in Berlin, which enables partial funding by the Senate of Berlin. It is the declared aim of the Beth Zion school to impart knowledge and skills as mandated in the general guidelines and planning of the Senate of Berlin, but at the same time strengthening the children's Jewish identity through classes on Jewish subjects and intensive Hebrew language study. Beth Zion is a day school and primarily targets Jewish families with children aged 5 to 10, living in the central or eastern parts of Berlin. It is, however, open to all Jewish families seeking to overcome hurdles in securing an appropriate Jewish education for their children. The overwhelming majority of kids attending Beth Zion are Halakhically Jewish.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 10  
 Number of pupils: 27  
 (as of September 2009)  
 Funding: Municipality of Berlin  
 The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation  
 Private donors

#### **Contact Data**

Lauder Beth-Zion Grundschule  
 Rektor: Miron Schumelda  
 Rykestr. 53, 10405 Berlin  
 Tel: +49 (0)30-44 01 02 50  
 Fax: +49 (0)30-44 01 02 51  
 email: [info@lauder-beth-zion-grundschule.de](mailto:info@lauder-beth-zion-grundschule.de)

### **18. Lauder Morijah Elementary School, Cologne**

The Lauder Morijah elementary school was founded in September 2002 by the "Träger-Verein der Jüdischen Schule zu Köln e.V." (Association for Promotion of a Jewish School in Cologne). The school considers education and upbringing as two inseparable halves that add up to one whole. The Lauder Morijah school teaches respect and tolerance towards all Jewish and non-Jewish ideologies. The school's main objective is to teach the German school curriculum set by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and to create a harmonious crossover into the teachings of Hebrew, Jewish tradition and Jewish religion. The school observes all Jewish holidays and Shabbat. The school is private but accredited by the state, which means that up to 25% of all children may be non-Jewish. Lauder Morijah is a day school, which means that the children remain on site until the afternoon. The children may

participate in various afternoon activities, ranging from music lessons to swimming to Shabbat chugim (workshops). The school gives the children a very strong foundation in Jewish texts, religion and tradition. Children who graduated from Lauder Morijah are reported having an exceptional understanding of and insight into Jewish religion and the Hebrew language.

### **Facts**

Employees: 12  
 Volunteers (estimated): 5  
 Number of pupils: ca. 80 (all grades)  
 Funding: Lauder Foundation  
 Government of Cologne  
 Jewish Community of Cologne

### **Contact Data**

Lauder Morijah Grundschule  
 Ottostr. 85; 50823 Köln  
 School director: Christine Reinicke  
 Tel: +49 (0)221-71 66 24 01  
 Fax: +49 (0)221-71 66 24 00  
 email: Lauder-morijah-schule@  
 netcologne.de

## **19. Yitzhak Rabin Elementary School, Düsseldorf**

The Yitzhak Rabin School is the elementary school of the Jewish Community in Düsseldorf. As a state accredited alternative school, it is financially supported by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The school works together with a Jewish partner school in Berlin and in Jerusalem. The Yitzhak Rabin School is a Jewish public school where the education is based on Jewish values, and the children grow up in a Jewish atmosphere. Hebrew and religious education are an important and integral part of the curriculum. All classes and recreational activities have basically two objectives, compliance with the guidelines and curriculum of North Rhine-Westphalia and imparting Jewish education. Thus, children are also taught Hebrew and Judaism. For Russian-speaking children, there are also bilingual lessons provided by native speakers that give the children an opportunity to learn more about the language and culture of their birth country. In all grades, special classes are offered for gifted and educationally challenged pupils. Remedial teaching is conducted one on one, or in groups. There is a wide variety of recreational activities on offer, such as sports (hockey, soccer/football, karate), dance, music, art, Jewish history and English.

**Facts**

Employees: 6 teachers for elementary school subjects; 4 teachers for Jewish subjects; 1 teacher for native languages 2 supervisors; 3 teacher candidates and teaching tutors  
 Number of pupils: Ca. 140  
 Funding: State of North Rhine-Westphalia

**Contact Data**

Mailing address:  
 Yitzhak Rabin Elementary School  
 Düsseldorf  
 Zietenstr. 50; 40476 Düsseldorf  
 Telephone: +49 (0)211-86 32 32 12  
 Website: [www.jgdus.de/Yithzak-Rabin-Schule.html](http://www.jgdus.de/Yithzak-Rabin-Schule.html)

**20. Joseph Carlebach School, Hamburg**

The Joseph Carlebach (JCS) private elementary day school was founded in August 2007 by the Jewish Community of Hamburg. It sees itself in the tradition of Joseph Carlebach, who for five years headed the Talmud Torah School in Hamburg (which existed from 1805–1942). He was dedicated to maintaining Jewish tradition, and encouraging tolerance and openness in social interaction. The school's main priority is to convey Jewish religion and tradition as well as culture. Hebrew language acquisition is seen as an introduction to Jewish culture. The school strives to impart competent knowledge about Israel. The Holocaust is not part of the curriculum but all of the pupils' questions are answered. The Joseph Carlebach School is run under the auspices of the Jewish Community of Hamburg. Additional Jewish partners are the Ronald Lauder Kindergarten in Hamburg and a few schools, including some in Berlin, for teacher observations. Future plans include the development and stabilization of the school, outreach to inhabitants of Hamburg, and ensuring a good atmosphere for pupils and teachers.

**Facts**

Employees: Ca. 20 (including bus driver, caretaker, teachers, social education workers)  
 Number of pupils: 60 in the 2009/10 school year (one first and one second grade class)  
 Funding: Jewish Community of Hamburg; Federal state of Hamburg; Monthly tuition

**Contact Data**

Joseph Carlebach Schule  
 Grindelhof 30; 20146 Hamburg  
 Tel: +49 (0)40-44 09 44 11  
 Fax: +49 (0)40-44 09 44 12  
 Website: [www.jcsh.de](http://www.jcsh.de)  
 email: [info@jcsh.de](mailto:info@jcsh.de)

## **21. Jewish Elementary School in Frankfurt/Main— Lichtigfeld-Schule**

The Lichtigfeld School opened on April 18, 1966 as the first post-war Jewish elementary school in Germany. The institution combines a pre-school with grades 1–6. It is closely connected with the Jewish Community of Frankfurt. The school aims to build and promote a close relationship to the broader Jewish Community and to the Jewish religion. Knowledge of Jewish history, awareness of the importance of Israel and the impact of the Shoa on both Israelis and the Jewish Diaspora are also fundamental topics. Jewish issues are discussed in all school subjects. The school strives to integrate children of Jewish immigrant families of all backgrounds. The Lichtigfeld School expects pupils to use their talents to build their strengths. Therefore the institution has a complex system of promotion; for example, children with an immigrant background are taught in small classes, and with a special emphasis on learning German as second language. Aside from state-required subjects the school offers as part of its curriculum three hours of Hebrew plus an hour for Jewish history and Shabbat each week.

### **Facts**

Employees: 69 teachers (incl. principal); 2 secretaries;  
1 caretaker  
Volunteers: Some social workers  
Number of pupils: 500, including 30% children from the FSU and 30% non-Jews  
Funding: Federal State of Hessen; Jewish Community of Frankfurt;  
Tuition based on parent's income

### **Contact Data**

I.E. Lichtigfeld-Schule  
z. Hd. Alexa Brum  
Hebelstraße 15–19; 60318  
Frankfurt am Main  
Tel: +49 (0)69-42 72 89-800  
Fax: +49 (0)69-42 72 89-899  
Website: [www.lichtigfeld-schule.de](http://www.lichtigfeld-schule.de)  
email: [lichtigfeld-schule@JG-Ffm.de](mailto:lichtigfeld-schule@JG-Ffm.de)

## **22. Elementary School Sinai, Munich**

The School "Sinai" is a denominational, state acknowledged elementary school that was founded in 1969. The school is closely connected with the Jewish Community of Munich (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde München). A primary aim is to develop and strengthen Jewish identity, while the complete elementary school curriculum of the Federal State Bavaria is applied. Jewish religion, tradition and history are not only taught but also lived and experienced. A relatively small number of pupils per class (maximum 18) guarantees close relations between

teacher and kids and lessons of huge quality. The School “Sinai” is also open for non-Jewish children. The weekly curriculum includes 5 hours Hebrew, and each new chapter is enriched by Hebrew songs. Religious education is oriented at the calendar of the Jewish holidays and at the weekly chapters of the Tora (Paraschot). The girls and boys do daily meet for morning prayer, and every Friday—before weekend—a little Kabbalat Shabbat is celebrated. Jewish topics are also included in the subjects of literature and arts. Since a few years, the school “Sinai” is also offering specific, intensive German language lessons for children from foreign families. Up from the 2nd grade, the pupils are made acquainted with computer and software.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 30  
 Number of pupils: 160  
 Funding: Subsidies by  
 K.d.ö.R  
 Government, parental fees

#### **Contact Data**

Sinai Grundschule  
 der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde  
 München und Oberbayern  
 St.-Jakobs-Platz 18  
 80331 München  
 Head of the School: Ms. Antonia Ungar  
 Tel: +49-(0)89-202 400-418

### **23. Jewish Elementary School, Stuttgart**

The Jewish Elementary School was founded in September 2008 by the Jewish Community of Stuttgart. The school’s main objective is to educate the children in Jewish traditions, values and Judaism. The school sees its mandate to instill in the children a feeling of belonging to the Community. It also tries to inspire children to enjoy learning. In addition, the school promotes the social competency and musical talent of its pupils. The school offers many different sport and art classes as well as religious studies. All Jewish holidays and Shabbat are observed. The school is private but accredited by the state. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The school also caters to children with a non-Halakhic background. It does, however, also make concerted efforts to work together with members of the Jewish Community considered Halakhically Jewish. The school is run directly under the auspices of Stuttgart’s Jewish Community. The school does not work with other Jewish or non-Jewish organizations. Because of the young age of its pupils, the school does not see itself as a center for giving insight into the global Jewish world, Israel and the Russian Diaspora. It does, however, feel that it has a mandate to give its

student body the basics about Jewish traditions, religion and, even if only a bit, some aspects of Israel.

### **Facts**

Employees: 6 consisting of:  
1 school director, 4 teachers;  
1 administrative officer  
Volunteers: 2–3 interns  
Number of pupils: 15 (grades 1 to 4)  
Funding: Regional Government of  
Stuttgart  
Jewish Community Stuttgart;  
Parental fees

### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Ganztagsgrundschule  
Stuttgart  
Hospital Str. 36; 70174 Stuttgart  
Tel: +49 (0)711-2283628  
Ms. Nirmann Schwaben  
(Chief Administrator)  
Director: Rabbi Netanel Wurmser  
Website: [http://www.irgw.de/  
grundschule/](http://www.irgw.de/grundschule/)

## **C) Religion Schools for Children & Youth**

### **24. Sunday School of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin**

The Sunday School of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin, hosted in the Jewish Educational and Family Center Berlin, is attended by about 60 girls and boys between the ages of 5 and 12. The kids gather twice a week (Wednesday and Sunday) and receive basic knowledge of Jewish tradition in a creative and playful way. The Sunday School tries to outreach children who are not visiting Jewish elementary schools, and a considerable number come from socially underprivileged families.

### **Facts**

Employees:  
All volunteer  
Number of pupils: 60  
Funding:  
Permanent fundraising  
Parental fees: 40 € per month

### **Contact Data**

Chabad Lubavitch Berlin/  
Sonntagsschule  
Ms. Gevirtz, Ms. Golovodschov  
Münstersche Str. 6; 10709 Berlin  
Tel.: +49 (0)30-212 808 30  
Fax: +49 (0)30-212 808 31  
Website: [www.chabadberlin.de](http://www.chabadberlin.de)  
email: [kontakt@chabadberlin.de](mailto:kontakt@chabadberlin.de)

### **25. Jewish Religion School Jeschurun, Frankfurt am Main**

The Jewish Religion School Jeschurun was founded at the same time that the Frankfurt Jewish Community was re-established after the end of the Second World War. Jeschurun is open to middle school and high school aged Jewish children. It is open exclusively to Halakhic Jews. The school operates mostly on the same principles as Christian

religious instruction. As such, girls and boys are exempted from state-mandated ethics lessons. Instead, they participate in Jewish religious instruction. The school's curriculum is separated into sets. Each set accounts for a 90 minute lesson per week. Most of the sets prepare the children for their graduation exams. The children, however, also delve into Jewish-relevant courses, such as Hebrew, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Shabbat. The work of the school focuses on giving its children insight into Jewish faith and tradition. Although religion is the mainstay of the school's curriculum, Jeschurun also strives to give its pupils insight into the global Jewish world, including Israel and the Russian Diaspora. Jeschurun operates under the auspices of the Frankfurt Jewish Community. It does not work together with any other Jewish or non-Jewish organization.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 5 consisting of:  
1 director; 4 teachers  
No volunteers.  
Funding: Jewish Community  
Frankfurt  
Ministry of Education, Hessen  
Small subsidy from ZWSt

#### **Contact Data**

Religionsschule Jeschurun  
Friedrichstrasse 27;  
60323 Frankfurt am Main  
Tel: +49 (0)69-972 05 395  
Telefax: +49 (0)69-247 09 685  
School director: Haviva Raibstein  
Website: <http://www.jg-ffm.de/web/deutsch/erziehung-bildung/religionsschule-jeschurun/>  
email: [jeschurun@JG-Ffm.de](mailto:jeschurun@JG-Ffm.de)

### **26. Chabad Hebrew School/Religion School Hamburg**

Chabad Lubavitch founded the Hebrew School in Hamburg in 2004. The initiative came from Rabbi Bistritzky and the Hamburg Chabad House. The Hebrew School provides a productive environment for (preferably) Halakhic Jewish children between the ages of 7 and 12 to come together, learn, study and play. The school meets once a week on Sundays. It provides breakfast (strictly kosher) for the children, it offers music lessons with a professional music teacher, religious studies workshops, trips to other cities and to fun places in Hamburg. The work of the institution focuses primarily on imparting Jewish religion and tradition. In addition, the Hebrew School is striving to impart knowledge about the Jews around the world and in Israel. According to Rabbi Bistritzky, the Hebrew School and the Chabad House have a good relationship with the Jewish Community of Hamburg but work independently. The Hebrew School does not work with non-Jewish



organizations. The Hebrew School plans to train its own people in the near future but right now the children are too young to take on that responsibility.

### **Facts**

Employees: 7  
 Volunteers: mostly parents  
 Number of participants: 50  
 Funding: Private donations  
 Membership fee of € 30 per month  
 (welfare recipients are exempt)

### **Contact Data**

Chabad Jugendzentrum Hamburg  
 36–40 Rentzel Straße;  
 20146 Hamburg  
 Rabbi Shlomo Bistritzky;  
 Mrs. Chana Bistritzky  
 Tel: +49 (0)40-414-24190  
 Fax: +49 (0)40-415-39921  
 Website: [www.ChabadHamburg.de](http://www.ChabadHamburg.de)

## **27. Jewish School of Religion, Stuttgart**

The Stuttgart Jewish School of Religion was founded shortly after World War II. There was a consensus among the Jewish Community and its surviving members that the children needed a Jewish education in order to try and normalize their lives. The school's main objective is to teach Jewish traditions and religion. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious, social or ethnic upbringing. The youth center is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. However, it prefers to work with Community members who, accordingly, need to be Halakhically Jewish. According to Rabbi Netanel Wurmser, the school's director, the re-birth of the religious school was its greatest achievement. Considering German Jewry's traumatic past, seeing a school teaching over 250 young Jews is a feat in itself. The greatest challenge which the school faces is logistics. Bringing together 250 pupils from 50 different schools and coordinating their timetables is a "nightmare", according to the rabbi.

### **Facts**

Employees: 6 (1 director, 5 teachers)  
 Volunteers (estimated):  
 No volunteers  
 Number of participants:  
 Grades 1–13: ca. 250  
 Funding:  
 Jewish Community of Stuttgart  
 Ministry of Education

### **Contact Data**

Religionsschule der Israelitischen  
 Religionsgemeinschaft  
 Württembergs  
 Hospitalstr. 36; 70174 Stuttgart  
 Tel: +49 (0)711-228 36 10  
 Fax: +49 (0)711-33 836-36  
 Director: Rabbi Netanel Wurmser  
 Website: [www.irgw.de/schule/](http://www.irgw.de/schule/)  
 email: [jindra@irgw.de](mailto:jindra@irgw.de)

## **D) Jewish Secondary Schools/High Schools**

### **28. Jewish High School, Berlin**

The tradition-rich history of the Jewish high school began in 1781 when Moses Mendelssohn founded the first Jewish free school in Germany. The state-accredited private Jewish high school defines itself as a denominational school open to pupils regardless of religious affiliation. All pupils take part in Jewish religion classes and Hebrew lessons, a kosher lunch is provided, and everyone is invited to celebrate the Jewish holidays together. The Jewish high school is affiliated with the Jewish Community of Berlin. Supporters of the Jewish high school are RAA ("Regionale Arbeitsstelle für Bildung, Integration und Demokratie e.V."), Siemens, Coca Cola, T-Com, WE-DO, and the Förderverein, the foundation for the support of the school. At the moment approximately 420 pupils attend the Jewish high school; they are taught by 44 teachers, and classes contain no more than 24 pupils. The school has the facilities of a college preparatory high school and of a vocational training school which ends after the tenth grade.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1 director, 44 teachers, others (cook, secretary etc.)  
 Number of pupils: 420  
 Funding: Senate of Berlin;  
 Monthly fees  
 Jewish Community of Berlin

#### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Oberschule Berlin  
 Director: Barbara Witting  
 Große Hamburgerstr. 27;  
 10115 Berlin  
 Telephone: +49 (0)30-726 265 711 0  
 Fax: +49 (0)30-726 265 714 5  
 E-Mail address: [info@josberlin.de](mailto:info@josberlin.de)  
 Website: [www.josberlin.de](http://www.josberlin.de)

## **E) Youth Centers**

### **29. Jewish Youth Center Kavana Anne Frank, Aachen**

The Kavana Anne Frank youth center was founded 15 years ago on the initiative of several young and committed members of the Aachen Jewish Community. After having immigrated to Germany from the former Soviet Union, most of the founding members were very keen on establishing a platform for dialogue for young Jewish people. Kavana is open to all Jewish children between the ages of 6 and 15. The youth center is also open to children with a non-Halakhic

background. Communicating Jewish religion and traditions as well as culture, history and arts is the primary focus of the center. Religious aspects of Judaism are often taught within the framework of a rabbi's shiur. Jewish historical topics, such as the Holocaust, are only taught when the children reach an age considered appropriate. Furthermore, the youth center strives to give children insight into the global Jewish world, including Israel and the Russian Diaspora. Kavana Anne Frank is run under the auspices of the Aachen Jewish Community. It also cooperates with other Jewish organizations such as the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt), Lehava, and the Association of Jewish Communities in North-Rhein-Westphalia. The center does not work together with non-Jewish organizations.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 4, thereof: 2 Roshim,  
2 Madrichim  
No volunteers.  
Number of participants: 20  
Funding: Jewish Community  
Aachen  
Association of Jewish Communities  
in the Federal State of North-Rhine  
Westphalia

#### **Contact Data**

Jugend-Zentrum  
Jüdische Gemeinde Aachen  
Synagogen Platz 23; 52062 Aachen  
Tel: +49 (0)241-477 80-0  
Fax: +49 (0)241-222 14  
Head of the youth center:  
Ms. Julia Ryapushkina  
Website: [www.jgaachen.de](http://www.jgaachen.de)  
email: [info@jgaachen.de](mailto:info@jgaachen.de)

### **30. Youth Center Olam, Berlin**

The youth center Olam was founded in the late 1950's in Berlin. The governing body is the Jewish Community of Berlin. The youth center is also connected with Jewish institutions such as Makkabi, Baminim, Lehawa, other youth centers in Germany, the Berlin Jewish High School, the Heinz Galinski elementary school, the Berlin Jewish kindergarten, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt), as well with non-Jewish organizations such as the "Anne Frank Haus der Jugend" (Anne Frank Youth House), the Kurt Löwenstein School, and the "Multikultureller Verein Dessau" (Multicultural Club Dessau). Olam has 16 madrichim and about 20 music teachers and gym instructors as full-time employees; there also are 14 volunteers. These employees are trying to pass on knowledge about Israel, Judaism and Jewish ethics. It is open to everyone, no matter which religion (Halakhic or not). Children and teens between 5 and 19 are welcome to attend Sunday's peolot and/or weekday activities, such as fashion and design, dancing, or sports. Peolot are held in four groups for kids

between 5 and 12. For teenagers between 13 and 19, peolot are held in two groups.

### **Facts**

Employees: 1 leader; 14 madrichim;  
ca. 20 teachers  
Volunteers (estimated): 14  
Participants: 40–60 per week  
Funding: Senate of Berlin  
Private donations

### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Olam  
Joachimstalerstr. 13, 10719 Berlin  
Telephone: +49 (0) 30 880 28 123  
Fax: +49 (0)30 880 28 170  
Website: [www.jg-berlin.org](http://www.jg-berlin.org)  
email: [xenia0205@hotmail.com](mailto:xenia0205@hotmail.com)

## **31. Jewish Youth Center, Bochum**

The youth center in Bochum was founded almost 15 years ago by the Bochum Jewish Community. It attracts Jewish children and young people ranging in ages from 3 to 20. Currently 40–60 children are enrolled at the center. The center welcomes all children irrespective of their religious upbringing. It also has its doors open to non-Halakhic Jews as well. The work of the center focuses on giving its children and youth insight into the Jewish religion, traditions, culture and art. The religious and traditional aspects of Judaism are often taught through events and activities where both parents and children participate. The youth center strives to give children insight into the global Jewish world, including Israel and the Russian Diaspora. The youth center is associated with Bochum's Jewish Community, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt) and Lehawa. The youth center sometimes cooperates with non-Jewish organizations. The center takes every chance to provide its personnel with further educational opportunities in order to enhance their expertise. Ms. Julia Feygin, the youth center director, believes in the “learning-by-doing” approach. She believes this approach to be very useful in smaller Communities such as Bochum's.

### **Facts**

Employees: 1 Rosh; 8 Madrichim  
Parents act as volunteers.  
Participants: 40–60 children  
Funding:  
Jewish Community Bochum

### **Contact Data**

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum,  
Jüdische Gemeinde Bochum  
Erich-Mendel-Platz 1, 44791 Bochum  
Tel: +49 (0)234/417560-0  
Fax: +49 (0)234/417560-130  
Email of the Head: [Julia.feygin@gmx.de](mailto:Julia.feygin@gmx.de)  
Website: [www.jg-bochum.de](http://www.jg-bochum.de)  
email JC: [Jgbochum@t-online.de](mailto:Jgbochum@t-online.de)

### **32. Youth Center Jachad, Cologne**

Jachad is the youth center of the Jewish Community of Cologne, which also supports it financially. Another important partner is the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt). There are no non-Jewish partner organizations. Youth center meetings are held on Sunday afternoons. There are programs for four different groups of children and teens from 6 to 18 years old. The programs include sports, singing and producing a newsletter. For 2.50 € per day, each participant gets a kosher lunch at the center. The center is explicitly for Halakhically Jewish children; i.e. members of the Jewish Community. The center tries to impart knowledge about Jewish life around the world, Israel and the Russian Diaspora as well. The most positive development is the increasing attendance at the center. Jachad's director Benjamin Vamosi said his only future wish is to increase the variety of activities so as to draw more participation.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1 director;  
14 madrichim; 4 chugisten  
Volunteers: 14 madrichim  
Participants: 100 per week  
Funding: Jewish Community of Cologne

#### **Contact Data**

Mr. Benjamin Vamosi  
Telephone: +49 (0)176-641 95 899  
Mail: b.vamosi@sgk.de

### **33. Youth Center Emuna, Dortmund**

In 1993, Joss Avidor founded the youth center Emuna in Dortmund. The governing body is the Jewish Community in Dortmund, which also supports the center financially. Other funding comes from the state and private donations. The center works closely with Jewish institutions such as the Landesverband Westphalen Lippe (Federal Jewish Association of Westphalia Lippe), the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt) and other Jewish youth centers in Germany, as well as with the non-Jewish roundtable organization Kreisjugendring (organization of all local youth centers and clubs in Dortmund).

The center employs seven madrichim; the cook is a volunteer. The center's team tries to impart knowledge about Israel, Judaism, ethics and morality. The center is primarily intended for members of the Jewish Community (Halakhic Jews). Children and young people between the ages of 5 and 20 are welcome to attend Sunday's peolot and/or to participate in weekday leisure time activities, such as painting, singing and dancing. Peolot are held for the age groups (kwutzot) between 6–8, 9–12, 14–15, and for all those over 15 years.

**Facts**

Employees: 1 leader; 7 madrichim;  
1 cook (volunteer)  
Participants: 30–40 per week  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Dortmund; State funding; Private  
donations

**Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Emuna  
Jüdische Gemeinde Dortmund  
Prinz-Friedrich-Karl-Str. 9–11;  
44135 Dortmund  
Telephone: +49 (0)231-557 472 0  
Fax: +49 (0)231-557 472 20  
email: [Adrian@emuna-dortmund.de](mailto:Adrian@emuna-dortmund.de)

**34. Youth Center Tikwatejnu, Duisburg**

The Jewish Community of Duisburg founded the youth center Tikwatejnu in the 1990's. Tikwatejnu attracts Jewish children between 4 and 18. Currently the center has 25–30 children. The center welcomes all children regardless of religious background. The youth center is thus explicitly open to non-Halakhic Jews; the head of the center mentioned that during the Third Reich non-Halakhic Jews suffered as much as Halakhic Jews.

The center's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and instill in them Jewish tradition, Jewish and secular values and morals. In addition, the center has a program called Sunny School where children are taught a variety of subjects by professionals. The work of the institution focuses on imparting Jewish religion and tradition, culture and art. The religious aspects of Judaism are often taught in cooperation with the Jewish religious school and the rabbinate. Jewish cultural and historical topics, such as the Holocaust, are also taught in age-appropriate circumstances. The youth center also is striving to impart competent knowledge about the global Jewish world, Israel and the Russian Diaspora. Tikwatejnu is closely connected with the Jewish Community of Duisburg and the Association of Jewish Communities in North Rhine Westphalia.

**Facts**

Employees: 8 consisting of;  
2 roshim; 6 madrichim  
No Volunteers  
Participants: 16 children at the  
"Sunny School"  
Funding: Jewish Community  
Duisburg; Association of Jewish  
Communities in North Rhine-  
Westphalia

**Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Tikwatejnu  
Gemeindezentrum  
der Jüdischen Gemeinde  
Duisburg-Mülheim/Ruhr-  
Oberhausen  
Springwall 16; 47051 Duisburg  
Telephone: +49 (0)203-2981205  
Website: [www.tikwatejnu.de](http://www.tikwatejnu.de)  
E-Mail address: [tikwatejnu@gmail.com](mailto:tikwatejnu@gmail.com)

### **35. Youth Center Schalem of the Jewish Community Dresden**

Schalem was founded in August 2003 in Dresden to meet a growing need for youth-oriented projects. The idea was realized after an agreement with the Jewish Community of Dresden. The center is open to Jews of all denominations, also non-Halakhic Jews, who are between 6 and 23 years old. The youth center is connected with the Jewish Community of Dresden and cooperates closely with the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt) and Lehawa.

The center is primarily dedicated to transmitting Jewish religious identity. The curriculum is being revised. Schalem also strives to impart competent knowledge about Jews around the world, including Israel. According to the head of the center, Katia Novominska, the major achievements to date are the establishment of the center itself, and its specific assistance to problem children. A new curriculum and new premises are planned. Katia Novominska wants to offer more attractive events to children and opportunities for religious education for youths.

#### **Facts**

Volunteers: 1 Rosch; 4 Madrichim;  
2 Schlichim  
Funding:  
Jewish Community of Dresden  
Lehawa (ZWSt)  
Association of Jewish Communities of  
Saxony

#### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Gemeinde  
Jugendzentrum Schalem  
z.Hd. Katia Novominska  
Hasenberg 1; 01067 Dresden  
Telephone: +49 (0)351-656 07 10  
(Jüdische Gemeinde Dresden)  
Fax: +49 (0)351-656 07 50  
(Jüdische Gemeinde)  
email: schalem.dresden@googlegmail  
.com

### **36. Jewish Youth Center “Siegfried Klein”, Düsseldorf**

The governing body of the youth center Siegfried Klein is the Jewish Community of Düsseldorf, which supports the center financially. The center is also connected with Jewish institutions such as Lehawa, other youth centers in Germany, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt) and non-Jewish organizations such as the Jugendring Düsseldorf (Association of Youth Groups Düsseldorf). Focus is placed on imparting knowledge about Israel, Judaism, the Jewish-Russian Diaspora, ethics and morals. The center tries to attract children and teenagers who are members of the Jewish Community Düsseldorf. Non-Halakhic children are also welcome, but there are many more

Halakhically Jewish participants. Children and teenagers between 6 and 18 can take part in Sunday's peolot and/or weekday activities, such as singing, dancing, sports, and art. Shira Fleisher, head of the center, hopes to reach all Jewish children and teenagers in Düsseldorf to build a better community spirit. According to her, the youth center is currently lacking appropriate space and cannot afford to pay staff.

#### **Facts**

Employees: N/A  
Volunteers: 10 madrichim;  
6 chugisten  
Participants  
Approx. 30–50 per week.  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Düsseldorf

#### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum "Siegfried Klein"  
Head of the Youth Center:  
Ms. Shira Fleisher  
Zietenstraße 50; 40476 Düsseldorf;  
Germany  
Telephone: +49 (0)211-469 120  
Fax: +49 (0)211-485 156  
Website: [www.kadimaonline.de](http://www.kadimaonline.de)  
email: [info@jgdus.de](mailto:info@jgdus.de)

### **37. Jewish Youth Center, Essen**

The center was founded in January 2009 by the Jewish Community of Essen. It attracts Jewish youth from the ages of 14 to 25. It currently serves 12–20 members, and welcomes all young members of the Jewish Community and all young people interested in Judaism. The center's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children of Essen and instill in them a sense of Jewish tradition, Jewish values and morals. It also organizes sports, cultural and social activities with youth from other Communities. Once a year the center organizes a minimachane. The youth center organizes Kabbalat Shabbat services, as well as day trips to other cities to learn about and explore Jewish life. The center focuses on Judaism and tradition, culture and arts. The religious aspects of Judaism are essential to this center, which also strives to provide a comprehensive background on Jewish life around the world, to some extent also on Israel and the Russian Diaspora.

#### **Facts**

Employees: Paid Community employees support the center directly.  
Participants: 12–20  
Funding: Association of Jewish Communities in North- Rhine Westphalia; Jewish Community of Essen; Essen city government

#### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum  
Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Essen  
Sedanstr. 46; 45138 Essen;  
Germany  
Telephone: +49 (0)201-959 96-0  
Fax: +49 (0)201/-959 96-29  
email: [jkg-essen@gmx.de](mailto:jkg-essen@gmx.de)



### **38. Youth Center Amichai Frankfurt am Main**

Amichai was founded in the late 1940's when the post-war Jewish Community of Frankfurt was established. Amichai offers its programs only to members of Frankfurt's Jewish Community; children and youth between 5 and 19 years old, with special interest in attracting those between 14 and 19 years old. Thus the institution is not open to non-Halakhic Jews. Amichai is closely connected with the Jewish Community of Frankfurt. Additional Jewish partners consist of all Jewish institutions and organizations situated in Frankfurt, including Makkabi, Chabad and WIZO. There is also close cooperation with the municipal Jugendamt (youth welfare office). The institution's biggest priority is to impart Jewish religion and tradition. Open every day except Friday and Saturday, Amichai offers peilot and chugim in small groups. Participants may choose between drawing, handicrafts, piano and drum lessons, table tennis, yoga, self-defense, chess, video filmmaking, theatre, dance and Hebrew. There is a course on Israeli folk dances for adults, too.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 10 to 15 including  
2 administration  
Madrachim or chugim  
(small allowance)  
Participants: 80 to 120 per week  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Frankfurt

#### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Amichai  
Alexej Tarchis (head of the center)  
Savignystraße 66;  
60325 Frankfurt am Main  
Tel: +49 (0)69-76 80 36 150  
Fax: +49 (0)69-76 80 36-159  
Website: [www.amichai.de](http://www.amichai.de)  
email: [amichai01@gmx.de](mailto:amichai01@gmx.de)

### **39. Youth Center Chai, Hanover**

Originally founded in the 1950's, Chai re-opened in Hanover after the large influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union in the 1990's gave it a new lease on life. Immigrant children wanted to meet other Jewish kids and learn about their Jewish roots. The initiative came from the local Community and new immigrants. Chai is designed for young Jews between 6 and 20. The center's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and create a strong bond between them and the Jewish Community. The center partakes in various activities, such as *Jewrovision* (an annual German-wide song contest between all the Jewish youth centers) and youth Shabbatoh. The center also offers workshops on such topics as Jewish traditions, Hebrew and sports. Priority

is given to teaching about Jewish culture and arts. However, there is also an emphasis on Jewish tradition and religion. Chai is connected to the Jewish Community Hanover and the Landesverband Niedersachsen (Association of Jewish Communities in Lower Saxony) and works closely with organizations such as the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt). According to Yevgeniy Korsunskyy, Chai's director, the most important accomplishment to date is the establishment of a new and young madrichim team.

### **Facts**

Employees: 11; consisting of:  
1 rosh, 5 madrichim, 5 interns/  
Volunteers: 5  
Participants: 40  
Funding: Association of Jewish  
Communities in Lower Saxony  
(financial assistance);  
Jewish Community Hanover  
(location)

### **Contact Data**

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum Chai  
Haeckelstr. 10; 30173 Hannover  
Rosh: Yevgeniy Korsunskyy  
Mobile: +49 (0)163-243 68 89  
Website: [www.jz-chai.de](http://www.jz-chai.de)  
email: [genja@jz-chai.de](mailto:genja@jz-chai.de)

## **40. Liberal Youth Center Hanover**

The Liberal Youth Center Hanover was founded about ten years ago. The original initiative came from a local Jewish Community, the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover, belonging to the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany. The center attracts Jewish children between 6 and 18, and the group "Jung und Jüdisch" (Young and Jewish) welcomes members between the ages of 18 and 35. Currently the youth center has 15 children and "Jung und Jüdisch" has a group of 20. The youth center's main priority is to instill in Jewish children a sense of community and belonging. It focuses on imparting Jewish religion and tradition as well as Jewish culture and arts. According to the head of the youth center, Mr. Michalowitz, the religious aspects of Judaism are the basis for all work with Jewish youth. As a branch of the Liberal Community Hanover, the center cooperates closely with Netzer (the youth movement of the World Union for Progressive Judaism) and "Jung und Jüdisch". For example, the center's madrichim are sent to seminars organized by Netzer. There is no formal education for the staff at the youth center. The youth center very rarely works with non-Jewish organizations.

**Facts**

Employees: 5; consisting of  
1 rosh; 4 madrichim  
Volunteers (estimated): 3–4  
Number of participants:  
15 children (6–18); 20 young adults  
(18–35)  
Funding: Liberal Jewish Community  
of Hanover

**Contact Data**

Liberales Jugend-Zentrum Hannover  
Head of the Youth Center:  
Mr. Michalowicz  
Fuhsestr. 6; 30419 Hannover  
Tel: +49 (0)511-2880100  
Fax: +49 (0)511-2353954  
Website: [www.ljgh.de](http://www.ljgh.de)  
email: [gemeinde@ljgh.de](mailto:gemeinde@ljgh.de)

**41. Jewish Youth Center Szimcha, Heidelberg**

The Jewish Youth Center Szimcha was founded 15 years ago by the Jewish Community in Heidelberg. Szimcha attracts Jewish children between the ages of 3 and 19. Currently, the center has 30–35 children. All youths are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The center is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. The center's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and instill in them Jewish traditions, values and morals. One of their main objectives is to start training the children in Jewish education at a young age, so that the children can grow up with Jewish values and traditions instilled in them. Szimcha offers many different chugim (workshops) for its children, such as art, music and sports. Shabbat gets celebrated every week and a very big Shabbat gets organized once a month. The center often organizes family evenings. The work of the center focuses on giving its members insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. The religious aspects of Judaism are often taught in cooperation with the cantor of the Heidelberg synagogue. He comes to Szimcha to teach religious studies to children of all ages. One of the center's madrichoth is a student at the Center for Jewish Studies at the Heidelberg University. Jewish topics, such as the Holocaust, are also taught to children considered old enough.

**Facts**

Employees: 3, consisting of: 1 Rosh,  
2 Madrichim  
Volunteers: 4–5  
Participants: 30–35 children, divided  
up into three groups  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Heidelberg  
Jewish Council of Baden

**Contact Data**

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum Szimcha  
Leiterin: Halyna Dohayman  
Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Heidelberg  
Häusserstr. 10–12; 69115 Heidelberg  
Tel: +49 (0)6221-90524-0  
Tel: +49 (0)6221-72 74 987  
email: [o.dohayman@gmx.net](mailto:o.dohayman@gmx.net)

## 42. Jewish Youth Center, Lübeck

The Jewish Youth Center of Lübeck was founded in 2000 by Lehawa and the Central Welfare Board of Jews (ZWSt) in Germany to counteract the obvious lack of programs and activities for young Jews in the city. The center is an official branch of Lübeck's Jewish Community. It is open to Jews ranging in ages from 15 to 23. Everyone is welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The youth center is also very receptive to people with a non-Halakhic background. The center's mandate, implemented by the Jewish Community authorities, is to provide a Jewish education for the young. The religious aspects of Judaism are taught by Rabbi Pushkin. Although religious studies are an important component of the center's work, it does not appeal to everyone. The center aims to offer topics of discussion that most of its members can relate to. Recent topics of discussion and seminars have been Israel and the Middle East conflict, integration vs. assimilation, and anti-Semitism in Europe and Germany.

One of the issues which Ms. Pletoukina (Head of the Center) would like to resolve is the issue of the treatment of non-Halakhic Jews. Unfortunately, many of the young people at her center, particularly many of the extremely active ones, are excluded from participating in activities that are offered by the ZWSt and the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

### Facts

Employees: 1 Rosh who is also the madricha  
 Volunteers: In cooperation with Lehawa  
 Participants: 15–40  
 Funding: Jewish Community of Lübeck  
 Previous projects received funding from: ZWSt, Central Council, Lehawa, "Aktion Mensch"

### Contact Data

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum Lübeck  
 Jüdische Gemeinde Lübeck  
 St. Annen Strasse 11–13;  
 23552 Lübeck  
 Tel: +49 (0)451-79 82 18 2  
 Fax: +49 (0)451-70 74 20 8  
 Rosh of the Youth Center:  
 Ms. Anastasia Pletoukina  
 Website: [jg-luebeck.de/](http://jg-luebeck.de/)  
 email: [jugendzentrum@jg-luebeck.de](mailto:jugendzentrum@jg-luebeck.de)

## 43. Jewish Youth Center, Mainz

The Jewish Youth Center in Mainz was founded in 2002. Currently a dozen young people ranging in ages from 13–25 are enrolled in the center. The youth center is also very receptive to youths with a non-Halakhic background. The center works directly under the auspices of Mainz's Jewish Community. It sometimes cooperates with the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt) and the Lauder

Foundation. It does not cooperate with non-Jewish organizations. The center's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and instill in them Jewish traditions, values, and morals. The center provides a platform for young Jewish people to meet, discuss things and enjoy each other's company. Most children stem from immigrant families, mostly from the former Soviet Union. As a result, the center seeks to help them integrate into the community without them losing sight of their Jewish heritage and their Jewish identity. Once a month the center organizes a discussion group with a member of the Jewish Community board. Topics vary from social ethics to aspects on Jewish religion. The center organizes Hebrew classes, workshops on Israel and also has its own band and offers various kinds of music classes.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 4 consisting of: 1 rosh;  
3 madrichim  
All work is voluntary.  
Participants: 13 (up to 30 for special events)  
Funding: Jewish Community of Mainz

#### **Contact Data**

Jugend-Zentrum Mainz  
Forsterstrasse 2, 55118 Mainz  
Telephone: +49 (0) 6131-61 39 90  
Fax: +49 (0) 6131-61 17 67  
Head of the Center: Ms. Spolanskaya  
Website: [www.jgmainz.de/index.htm](http://www.jgmainz.de/index.htm)  
email: [info@jgmainz.de](mailto:info@jgmainz.de)

#### **44. Jewish Youth Center, Mönchengladbach**

The Jewish Youth Center of Mönchengladbach was founded simultaneously with the re-incorporation of the city's Jewish Community. The original initiative came from local Jews who saw the need for a youth center while there was a large influx of immigrants arriving from the former Soviet Union. The youth center attracts Jewish children ranging in ages from 6–18. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The youth center is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. The work of the center focuses on giving its members insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. The religious aspects of Judaism are conveyed through the celebration of the high holidays. Jewish historical topics, such as the Holocaust, are only taught when the children reach an age considered appropriate. Furthermore, the center strives to give children insight into the global Jewish world, including Israel and the Russian Diaspora. The center also offers dance and choir lessons, Hebrew and English classes and leisure activities for young people. A difficult challenge the youth center faces is dealing with parents who refuse a Bar or Bat-Mizvah for their children.

**Facts**

Employees: 8 consisting of:  
 1 Rosh; 7 teachers; no volunteers.  
 Participants: 30–33  
 Funding: Jewish Community  
 Mönchengladbach

**Contact Data**

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum  
 Mönchengladbach  
 Jüdische Gemeinde Mönchengladbach  
 Albertusstr. 54; 41061 Mönchengladbach  
 Tel: +49 (0)2161-238 79  
 Fax: +49 (0)2161-146 39  
 email:  
 juedischegemeindemg@t-online.de

**45. Jewish Youth Center Neshama, Munich**

The Jewish Youth Center Neshama in Munich was founded simultaneously with the re-establishment of Munich's Jewish Community. Today Neshama attracts Jewish children ranging in ages from 6–19. About 60–70 children are currently enrolled at the center. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The kindergarten is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. Neshama's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and teach them Jewish traditions and to instill in them Jewish and secular values and morals. The work of the center focuses on giving its children insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. Ilya Krasnov, head of the youth center, points out that Neshama is a center based on traditions rather than religion. The center works in close cooperation with Munich's Jewish Community. Neshama's biggest challenge is maintaining its already high level of quality set up by its team from the very beginning. To do this, Mr. Krasnov hopes to be able to provide his madrichim with even better training programs in the future. As far as he is concerned, getting a better further educational program for the staff of Neshama is his biggest challenge.

**Facts**

Employees: 12 consisting of:  
 1 Rosh; 11 Madrichim  
 Volunteers: Older chanichim  
 Number of participants:  
 60–70, in 6 kwutsoth  
 Funding: Munich's Jewish  
 Community; Project funding;  
 Private donations

**Contact Data**

Jugend-Zentrum Neshama  
 Israelitische Kultusgemeinde  
 München und Oberbayern K.d.ö.R.  
 St.-Jakobs-Platz 18; 80331 München  
 Telephone: +49 (0)89-20 24 00-100  
 Fax: +49 (0)89-20 24 00-170  
 Rosh: Ilya Krasnov  
 Website: [www.ikg-muenchen.de](http://www.ikg-muenchen.de)  
 email: [info@ikg-m.de](mailto:info@ikg-m.de)

#### **46. Youth Center Hatikva, Münster**

The Münster Jewish Community's Youth Center Hatikva was founded nine years ago. The center's biggest priority is community-building among its participants. Breaking down prejudices against Muslim teenagers; for example, is one of the center's primary goals. Although the youth center is also open to non-Halakhic Jews and non-Jews, it operates in a kosher environment. The visiting teenagers play, bake and eat together. Once a month they organize a special activity such as bowling or swimming. One main objective of the center is to convey knowledge about Judaism. The youths organize and celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat at frequent intervals. Furthermore, the center's rosh, an Israeli, is considered the local emissary on discussions revolving around Israel. The center attracts larger groups of kids for the shabbaton as well as for the monthly field trips. 10 to 15 children attend these programs regularly. Currently, the center does not have any joint projects with non-Jewish organizations. Ms. Mirith Silbermann, who took over the reign of the center in March 2009, plans on developing such relationships. Another important future goal set by the new director, is organizing more elaborate holiday programs with the teenagers, such as a play during the Chanukah season.

##### **Facts**

Employees: 1 rosh:  
Ms. Mirith Silbermann  
3 madrichim  
Participants: 5–15  
Funding:  
Jewish Community of Münster

##### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Hatikva  
Jüdische Gemeinde Münster  
Klosterstrasse 8–9; D-48143 Münster  
Tel.: +49 (0)251-44909  
(Jewish Community)  
Fax: +49 (0)251-51 15 52  
<http://www.jgms.org>  
email: [jgmms@aol.com](mailto:jgmms@aol.com)

#### **47. Jewish Youth Center, Straubing**

About 30–50 children are taught about the Jewish religion and Hebrew in the Jewish Community's youth center in Straubing. The teachers are the Community's rabbi and his wife. The Rebbetzin teaches the toddlers. The rabbi himself teaches the school-age children until they graduate. Most of the children come from families with origins in the former Soviet Union. Many of them have not yet mastered German and are finding it difficult to master Hebrew as well. Since the youth center caters to orthodox families, Hebrew is an important third lan-

guage which the children must learn while simultaneously developing their German skills and maintaining their Russian. Hiring a younger teacher would increase the quality of the programs offered. However, increased funding would be necessary before that could happen.

#### **Facts**

No information available

#### **Contact Data**

Jewish Community Straubing  
Wittelsbacherstr. 2; 94315 Straubing  
Tel: +49 (0)94 21-13 87  
Mobile: +49 (0)152-088 701 74  
email: [ikg-straubing@t-online.de](mailto:ikg-straubing@t-online.de)

### **48. Jewish Youth Center Zion, Stuttgart**

The youth center Zion was founded more than 20 years ago by the Stuttgart Jewish Community. About ten years ago the youth center underwent major reorganization. It was then that it was able to take up its work actively. Zion is open to Jewish children between the ages of 6 and 18. Children are welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The youth center is also very receptive to children with a non-Halakhic background. Zion's main priority is to reach out to all Jewish children and instill in them Jewish traditions, values, morals and Zionist ideals. The center's name already points to its Zionist ideology. The work of the center focuses on giving its members insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. Jewish cultural topics, such as the Holocaust, are also taught to children considered old enough. Zion hopes to maintain its solid reputation and continue being a center filled with life and energy. This would be the driving force that would make it grow into a bigger and better place in the future. Major hardships for Zion stem from a lack of money and representative rooms out of which it could work.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 8, consisting of: 1 rosh;  
7 madrichim.  
No volunteers.  
Participants: ca. 25  
Funding: Jewish Community  
of Stuttgart; Association of  
Jewish Communities in Baden-  
Württemberg

#### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Zion  
Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft  
Württembergs  
Hospitalstrasse 36; 70174 Stuttgart;  
Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)711-228 36-0  
Fax: +49 (0)711-228 36-18  
Head of the youth center: Maria Suslof  
Website: <http://www.irgw.de/>



#### **49. Jewish Youth Center Oz, Wiesbaden**

Ever since it was founded, the post-war Jewish Community of Wiesbaden has had a youth center, but Oz is a recent development. Oz attracts Jewish children and teenagers between 4 and 18. It welcomes all children without regard to religious background. The youth center currently consists mainly of Halakhic Jews but has a few non-Halakhic Jewish members who are seeking to convert. The center also aims to build a bridge between each child, Israel and Judaism, and theorizes that active involvement with the youth center will help speed a child's integration process into both the Jewish Community and German society in general. Thus, Oz offers a wide variety of activities, such as photography, art, handicrafts, table tennis and more. The center provides a warm lunch for all (dairy kosher) and it organizes three mini-machanoth (weekend trips) for member children, completely subsidized by the Community. According to Mr. Krasnov, the most important achievement to date is the organization of the three mini-machanoth a year. The center would like to reach all Jewish children in Wiesbaden and help build a strong nucleus of activists at Oz.

##### **Facts**

Employees: Community workers support the youth center.  
No volunteers.  
Participants: 20–30, in three kvuzoth  
Funding: Jewish Community of Wiesbaden

##### **Contact Data**

Jugendzentrum Oz, Wiesbaden  
Friedrichstraße 31–33;  
65185 Wiesbaden  
Telephone: +49 (0)6 11-93 33 03 27  
Fax: +49 (0)6 11-93 33 03 19  
Rosh: Mark Krasnov;  
mob.: +49 (0)1 76-64 14 65 71  
Website: <http://www.jz-oz.de>  
email: [mark@jz-oz.de](mailto:mark@jz-oz.de)

#### **50. Jewish Youth Center, Wuppertal**

The youth center of the Wuppertal Jewish Community has been active for the past 10 years. The center strives to be attractive to all Jewish youths of the Community while emphasizing the Halakha. It also caters to teenagers not interested in specifically Jewish themes. Non-Halakhic Jews; for example, those children with only a Jewish father, are welcome to participate at all functions, including the machanot. The center focuses on teaching the children about their traditions instead of religious rules and finds this method more accepted. The

center also strives to give children insight into the global Jewish world, including Israel. Leonid Goldberg, a JC Board member said, the existence of the youth center is in itself a great feat. He says that there has been a major change for the better compared to the situation 25 years ago, when his children were the only young members of the Community.

### **Facts**

Employees: 1 religion teacher  
(from the JC)  
1 rosh (head of the youth center);  
4 madrichim  
Volunteers: ca. 5  
Participants: 25–35 (Sunday  
meeting); 40 children and teenagers  
attend religious lessons  
Funding: Jewish Community  
of Wuppertal Donations by the  
Sparkasse (Bank)

### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Wuppertal  
Gemarker Strasse 15;  
42275 Wuppertal  
Tel. +49 (0)202-371183  
Tel. +49 (0)202-37228-55  
(Leonid Goldberg)  
Fax: +49 (0)202-3711850

## **51. Jewish Youth Center, Würzburg**

What began as an irregular organization of activities for Würzburg's Jewish youths by Lehawa, became a full fledged Jewish youth center of the Jewish Community in 2003. Today, the center attracts Jewish children ranging in ages from 4–22. Everyone is welcome irrespective of their religious upbringing. The youth center is also very receptive to people with a non-Halakhic background. The center's main priority is to reach out to all children of Jewish heritage and to instill in them Jewish traditions, values and morals. Most of Würzburg's Jewish youths hail from Russia and have no or very limited knowledge of Judaism. The work of the center focuses on giving its members insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. The religious aspects of Judaism are generally conveyed through visual aids such as films. Other Jewish topics are developed through music and Jewish art.

The youth center is run under the auspices of Würzburg's Jewish Community and the Association of Jewish Communities in Bavaria. It cooperates with other Jewish organizations such as the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, Jung und Jüdisch and the Lauder Foundation.

**Facts**

Employees: 4, consisting of:  
1 Rosh; 3 madrichim  
No volunteers  
Participants: 30  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Würzburg

**Contact Data**

Jüdisches Jugendzentrum Würzburg  
Israelitische Gemeinde Würzburg  
Valentin-Becker-Strasse 11;  
97072 Würzburg  
Tel: +49 (0)931-404140  
Fax: +49 (0)931-4655249  
Director: Mr. Schiff  
Website: [www.shalomeuropa.de](http://www.shalomeuropa.de)  
E-mail: [info@shalomeuropa.de](mailto:info@shalomeuropa.de)

**F) Student Organizations****52. Jewish Organization of North German Students, Hamburg (JONS)**

The Hamburg-based “Jüdische Organization Norddeutscher Studenten e.V.”, also known as JONS, was founded in 1995. Three major criteria must be met to be allowed membership. Members must be Halakhic Jews, permanent residents of Germany and between the ages of 18 and 35. Currently JONS has around 420 members of which 300 are active participants. The union’s main priority is to bring Jewish students together and to create a platform where they can exchange ideas about politics and religion. The union provides a place for Jewish students to integrate but not to assimilate. JONS places emphasis on the values of Jewish heritage and traditions as “the glue that keeps the Jewish people united”. The union organizes parties, discussions, debates and regular monthly gatherings for its members. The student union strongly values Jewish religious tradition. It observes all Jewish holidays and takes into account the role that religion plays in them. Still, JONS does not consider itself a religious organization but rather one based on traditions. JONS is completely independent. However, it works closely together with the other Jewish student unions such as the European Jewish Student Union and Jewish organizations in Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

**Facts**

Employees: 3 board of directors  
 Volunteers: ca. 20  
 Participants: ca. 100  
 Funding: Jewish Community  
 Hamburg (small budget)  
 Jewish Agency (project based);  
 ZWSt (project based)  
 JOINT (project based)

**Contact Data**

Jüdische Organization Norddeutscher  
 Studenten e.V.  
 Grindelhof 30; 20357 Hamburg  
 Executive committee members:  
 Maxim Schkolnik  
 email: m.schkolnik@jons-ev.org  
 Mischa Kofman,  
 email: m.kofman@jons-ev.org  
 Ilona Vochtchina, email:  
 i.vochtchina@jons-ev.org

**53. Jewish Student Union in Baden e.V., Heidelberg**

The Jewish Student Union in Heidelberg was founded in December 2007 by four active local students. These students made it their aim to organize constructive and productive activities for the large number of Jewish students in Heidelberg and surrounding towns. The union welcomes Jewish students between the ages of 18 and 35. The three major criteria for membership are to be a Halakhic Jew, to have permanent residency in Baden and to meet the age requirement. Currently the student union has about 100 members. The union is completely independent, although it has some limitations in terms of how its budget is spent, as they are supported by the Oberrat Baden (Jewish Council of Baden). It often cooperates with the other Jewish student unions and with the local Jewish Community. The student union often uses the rooms of the Jewish Community. The union also works with the project ILI—I like Israel. There is no cooperation with non-Jewish organizations. The biggest project currently is the prospect of opening a Hillel house-type residency for Jewish students on the Heidelberg university campus. There are talks underway with the Central Council of Jews in Germany and with other organizations.

**Facts**

Employees: 3; 3 i.e. members of  
 the board of directors;  
 Volunteers: ca. 20  
 Participants: ca. 100  
 Funding: Oberrat Baden: Private  
 donations; Entrance fees  
 (at events)

**Contact Data**

Bund jüdischer Studenten Baden e.V.  
 Häusserstrasse 10–12;  
 69115 Heidelberg  
 Website: www.bjsb.de  
 email: info@bjsb.de  
 Head of the Student Union:  
 Jonathan Walter  
 Mobile: +49 (0)171–541 7411

#### **54. Jewish Student Union, Cologne**

In January 2009 four very active and eager Jewish students (re-)founded the Bund jüdischer Jugendlicher und Studenten Köln e.V. with support from the Jewish Community in Cologne. The original aim was to organize constructive and productive activities for the large number of Jewish students in Cologne. The student union welcomes all Halakhic and non-Halakhic Jewish students between the ages of 18 and 26. The group's main priority is to bring Jewish students in Cologne together so they can get to know each other and make new friends. The union organizes parties, discussions, debates and monthly gatherings for members; it sometimes cooperates with other Jewish student unions to organize bigger events. The student union is completely independent in its decision-making but is supported by the Jewish Community of Cologne. It also cooperates with other Jewish student unions and with the Jewish youth center and the Jewish Community in Düsseldorf; it also has had some cooperation with Limmud.de. There is no cooperation with non-Jewish organizations.

##### **Facts**

Employees: 4 board of directors;  
1 Jewish Community employee  
No volunteers.  
Number of participants: 60–70  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Cologne

##### **Contact Data**

Bund jüdischer Jugendlicher und  
Studenten Köln e.V.  
Synagogen-Gemeinde Köln  
Roonstraße 50; 50674 Köln  
Tel: +49 (0)221-92 15 60-0  
Fax: +49 (0)221-92 15 60-9  
email: bjjsk@gmx.net

### **G) Jewish Adult Education Centers**

#### **55. Jewish Adult Education Center, Berlin**

The Jewish Adult Education Center was founded in 1962 by the Jewish Community of West Berlin. The highest priority is given to imparting Jewish religion, tradition, culture and art. Factual, competent education about Jewry is the main focus of the institution, which aims to strengthen Jewish identity and build a bridge to the non-Jewish society.

Course offerings fall into several categories, including Jewish history, religion and philosophy, contemporary history, literature and film events, cultural history and psychology, language courses in Hebrew,

Yiddish and German, and thematic courses such as the Jewish calendar, music and dance. In order to help the Jewish FSU immigrants achieve a better integration into German society and the Jewish Community, the JVHS offers intensive German language courses and other programs. Courses in Hebrew cover such topics as Israeli culture and society. Courses in German as a foreign language are also offered to young Israelis.

### **Facts**

Employees: 3 full-time staff; 13–20 part-time teachers per year  
 Participants: 400 per trimester, mostly non-Jews  
 Funding: Jewish Community of Berlin  
 Federal State of Berlin, Participant fees

### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Volkshochschule Berlin  
 Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin, K.d.ö.R  
 Fasanenstraße 79–80; 10623 Berlin  
 Tel: +49 (0)30-880 280  
 Website: [www.jvhs.de](http://www.jvhs.de)  
 email: [jvhs-berlin@jg-berlin.org](mailto:jvhs-berlin@jg-berlin.org)

## **56. Jewish Adult Education Center, Frankfurt/Main**

The Jewish Adult Education Center in Frankfurt (JVHS) was founded in 1988 by Michel Friedman, head of the cultural department of the Jewish Community of Frankfurt. The JVHS welcomes all members of the Jewish Community and all citizens of Frankfurt who are interested in Jewish culture and history. The adult education center fosters dialogue between the Jewish and non-Jewish world. The JVHS offers a wide variety of classes taught by professional and highly qualified teachers. Classes, seminars, lectures, readings and excursions on specific and more general topics are as much a part of the program as are Hebrew and Yiddish language classes, seminars on the philosophy of Judaism, and cooking and dance classes. In addition, the JVHS strives to provide comprehensive background information on the Diaspora and Israel. The JVHS works together with other supporters of adult education including the Trialogue of Cultures (Triolog der Kulturen), an interreligious and intercultural project, which is co-organized by the corresponding religious educational supporters in Frankfurt, by Frankfurt's Adult Education Center and by the JVHS. However there are no permanent cooperative programs; co-operation varies from project to project. The most frequent partner is the Adult Education Center in Frankfurt.

**Facts**

Employees: 32 including; thereof:  
 1 director, 1 secretary, 30 teachers  
 Volunteers: N/A  
 Participants: 400 each semester  
 Funding: no answer was offered

**Contact Data**

Jüdische Volkshochschule Frankfurt  
 Director: Mr. Roberto Fabian  
 Westendstraße 43  
 60325 Frankfurt  
 Telephone: +49 (0)69-76 80 36-142  
 Website: [www.jg-ffm.de/web/deutsch/erziehung-bildung/juedische-volkshochschule/](http://www.jg-ffm.de/web/deutsch/erziehung-bildung/juedische-volkshochschule/)  
 email: [volkshochschule@jg-ffm.de](mailto:volkshochschule@jg-ffm.de),  
[jvhsffm@aol.com](mailto:jvhsffm@aol.com)

**57. Jewish Adult Education Center, Munich**

The Jewish Adult Education Center in Munich (JVHS) was founded in the spring of 1983 as a project of the cultural center of the Jewish Community. The JVHS in Munich was modeled on the Jewish adult education center in Berlin. The demand was very high and thus it became very popular. The JVHS welcomes all adults interested in Jewish culture, Jewish history, Hebrew and Yiddish, and the philosophy of religion. The JVHS offers a wide variety of courses that go beyond Judaism and Jewish studies. The adult students have the chance to enroll in seminars, lectures and readings on a plethora of topics as well as attend classes on cooking, Israeli folk dancing, and various levels of Hebrew and Yiddish classes. The center offers art classes and has recently added a yoga class to its curriculum. All teachers are highly qualified and very motivated. Above all, the JVHS values authenticity; all teachers are Jewish and language teachers are native speakers. In addition, the JVHS strives to provide comprehensive background information on the Diaspora and Israel. The JVHS often collaborates with the adult education center in Munich. According to Ms. Ellen Presser, director of the JVHS Munich, there is no shortage of potential qualified staff and good ideas, but the JVHS needs more space and financial support.

**Facts**

Employees: 10; including:  
 1 director, 1 secretary,  
 5–8 teachers  
 Volunteers: A few volunteers teach  
 German for immigrants  
 Participants: 120–200 students each  
 semester  
 Funding: Course fees  
 Jewish Community Munich

**Contact Data**

Jüdische Volkshochschule München  
 Israelitische Kultusgemeinde  
 München und Oberbayern K.d.ö.R.  
 Director: Ms. Ellen Presser  
 St.-Jakobs-Platz 18; 80331 München  
 Tel: +49 (0)89-20 24 00 491  
 Fax: +49 (0)89-20 24 00 470  
 Website: <http://www.ikg-muenchen.de/index.php?id=54>  
 email: [Kultur@ikg-m.de](mailto:Kultur@ikg-m.de)

**H) Batej Midrasch (Lehrhäuser)****58. Beit Midrasch (Jüdisches Lehrhaus) Bamberg**

The Beit Midrasch Bamberg was founded in November 2008 by the Jewish Community of Bamberg. The initiative came from the chazan (cantor) of the community, Ariele Rudolph. His idea was to establish a house of learning following the example of the Jewish Adult Education Center (JVHS) in Berlin and the Lehrhaus in Emmendingen. The Bamberg Lehrhaus started with shiurim on the first Shabbat of each month. Today, it consists of a non-academic German segment with weekly lectures, and the Bet Midrasch Russit where lectures are given in Russian as a special offer to FSU immigrants. The institution plans to open an academic branch with lecturers, including guest lecturers from the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg. The Lehrhaus already is closely connected with the Jewish Community of Bamberg and the Association for Jewish History and Religion (Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Religion) in Bamberg. Jewish religion, history and tradition are the main lecture themes. The Bet Midrasch Russit places a special emphasis on raising Jewish children, Jewish education and nurturing Jewish tradition in families with an FSU background.

**Facts**

Employees: /  
 Volunteers: The coordinator of the  
 Beit Midrasch  
 The religious teacher of the JC  
 Additional lecturers on different  
 topics  
 Participants: 10 per event  
 Funding: Jewish Community  
 Bamberg

**Contact Data**

Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Bamberg  
 Jüdisches Lehrhaus  
 Mr. Ariele Rudolph  
 Willy-Lessing-Str. 7a; 96047 Bamberg  
 Tel.: +49 (0)951-29787-13  
 Website: [www.ikg-bamberg.de](http://www.ikg-bamberg.de)  
 (JC Bamberg)



### **59. Masorti Beit Midrasch Berlin (Masorti Lehrhaus Berlin)**

The Masorti Beit Midrasch Berlin started its work as a Jüdisches Lehrhaus of the Masorti movement in Germany in January 2003, and quickly became a place of intense Jewish learning in the German capital. The basic method of study used is traditional chevruta-style learning (dialogue) followed by a shiur (talk). The spectrum of shiurim ranges from Talmud and Torah study focusing on topics of social justice, to practical issues of Jewish life today. Past guest lecturers include Rabbi Mark R. Cohen (Princeton), Rabbi Burt Visotzky (New York), Rabbi Levi-Weiman-Kelman (Jerusalem) and Rabbi Robert Liberman (Beer Sheva). Thanks to strong support from American rabbinical students, it has been possible to organize several summer programs (Sommer im Lehrhaus), offering, for example, introductory courses in Hebrew conversation and in how to use the siddur (prayerbook). The Masorti Lehrhaus continues in the tradition of the Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus in Frankfurt/Main (founded in 1920 by Franz Rosenzweig), and is open to all interested Jews.

#### **Facts**

No information available

#### **Contact Data**

Masorti e.V.  
Eislebener Str. 4: 10789 Berlin  
Tel.: +49 (0)30-21016551  
Fax: +49 (0)30-21016552  
Website: [www.masorti.de/lehrhaus\\_de.html](http://www.masorti.de/lehrhaus_de.html)  
email: [info@masorti.de](mailto:info@masorti.de)

### **60. Beit Midrasch Emmendingen (Jüdisches Lehrhaus Emmendingen)**

The Beit Midrasch was founded on November 1, 2007 by the Jewish Community of Emmendingen and the inter-religious Association for Jewish History and Culture (Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur Emmendingen e.V.). The initiator was Klaus Teschemacher (executive secretary of the Jewish Community in Emmendingen), who heads the Lehrhaus to this day. The goal was to impart knowledge of Jewish history and religion to Jews, and particularly to non-Jews. Based on Franz Rosenzweig's concept of dialogue learning, the institution offers courses in Jewish history and religion, liturgy, philosophy (Maimonides), architecture, painting, and medieval calligraphy. Hebrew language courses are offered at the beginner and advanced levels. Adult Jewish Community members from the FSU may attend

for free, and courses are held in Russian. Moreover, the staff wants to attract children who can participate in inter-religious workshops such as *Weihnukkah*, a combination of Christmas and Hanukkah. The *Lehrhaus* also emphasizes knowledge about Israel. Now it organizes a course on the Arab-Israeli conflict, together with the municipal adult education center of Emmendingen, which also pays the teacher's salary.

### **Facts**

Employees: 4 teachers  
Participants: 30 per semester,  
50% non-Jewish  
Funding: fees of participants

### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Gemeinde Emmendingen  
K.d.ö.R.  
Kirchstr. 11; 79312 Emmendingen  
Telephone: +49 (0)7641-57 19 89  
Fax: +49 (0)7641-5719 80  
Website: [www.juedgemem.de/](http://www.juedgemem.de/)  
email: [juedgemem@aol.com](mailto:juedgemem@aol.com)  
<http://juedisches-museum-emmendingen.de/Lehrhaus0902.pdf>

## **I) Rabbinical Seminaries/Yeshivot**

### **61. Abraham Geiger College, Potsdam**

The Abraham Geiger College (AGC) is the first Liberal rabbinical seminary in continental Europe since the Shoa. Its mission is to educate rabbis for Jewish Communities in Central and Eastern Europe. Founded in 1999, the AGC is an institute at Potsdam University and matriculated its first class of rabbinical students in 2001. In 2006, the institute ordained its first graduates. The AGC's rabbinic studies are integrated into the extensive curriculum of the Institute of Jewish Studies at Potsdam University, which provides the ambience and resources of a large state university. This structure helps to promote an understanding of Judaism within a pluralistic context. In addition to the rabbinical seminary, the Abraham Geiger College established an Institute of Cantorial Arts in the late summer of 2008, which is intended to train future cantors for Liberal Jewish congregations in Europe. According to AGC Chairman Walter Homolka, the cantorial program at the college has been "particularly helpful because not many immigrants see themselves immediately as a rabbi, but many are musically inclined from the very beginning. Both rabbinical and cantorial tracks provide professionals that will be able to serve as agents of change in Jewish congregations and communities across the continent."

**Facts**

Employees: 15 staff lecturers,  
2–3 guest lecturers  
Funding: German Federal Ministry  
of Interior  
Conference of Federal Ministers of  
Culture  
Central Council of Jews in  
Germany  
Ministry of Science, Research  
and Culture (Federal State of  
Brandenburg); Private Donors

**Contact Data**

Chairman: Prof. Dr. Walter Homolka  
Abraham Geiger College  
P.O. Box 120852; 10598 Berlin;  
Germany  
Tel.: +49 (0)30-31805910  
Fax: +49 (0)30-318059110  
Website: [www.abraham-geiger-kolleg.de](http://www.abraham-geiger-kolleg.de)  
email: [Abraham.Geiger.Kolleg@t-online.de](mailto:Abraham.Geiger.Kolleg@t-online.de)

## **62. Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin (Hildesheimer-Rabbinerseminar)**

The newly established Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin has historic links to the legendary German Rabbi Dr. Esriel Hildesheimer, who founded the original Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin in 1869. That seminary ordained orthodox rabbis until the Nazis closed it down in 1938. The new seminary was mainly an initiative of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation in Germany. The core of the Rabbinical Seminary is the Yeshiva Beis Zion Berlin, an outstanding school for Torah studies in Germany, and a central institution of the Lauder Yeshurun, an organization that promotes Jewish education in Germany as well as in Central and Eastern Europe. All students of the Rabbinical Seminary study at the Yeshiva Beis Zion. The Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin cooperates with the Central Council of Jews in Germany and provides support for small Jewish Communities in outlying areas (i.e., sending students to organize religious Sabbath and holiday services). The first two graduates from the Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin were ordained in June 2009.

**Facts**

Employees: 5  
Students: 9  
Funding: Central Council of Jews in  
Germany  
The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation  
Application submitted to the Federal  
Ministry of the Interior; Private  
donors

**Contact Data**

Rabbinerseminar zu Berlin  
Rabbi David Kern (Director)  
Skoblo Synagogue and Education  
Center  
Brunnenstrasse 33; 10115 Berlin;  
Deutschland  
Tel: +49 (0)30 40 50 46 90  
Fax: +49 (0)30 40 50 46 969  
Website: [www.rabbinerseminar.de](http://www.rabbinerseminar.de)

### **63. Yeshiva Beis Zion—the Lauder College at the Skoblo Synagogue and Education Center, Berlin**

The Yeshiva Beis Zion is a center of authentic, in-depth Jewish learning and living, serving all of Central Europe. The yeshiva program is an intensive, full day course of study offered on three levels: introductory, intermediate and advanced. The introductory course is a one year program designed to provide broad Jewish literacy. Emphasis on Hebrew reading and comprehension, and an introduction to various texts including Mishna, Gemara and Halakhic works provide students with a framework in which to continue Jewish learning, either in the yeshiva or independently. The head of the yeshiva, Yoel Smith, is a renowned Torah scholar from the UK, the teaching staff comes from Israel, the US and Germany. The students currently enrolled are from cities across Germany, as well as Hungary, Poland, Belarus and Moldova. Seminar participants have come from Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Serbia and Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria. The introductory and intermediate programs are also used by Jewish students who are studying medicine, business, or law in and around Berlin. Yeshiva Beis Zion also hosts the Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin (see inst. 62)

#### **Facts**

Employees: 6  
Students: 32  
Funding: The Ronald S. Lauder  
Foundation  
Ner Le'elef  
Private donors

#### **Contact Data**

Yeshiva Beis Zion  
Skoblo Synagogue and Education  
Center  
Brunnenstrasse 33; 10115 Berlin,  
Deutschland  
Tel: +49 (0)30 40 50 46 90  
Fax: +49 (0)30 40 50 46 969  
Website: [www.lauderyeshurun.de/en/home-y](http://www.lauderyeshurun.de/en/home-y)  
email contact: [zsolt.balla@yeshiva.de](mailto:zsolt.balla@yeshiva.de)

### **64. Lauder Midrasha, Berlin**

The Lauder Midrasha, originally established in Frankfurt/Main in 2001 and moved to Berlin in 2006, is designed for young women who wish to discover their Jewish identity. The Midrasha helps them to make a connection with their Jewish heritage and explore its contents in a serious yet relaxed atmosphere. The Midrasha offers in-depth study of the Torah, the Halakha, Hebrew and Jewish tradition. A dedicated and experienced teaching staff assists each student's personal development and helps them develop a positive identity as Jews.

The programs offered range from full time semesters of studies with daily shiurim to regular Shabbat learning programs together with Jewish families from Berlin.

The director of the Lauder Midrasha, Ms. Olga Afanasev, has a law degree from the Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe University in Frankfurt/Main. The managing team is completed by the Menahel Ruchani, Rabbi Meir Roberg (Berlin/Jerusalem), and by Rabbi Dani Fabian (Senior Lecturer).

#### **Facts**

Employees: 6  
Students: 18  
Funding: The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation  
Private Donors

#### **Contact Data**

The Lauder Midrasha  
Rykestrasse 53; 10405 Berlin, Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)30 440 10 252  
Website: [www.lauderyeshurun.de/de/midrasha](http://www.lauderyeshurun.de/de/midrasha)  
email contact: [olga@lauder.de](mailto:olga@lauder.de)

### **65. Yeshiva Gedola Berlin (Chabad)**

The Yeshiva Gedola of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin was opened in October 2000 and today belongs to the Chabad Jewish Educational and Family Center in Berlin (founded in 2007). There are 12 full time rabbinic students every year. The yeshiva is also open to interested Jews from Berlin (and elsewhere) to join learning and lessons or to use the library. A regular study day for the students includes Jewish philosophy, Talmud, Jewish ethics and a considerable segment of private study. Currently most of the bocherim are from the United States and from Eastern Europe. The Rosh ha Yeshiva, Rabbi Dov Ber Kahn, emphasizes that the yeshiva has a strong obligation to impart Jewish knowledge to Jews in Berlin and also in the surrounding area. "Lilmod chayav lelamed", he says. The rabbinical students are involved in the Chabad outreach programs for schools, Bikur Cholim, old age homes and in visiting prisoners. A support system for smaller Jewish Communities especially in Eastern Berlin (seminars and services) is under construction.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 3  
Students: 12 each year  
Funding: Exclusively through fundraising

#### **Contact Data**

Yeshiva of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin  
Rosh ha Yeshiva: Rabbi Uri Gamson  
Jüdisches Bildungs- und Familienzentrum  
Münstersche Straße 6; 10709 Berlin  
Telephone: +49 (0)30-2128-0830

**66. Yeshiva Gedola in Frankfurt/Main (Chabad)**

The Yeshiva Gedola of Chabad Lubavitch in Frankfurt/Main is situated in the famous West End Synagogue; the current bocherim come mainly from Israel and the United States. The Yeshiva Gedola was the first orthodox Yeshiva that was established in Germany after World War II. In a certain sense it continues the tradition of what was once Germany's largest yeshiva, which was organized in Frankfurt in 1890 by Solomon Breuer, son-in-law and successor of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

**Facts**

Employees: 3  
Students: 12  
Funding: Exclusively through fundraising

**Contact Data**

Yeshiva Gedola Frankfurt  
Director: Rabbi Yossi Havlin  
Altkönigstr 22; 60323 Frankfurt, Germany  
Telephone: +49 (0)69-722-770  
Fax: +49 (0)69-9592-9518  
Website: [www.chabad-lubavitch.de](http://www.chabad-lubavitch.de)

**J) Academic Institutions of Jewish Studies****67. Touro College Berlin**

Touro College Berlin was established in 2003. It is part of the Jewish-American Touro network that comprises 17 campuses in the United States, Germany, Russia and Israel. Aside from the American accreditation, since 2006 Touro College Berlin has also been granted state recognition as a German institution of higher learning. Touro College Berlin offers a B.Sc. program in International Business/Business Management and Administration: Management, and a unique M.A. program in Holocaust Communication and Tolerance. The curriculum for the M.A. in Holocaust Communication and Tolerance aims to deepen students' historical knowledge and foster an appropriate form of remembrance through innovative means of communicating and educating about the Holocaust in memorials, plaques, film, speech, and rituals. An interdisciplinary approach prepares students for professional opportunities in journalism, media design, education, research or other areas where contemporary, innovative and dignified ways of remembrance are called for.

**Facts**

Employees: 11 administrative staff,  
4 full time faculty, 20 adjunct faculty  
Current number of enrolled  
students: 99  
Funding (Sources): Private

**Contact Data**

Lander Institute about the Holocaust  
and Tolerance;  
Touro College: Am Rupenhorn 5  
14055 Berlin,  
Tel.: +49 (0)30-300686 64  
Website: [www.touroberlin.de](http://www.touroberlin.de);  
email: [lander@touroberlin.de](mailto:lander@touroberlin.de)

### **68. Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute for German Jewish History at the University of Duisburg-Essen**

The Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute for German Jewish History was founded in 1986. It is a cooperating institute of the University of Duisburg-Essen. It does research in the field of German-Jewish history from the Early Modern Times to the present. It investigates the complex patterns of interrelations between Jewish and general history from religious and socio-historical, as well as literary and cultural studies perspectives. By virtue of paying special attention to intra-Jewish contexts, traditions and sources, the institute's research provides new insights into how Jews in German-speaking areas and in the whole of Europe have shaped their identities and their history in many fields with self-confidence. The Steinheim Institute was the main impetus for the Department of Jewish Studies at Duisburg University, which moved in 2003 to the University of Düsseldorf.

**Facts**

No information available

**Contact Data**

Steinheim-Institut  
Geibelstr. 41; 47057 Duisburg;  
Germany  
Tel.: +49(0)203-370071/72  
Fax: +49(0)203-373380  
Website: [134.91.195.113/wiki/index.php/Hauptseite](http://134.91.195.113/wiki/index.php/Hauptseite)  
email: [steinheim@steinheim-institut.org](mailto:steinheim@steinheim-institut.org)

### **69. Institute of Jewish Studies at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf**

The Institute of Jewish Studies at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf was founded in 2002. It succeeded the Department of Jewish Studies at Duisburg University. A specialty of the institute is the

combination of Yiddish Studies and Jewish Studies. Other major fields of study are Rabbinical Literature and European Jewish History of the Early Modern Times and of the 19th Century. Close contacts exist between the institute and the Jewish Community in Düsseldorf.

### **Facts**

No information available

### **Contact Data**

Institut für Jüdische Studien  
Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf  
Universitätsstr. 1; 40225 Düsseldorf;  
Germany  
Managing Director:  
Prof. Dr. Stefan Rohrbacher  
Tel: +49 (0)211-81 15852  
email: rohrbacher@phil-fak.uni-  
duesseldorf.de

## **70. Moses Mendelssohn Academy, Halberstadt**

The Moses Mendelssohn Academy Halberstadt (MMA) was founded in 1995 and is based on a civilian public trust. The MMA closely cooperates with the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam. It fulfils the role of an educational center for all age groups, imparting basic knowledge of Jewish history, culture, tradition and religion to Jews and non-Jews, especially in former East Germany. The MMA is housed in the former Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary of Halberstadt, the Klaussynagoge, and also serves as an international meeting place. Numerous congresses/seminars and the Berend Lehmann Museum on German-Jewish/Prussian-Jewish history complete the profile of the MMA.

### **Facts**

Employees: Managing director  
(historian)  
1 administrative clerk  
Volunteers: Strong support by local  
volunteers (civilian action groups);  
Students  
Funding: State Government of  
Saxony-Anhalt; Private Donations

### **Contact Data**

Moses Mendelssohn Akademie  
Rosenwinkel 18; 38820 Halberstadt;  
Germany  
Managing director: Ms. Jutta Dick  
Tel: +49 (0)39 41-60 67 10  
Fax: +49 (0)39 41-60 67 13  
Website: [www.moses-mendelssohn-akademie.de/](http://www.moses-mendelssohn-akademie.de/)  
email: [mma-halberstadt@t-online.de](mailto:mma-halberstadt@t-online.de)



### **71. Jewish Studies at the University of Halle**

The main focus of the Department of Jewish Studies at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (established in 1992) is set on teaching and research on Jewish philosophy, Jewish cultural history and intellectual history of European Jewry from the 16th century until the present. Special emphasis is given to the epochs of Renaissance und Early Modernity.

The Department of Jewish Studies does closely cooperate with the Leopold Zunz Center (LZC) at the same university, where Jewish culture, history, philosophy and literature is studied as part of the general European culture. The LZC does publish the “European Journal for Jewish Studies” and is currently constructing the digital Leopold Zunz Archive (in cooperation with the National Library Jerusalem). The Curriculum of the Department of Jewish Studies at the University Halle includes—among others—Biblical and Modern Hebrew, History of the Jewish People, Jewish Religion and Philosophy.

#### **Facts**

No information available

#### **Contact Data**

Seminar für Judaistik/Jüdische Studien  
c/o Franckesche Stiftungen  
Franckeplatz 1, Haus 26,  
06110 Halle/Saale  
Director: Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Veltri  
Tel: +49 (0)345 / 552 40 60  
Website: [www.judaistik.uni-halle.de/](http://www.judaistik.uni-halle.de/)  
Email: [giuseppe.veltri@judaistik.uni-halle.de](mailto:giuseppe.veltri@judaistik.uni-halle.de)

### **72. University of Jewish Studies, Heidelberg**

The University of Jewish Studies Heidelberg (HfJS) was founded in 1979. It is supported by the Central Council of the Jews in Germany, financed through the local and federal government and is a fully recognized and accredited institution of higher learning. With eight professors, many assistants and currently about 150 students from 14 countries, the HfJS is considered one of the leading centers for Jewish studies in Europe. Jews and non-Jews alike can study at the HfJS and specialize in different fields. The HfJS offers B.A. and M.A. programs in Jewish Studies, the state examination for Jewish religion teachers, and a B.A. in Community work. In cooperation with partner institutions it is also possible to complete rabbinical training. Those Jewish students who want to specialize in becoming teachers, Chasanim

and future administration workers in the Jewish Communities all get a basic religious education, an academic education, but are also taught Community-specific issues. For example, future Community administration staff are provided with classes in accounting and public law. According to HfJS President Johannes Heil, Heidelberg should also establish in the near future a Hillel Student Center.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 8 professors/chairs;  
15 teachers,  
5 lecturers; a university rabbi; a few  
clerks in administration.  
Number of students: ca. 150  
Funding: Federal Government of  
Germany  
State Governments

#### **Contact Data**

Hochschule für Jüdische Studien  
Heidelberg  
President of the HfJS:  
Prof. Johannes Heil  
Friedrichstraße 9; 69117 Heidelberg;  
Germany  
Telephone: +49 (0) 6221-43 85 10  
Fax: +49 (0) 6221-4 38 51 29  
Website: [www.hfjs.eu/](http://www.hfjs.eu/)  
email: [info@hfjs.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:info@hfjs.uni-heidelberg.de)

### **73. Institute of Jewish Studies at Potsdam University**

The Institute of Jewish Studies at the Potsdam University was established in 2007, succeeding the interdisciplinary course of Jewish Studies existing since 1994. According to the directorship, more than 300 students are currently enrolled in the different degree programs (B.A., M.A., PhD). Guest lecturers from Israel, France, the UK, Italy, Switzerland, the US and Germany have enriched the program which mainly focuses on the history and the present of Jewry in its manifold religious, cultural, intellectual, economical and social interrelations. Cooperative relations exist with academic institutions in Paris, Krakow, Southampton and a few Israeli universities, as well as with the Abraham Geiger College, which is also part of the Potsdam University (see inst. 61).

#### **Facts**

Number of Lecturers: ca. 20  
(incl. administration)  
Number of enrolled students:  
ca. 300  
Funding: Federal State of  
Brandenburg

#### **Contact Data**

Institut für Jüdische Studien/  
Jewish Studies  
Am Neuen Palais 11, 144 69 Potsdam  
Managing Director:  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Brechenmacher  
Tel: +49 (0)331-9771036  
email: [brema@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:brema@uni-potsdam.de)

#### **74. Moses Mendelssohn Center of European-Jewish Studies, Potsdam**

The Moses Mendelssohn Center (MMZ), established in 1992, is an interdisciplinary scientific research institution that conducts historical and philosophical surveys as well as research in literature, religion and the social sciences. As an associate of Potsdam University, it participates decisively in the organization of Jewish Studies. The MMZ's main focus is on the history, religion and culture of Jews and Judaism all over Europe. A special emphasis is put on the relational history of Jews with their non-Jewish surroundings. Research concentrates on the challenges of social integration and acculturation of Jews as well as on comparative socio-historical approaches (living conditions, geographic and social mobility), socio-cultural aspects, and aspects of the history of ideas (literature, arts, religion, philosophy, music). It also promotes research on modern Israeli society, partly combined with comparative analyses of Jewish centers in the Diaspora. Additional foci are the development of educational material about Jewish topics of past and present, and systematic examination of right-wing extremism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Germany and Europe.

##### **Facts**

Employees: 6 full time scholars;  
a few scholars working in match-  
funding projects; 2 librarians  
administrative personal  
Funding: State Government of  
Brandenburg  
Private donations

##### **Contact Data**

Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum  
Director: Prof. Dr. Julius H. Schoeps  
Am Neuen Markt 8; 14467 Potsdam;  
Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)331-28 094-0  
Fax: +49 (0)331-28 094-50  
Website: [www.mmz-potsdam.de](http://www.mmz-potsdam.de)  
email: [moses@mmz.uni-potsdam.de](mailto:moses@mmz.uni-potsdam.de)

#### **K) Independent Frameworks**

##### **75. Bet Debora e.V., Berlin**

Elisa Klapheck, Lara Dämmig, and R. Monika Herweg launched the Jewish feminist initiative Bet Debora in 1998. The intention was to offer Jewish women a forum with the aim of building a gender-equal Judaism based on picking up the thread of European Jewry and the Jewish women's movement from before the Shoa. It also is rooted in the notion of Jewish renewal in Europe. This forum has met several times over the past 10 years. Conferences were organized in Berlin in

1999, 2001, and 2003; in Budapest, Hungary in 2006; and in Sofia, Bulgaria in June 2009. Bet Debora's goal is to reach European Jewish women, particularly rabbis, cantors, Jewish Community politicians, activists, rabbinic scholars, and interested Jewish women and men. Bet Debora focuses on Europe, although individual speakers from the U.S. and Israel have been invited. The highest priority in Bet Debora's work is given to transmitting Judaism and tradition as well as encouraging cultural and political engagement. It can already be stated that a European network of Jewish women has been established thanks to Bet Debora. Bet Debora volunteers plan to build a structure to facilitate more continuous work; for example, with smaller-scale projects between conferences. Given positive feedback from those who say they miss the work of Bet Debora in Berlin, another priority is to revive Bet Debora's presence in Germany.

#### **Facts**

Employees: No paid staff.  
 Participants: Per conference usually 100–200  
 Funding: Partly supported by foundations, German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; Jewish Community of Berlin, American Embassy

#### **Contact Data**

Bet Debora e.V.  
 Driesener Straße 1 A; 10439 Berlin; Germany  
 Tel: +49 (0)30-44 181 02  
 Website: [www.bet-debora.de/](http://www.bet-debora.de/)  
 email: [bet-debora@hagalil.com](mailto:bet-debora@hagalil.com),  
[bet.debora@gmail.com](mailto:bet.debora@gmail.com)

### **76. Jewish Educational and Family Center of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin**

The Jewish Educational and Family Center of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin was founded in 1996 when Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal came with his family and some other Schlichim from Brooklyn to Germany's capital. In 2007 the Center took rooms in a central location in Western Berlin, in a building which formerly housed a power plant. It is essentially run as a Jewish Adult Educational Center. According to the Director Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, the Center is aiming "to serve all Jewish people in Berlin, regardless of their background and affiliation, and focuses on a deeper understanding of Judaism". The half-year programs include classes and seminars in Hebrew, Talmud, Torah, Jewish Holidays, Jewish philosophy, Kabbala, Jewish ethics, historical topics and the discussion of temporary subjects from a Jewish perspective.

In addition, there is an active student program in which a monthly student Kabbalat Shabbat is organized. Educational trips for families and special holiday programs for the children complete the program of the Center. The Jewish Educational and Family Center includes a synagogue, a computer room, a restaurant, a visitor's center, a library, a youth lounge and a Mikwa. "We are open 365 days a year", says Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 8  
 Number of participants: ca. 115  
 per half-year-program  
 Funding: Permanent Fundraising

#### **Contact Data**

Jüdisches Bildungs- und  
 Familienzentrum  
 Direktor: Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal  
 Münstersche Str. 6; 10709 Berlin;  
 Germany  
 Tel.: +49 (0)30-212 808 30  
 Fax: +49 (0)30-212 808 31  
 Website: [www.chabadberlin.de](http://www.chabadberlin.de)  
 email: [kontakt@chabadberlin.de](mailto:kontakt@chabadberlin.de)

### **77. Jewish Cultural Association (JKV), Berlin**

The Jewish Cultural Association (JKV) was founded on December 11, 1989. The JKV made a special effort to offer activities, lectures and services to Jews who were not members of the official Jewish Community but were interested in their Jewish identity. Non-Jews were not members of the association; they participated as "friends" of the JKV. One of the main goals of JKV was to offer Jews a connection to Jewishness. Its approach was twofold. Activities were meant to help people integrate into their Jewishness on one hand, and into Berlin Jewish life on the other, so that newcomers would feel they belong to the Jewish family in Berlin. Initially, those receiving help were mostly Jewish FSU immigrants; later on those seeking assistance have been more often young Israelis. The JKV Berlin worked totally independently. According to the head of the institution, Ms. Irene Runge, the JKV did not work together with organizations, but rather cooperated mostly with individuals who may be associated with other organizations but who attend more or less privately. In December 2009, rather surprisingly, the JKV declared officially its own resolution.

**Facts**

Employees: 5 (board, unsalaried);  
3 freelancers  
Members: 125 members, 22  
“friends” (2004)  
Number of participants: about 50  
Funding: No institutional funding  
Contributions from members.  
Formerly from the U.S., UK, and  
Israel only

**Contact Data**

Jüdischer Kulturverein  
Oranienburger Str. 31  
10117 Berlin; Germany  
Dr. Irene Runge (chair)  
Telephone: +49 (0)30-282 66 69  
Fax: +49 (0)30-28 59 80 53  
Website:-  
email: JKV.Berlin@t-online.de

**78. Lehawa Germany**

Lehawa was founded in 2000 by the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt). It was formed as a means to help young Jewish immigrants help themselves and to support them in integrating into Germany and within Jewish Communities. In addition, the project was meant to help Germany's smaller Jewish Communities develop and set up their social-religious infrastructure. Lehawa helps in all areas of Jewish life in Germany with a special focus on children, adolescents and young adults. Lehawa has four offices; in Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Cologne. Lehawa uses these cities as bases for reaching the surrounding Jewish Communities. Lehawa organizes weekly activities with young people of all ages. They often take over management of youth clubs and Sunday schools as well. Lehawa primarily works with Jews ranging in ages from 6 to 35. The work of Lehawa focuses on sharing insight into Jewish religion, traditions, culture and arts. The Jewish religion, traditions and culture are a matter of everyday life for the Israeli volunteers. Thus, they are perfectly qualified to pass on their knowledge on a more personal and emotional level. Lehawa works directly under the auspices of the ZWSt. It also cooperates with other Jewish organizations, such as Bnei Akiva, and all Jewish Communities throughout Germany.

**Facts**

Employees: 1 director; 1 secretary;  
15–20 madrichim  
Volunteers (estimated): Many,  
but no fixed number  
Number of participants: Thousands  
of children every year  
Funding: ZWSt; Various subsidies

**Contact Data**

Lehawa  
Contact: Jona Gross, ZWSt  
Telephone: +49 (0)69-944 371 18  
E-Mail: gross@zwst.org  
Director of the project: Eli Stern  
Lehawa-Office Berlin,  
Telephone: +49 (0)30-257 60 99 12  
<http://www.zwst.org/cms/?cat=311>

## 79. Limmud Germany

Limmud.de was launched with a Mini-Limmud Day in Berlin on August 20, 2006, which drew about 300 visitors and offered 24 workshops. Since then, Limmud.de has held two multi-day festivals (in May 2008, with 300 participants and 105 workshops; and in May 2009, with 430 participants and 170 workshops) and two all-day Limmud events in Munich. Several other all-day Limmud events are planned. Limmud.de's annual multi-day learning festivals welcome Jews of all backgrounds and denominations. The classical constellation of frontal learning—teacher versus student—is replaced by a chevruta model of mutual learning. Participants decide between a dozen simultaneous sessions, and may offer to lead sessions themselves. Tolerance for different opinions is an important principle. The festivals are completely organized and run by volunteers. The number of participants in the multi-day events has grown by 30 percent, thus further growth is expected. In 2009 and 2010, 170 workshops were offered in German, English or Russian. Limmud.de participants have been inspired to organize local Limmud Day events in Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt.

### Facts

Volunteers: 12–20 (permanently involved in festival preparation)  
 Previous Funding: LA Pincus Fund; Central Council of Jews in Germany; UJA-Federation of New York  
 Rothschild Foundation; JDC (Joint); Jewish Agency (Hagshama)

### Contact Data

Chair, Limmud.de:  
 Toby Axelrod  
 Email: toby@limmud.de  
 Website: www.limmud.de

## 80. Torah College Berlin (Chabad)

The Torah College Berlin belongs to the Jewish Educational and Family Center of Chabad Lubawitsch and offers a combination of Jewish living and Jewish learning for young men from the age of 16 and older who come from outside Berlin. The young men normally use the one-year-program and study in parallel to their regular school attendance (usually high school or vocational school). The lessons in Torah, Talmud and Shulchan Aruch are provided in the morning or in the afternoon, furthermore it is possible to create an individual teaching plan for every single student. At the end of the week all the

students prepare Shabbat together. The college works closely together with the Yeshiva Gedola which is also located in the Jewish Educational and Family Center of Berlin. After school the college offers instructive trips to different towns in Germany and different sports activities. Every day three kosher meals are provided.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 4  
 Number of students: 14  
 Funding: Permanent Fundraising

#### **Contact Data**

Tora Kolleg/Director:  
 Rabbi Avraham Golovodschov  
 Münstersche Str. 6; 10709 Berlin;  
 Germany  
 Tel.: +49 (0) 30-212 808 33  
 Fax: +49 (0) 30-212 808 31  
 Website: [www.tora-kolleg.de](http://www.tora-kolleg.de)  
 E-Mail address: [info@tora-kolleg.de](mailto:info@tora-kolleg.de)

### **81. Schalom e.V.—German-Israeli-Jewish Meeting Place, Chemnitz**

Schalom, a non-profit German-Israeli-Jewish meeting place, was founded on November 9, 1998 by seven Jewish and non-Jewish citizens of Chemnitz of different ages and professions. Schalom is a charitable association and combines educational, cultural and integration work for Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. It is open to all interested people, regardless of religion, who stand up for peaceful coexistence of different cultures. Schaloms's main goal is to promote the revival, stabilization and continuation of Jewish life and culture in Chemnitz. Schalom also provides information about Jewish life, culture and religion to pupils, teachers, municipal authorities and churches. The public program includes readings, exhibitions, theater, concerts, guided tours and educational trips. It also participates in local civic initiatives against right-wing extremism and for the prevention of youth violence. German language courses are offered to FSU immigrants with a Jewish background. A social worker supports elderly immigrants; for example, in dealing with city agencies. Schalom also strives to familiarize immigrants with life in Germany and with the local Jewish Community. A weekly drawing class has been established to bring Jewish and non-Jewish children together.



**Facts**

Employees: 3  
 Volunteers: 5 including one social worker  
 Number of participants: 134  
 Funding: Restaurant Schalom, Donations, Capital from LOS (local capital for social purposes, funded by the German government)

**Contact Data**

SCHALOM e.V.  
 Carolastraße 5  
 09131 Chemnitz  
 Tel: +49 (0)371-69 577 69  
 Mobile: +49 (0)172-91 503 45  
 Website: [www.schalom-chemnitz.de](http://www.schalom-chemnitz.de)  
 email: [kontakt@schalom-chemnitz.de](mailto:kontakt@schalom-chemnitz.de)

**82. HaGescher—Brückenkindertagesstätte/Family Center, Dortmund**

The Brückenkindertagesstätte family center was founded in September 2003. The center is open to children of all ages, from all social strata, backgrounds, and religions, but there is a special effort to attract Jewish families. Additional Jewish partners of the center are Keren Kayemet Le Israel (KKL), the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt), and the Israeli Embassy. There is also close cooperation with the city of Dortmund. The biggest priority in the work of the institution is given to teaching about Jewish religion and tradition. The aim is to familiarize the children and their parents with rituals, rules and holidays, and everyday Jewish life. The premises are designed to emphasize a Jewish atmosphere, and the program includes singing, dancing, handicrafts, games and storytelling. Because the institution is a family center it offers a special language program and speech therapy to families with an immigrant background; it cooperates with the Federal Employment Agency and the Agency for Integration. The center also supports families in dealing with authorities. There is also a café for the parents.

**Facts**

Employees: 5 full-time staff, 4 part-time  
 Volunteers: 2–6  
 Number of children: 45  
 Funding: Jewish Community Dortmund  
 German government subsidies

**Contact Data**

Familienzentrum HaGescher/  
 Brückenkindertagesstätte  
 Monika Röse  
 Arndtstraße 15; 44135 Dortmund;  
 Germany  
 Tel: +49 (0)231-1763783  
 Website: [www.jg-dortmund.de/index.php?id=101](http://www.jg-dortmund.de/index.php?id=101)  
 email: [familienz.hagescher@t-online.de](mailto:familienz.hagescher@t-online.de)

### **83. HATiKVA—Educational and Meeting Center for Jewish History and Culture in Saxony, Dresden**

The independent education organization HATiKVA was founded in 1992 and is geared towards two major age groups: children and young people from 7 to 27; and adults over 27. Within its target audience, HATiKVA attempts to reach everyone, regardless of religion. Topics for the youth and adults range from a general introduction to Judaism to classes on holidays, rituals and customs from birth to death; four classes on German-Jewish history are offered, spanning the 18<sup>th</sup> century until today. Furthermore, Jewish sites in Dresden such as the synagogue are visited and explained. The creative mode of teaching includes both individual and group work in the rooms of HATiKVA and at appropriate places within the city. Results are presented and discussed. HATiKVA's extracurricular education programs are regarded as exceptional in the state of Saxony. Adults also may take Hebrew classes and participate in weekend seminars on such topics as "The Shtetl as a Reality and Symbol," or analyzing autobiographies of Jewish children during the Nazi era. HATiKVA also offers space for public discussion with an online-magazine about Jewish life in research and education: *Medaon. Magazin für Jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung*.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1.5 paid temporary positions for youth education;  
3 project positions;  
Volunteers: ca. 20  
6 honorary positions (editorial board of Medaon)  
Funding: Contributions from members of the society  
Donations; Dresden city government  
Youth Welfare Department, Cultural Office

#### **Contact Data**

HATiKVA e.V / Editorial Office of "Medaon"  
Pulsnitzer Str. 10; 01099 Dresden; Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)351-802 04 89  
Fax: + 49 (0)351-8047715  
Website: [www.hatikva.de](http://www.hatikva.de),  
<http://www.medaon.de/>  
email: [info@hatikva.de](mailto:info@hatikva.de),  
[medaon@hatikva.de](mailto:medaon@hatikva.de)

### **84. "Cultural Academy" for Children and Young People in Düsseldorf**

The Cultural Academy for Children and Young People (KFJ) was founded in 2007. The academy today offers programs almost year-round. The curriculum is changed annually and geared toward children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18 and (young)

adults. The academy is closely connected to the Jewish Community of Düsseldorf and fully supported by it. There is also close cooperation with municipal institutions and the main theater in Düsseldorf (Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus). There also are projects with children with a Turkish background. The KFJ wants to help ensure a Jewish future based on a Jewish tradition that connects education and culture with joy. A major emphasis is placed on conveying Jewish tradition, culture and arts. Jewish themes like holidays, klezmer music, Israeli and Yiddish dance, are expressed through different art genres including film, drama, and music. An emphasis is placed on art, dance, music, media, theater and education. The KFJ also offers private lessons in German, English and mathematics. Together with the youth center of the JC Düsseldorf, the academy organizes a weekly Sunday program for the children.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 1 full-time director;  
30 part-time teachers  
Volunteers: 3  
Number of participants: 150  
children, youths and adults a week  
Funding: Jewish Community of  
Düsseldorf  
Participant fees

#### **Contact Data**

Jüdische Gemeinde Düsseldorf  
Kulturakademie für Kinder und  
Jugendliche  
Zietenstr. 50; 40476 Düsseldorf;  
Germany  
Telephone: +49 (0)160-220 2147  
Website: [www.kinderkulturakademie.de](http://www.kinderkulturakademie.de)  
email: [kulturakademie@online.de](mailto:kulturakademie@online.de)

### **85. University of Applied Science Erfurt, Degree Program in Jewish Social Work (B.A.)**

The Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWSt), in cooperation with the Dorothea Gould Foundation from Switzerland, has developed a degree program that grants students a B.A. in Jewish social work. It is a co-operation between the University of Applied Science in Erfurt and the ZWSt. The project is completely financed by the Dorothea Gould Foundation. The Jewish social work course started in September 2007. The program welcomes all employees of the Jewish Communities in Germany who have graduated from high school and have an undergraduate degree. The age limit is 50. Currently the average age of the students is between 35 and 45. Primarily, the course focuses on immigrants from the former Soviet Union who have experience in working with Jewish institutions but now have the

chance to receive an accredited degree in Jewish social work. The program is part time to enable the students to work as well as study. It combines live lectures and seminars with e-learning and live-chat classrooms. The degree demands a certain practical work experience from each student, namely an internship or a placement with any Jewish institution in Germany, preferable with a Jewish Community.

#### **Facts**

Employees: 22: 1 director;  
1 secretary; 20 teachers  
Volunteers: N/A  
Number of students: 20  
Funding: Dorothea Gould  
Foundation, Switzerland

#### **Contact Data**

Fachhochschule Erfurt/Fachbereich  
Sozialwesen  
Director: Prof. Dr. Doron Kiesel  
Altonaer Str. 25; 99085 Erfurt;  
Germany  
Tel: +49 (0)361-6700 537  
E-Mail address: kiesel@fh-erfurt.de

### **86. Youth Activity Department of the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, Frankfurt Main**

The Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany was re-founded in 1951 by the Central Council of Jews in Frankfurt am Main. The ZWSt's youth activity department supports the work of young Jews throughout Germany. It is the name behind many of the country's youth centers, after school activities, retreats, vocational training seminars and countless other programs focusing on children, adolescents and young adults. The youth activity department organizes the madrichim seminars and is responsible for other educational seminars geared towards young people. The department also organizes the Machanoth, the summer and winter holiday camps for Jewish children between the ages of 6–18. Each summer ca. 700 children attend the camp and around 100 madrichim look after them. The department offers an annual weekend conference on current hot topics for 18–35 year olds. The programs offered aim to improve the infrastructure of the local Jewish Communities and to strengthen the quality of the work of the different youth centers across the country. The department's intense efforts to aid in the integration process of young immigrants into German society have shown far-reaching results.

**Facts**

Structure: Coordinating Office  
in Frankfurt/Main; Permanent  
Training of Madrichim  
Outreach: Jewish community youth  
centers  
German-wide Machanoth (summer  
+ winter)  
Funding: Various subsidies

**Contact Data**

ZWSt Jugendreferat  
Hebelstrasse 6;  
60318 Frankfurt am Main; Germany  
Director: Yair Kannai  
Tel: +49 (0)69-944371-13  
email: kannai@zwst.org

**87. Salomo Birnbaum Yiddish Society, Hamburg**

The independent Salomo Birnbaum Yiddish Society was founded in Hamburg in 1995. The biggest priority for the founders is the transmission of knowledge in the areas of Jewish culture and arts, especially Eastern European, Ashkenazi and Yiddish culture. This society remains unique in Germany. The reasons for the creation of this society were manifold. Firstly, the founders were concerned that Yiddish was only taught at universities, and wanted to give the language a place outside purely academic institutions. The society looks forward to introducing many more people to the vast and varied treasures of Yiddish culture, so that Yiddish will continue to live. Its board hopes that public authorities will come to fully understand and support the social/societal importance of the Birnbaum Society's work. Apart from offering a public space for introducing and discussing Yiddish cultural artifacts, the Salomo Birnbaum Society also supports Yiddish language classes, Yiddish publications and translations from Yiddish into German. In addition, the society promotes academic research projects connected with Yiddish, with the important resource of the Salomo Birnbaum Library.

**Facts**

Employees: 5 board members  
Members: about 80  
Volunteers: ca. 10  
Number of participants: 10–50  
Funding: Supervising School  
Authority; Member contributions;  
Private donations

**Contact Data**

Salomo-Birnbaum-Gesellschaft  
Postfach 73 08 03; 22128 Hamburg;  
Germany  
Chairperson: Danka Kowalski  
Tel: +49 (0)40/20 80 60  
(Wilfried Kühn)  
Fax: +49 (0) 1212-5-051-05-068  
Website:  
www.birnbaum-gesellschaft.org  
email: birnbaum-blitspost@web.de

### 88. Torah Center, Leipzig

In the spring of 1999, after completing his yeshiva studies in the US, Rabbi Dovid Chandalov and a few of his friends founded a youth center in Leipzig. Over the years, with a helping hand from Rabbi Josh Spinner from the Lauder Foundation, the youth center Am Echad grew to become today's Torah Center. At first the Torah Center was situated in the Jewish Community's facilities but eventually, it grew more independent and established its own building in Leipzig. The Torah Center attracts Jewish youth between the ages of 10 and 30, but as the rabbi points out, he studies with people of every age at the center. The rabbi prefers to work with Halakhic Jews but would not send away non-Halakhic Jews. The center serves about 40 people during the week and up to 100 at the weekly Shabbatoh. The main priority of the center is to provide a Jewish education to all those who either never had the chance of Jewish learning (such as many immigrants from the FSU) or who never concerned themselves with their Jewish heritage. Every Shabbat, the Torah Center organizes a Friday night prayer and dinner, interesting discussions and an authentic Jewish atmosphere.

#### Facts

Employees: 10  
 Volunteers: "Many." (according to interviewee)  
 Number of participants: 40–100 per week  
 Funding: Lauder Foundation  
 ca. 50%  
 Private donations ca. 50%

#### Contact Data

Torah Zentrum Leipzig  
 Uferstr. 21; 04105 Leipzig; Germany  
 Rabbi Dovid Chandalov  
 Tel: +49 (0)341-319 27 21  
[www.lauderyeshurun.de/torazentrum-leipzig](http://www.lauderyeshurun.de/torazentrum-leipzig)  
 email: [tzl@lauderyeshurun.de](mailto:tzl@lauderyeshurun.de)

### 89. Other Music e.V., Yiddish Summer Weimar

The non-profit organization Other Music e.V. was officially founded in 2006. The main educational project of Other Music, the Yiddish Summer Weimar, has existed for almost 10 years now. The yearly event (six weeks in summer, one week in winter) explores cultural identity and tradition in today's world in new ways. The project investigates and conveys Jewish traditions and the possibilities of meaning they can contribute today through music. All programs of Other Music are explicitly open to non-Halakhic Jews and non-Jews.

Other Music transmits Jewish art and tradition to a large extent through music, dance and language. Religious aspects are interrelated, such as when teaching nigunim and Hebrew texts or the *khusidl*, a dance that cannot be deeply understood outside a religious framework.

Other Music is an independent organization, but cooperates with many Jewish and non-Jewish partners, for example with the Jewish Community of Erfurt, a local music school, a cultural center and restaurants and cafés in Weimar. Other Music has received wide local, national, and international recognition, including from the EU and the German Music Council. The mayor of Weimar, Stefan Wolf, has publicly stated that establishing the Other Music Academy is of high priority for his administration.

### **Facts**

Employees: Part-time paid management position; 3 unpaid positions; Volunteers: 10–15  
 Number of participants:  
 About 300 each year  
 Fund of the European Commission for the “The Other Europeans”—Project; Weimar city government  
 Thuringian Ministry of Education; Erfurt Community

### **Contact Data**

other music e.V.  
 Ernst-Kohl-Straße 23;  
 99423 Weimar; Germany  
 Tel.: +49 (0)3643-85 83 10  
[www.yiddish-summer-weimar.de/e\\_home.php](http://www.yiddish-summer-weimar.de/e_home.php)  
[www.other-music.net/e\\_ueber\\_uns.htm](http://www.other-music.net/e_ueber_uns.htm)  
 email: [yiddish-summer@other-music.net](mailto:yiddish-summer@other-music.net)

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