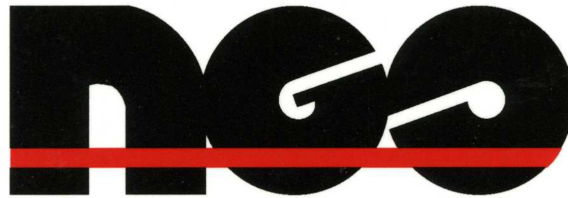

NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE

NUMBER 92 • SPRING/SUMMER 2004

MULTICULTURAL GERMANY:

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Holocaust-Memory and Multiculturalism. Russian Jews in German Media after 1989

Franziska Becker and Karen Körber

In October 2001, Europe's largest Jewish museum officially opened in Berlin. The opening ceremony developed into one of the capital's most important social events at the beginning of the new century. Not far from the Jewish Museum lies the site for the construction of the memorial to murdered European Jews. On postcards and views of the city, the golden dome of the synagogue is a popular motif, and tour organizers offer forays into the old and the new Jewish Berlin, with Yiddish theater in a rear courtyard, *klezmer* concerts, and kosher cuisine. Reunited Germany has not forgotten its history, as was feared after 1989, on the contrary. Jewish culture and history in particular are accorded a suitable position in the staging of the Berlin republic.

At first glance, this (re)discovery of Jewish culture is linked to Germany's conception of itself as a memory community answerable for the crimes of the German past. At second glance, however, a change in the public portrayal of Jews in Germany begins to appear. If, in the past, Jews were almost exclusively portrayed as victims of the Holocaust, whose history ended in the extermination camps, articles have increasingly appeared in the German press since the beginning of the 1990s expressing the hope for a lively Jewish culture in Germany. The new visibility of Jewish life has led commentators either to speculate about a "German-Jewish coming out"[1] or, considering the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, to muse about the return of "oriental

1. Miriam Niroumand, "Deutsch-jüdisches Coming Out," *Die Tageszeitung* (23 Nov. 1992).

Jews"[2] and the "*shtetl* in the big city of the nineties."[3] Thus, the new Jewry gains its significance not least of all because, understood as a renaissance of Jewish life, it supposedly connects back to a past which has repeatedly been characterized as a "German-Jewish symbiosis." The staging of the "new" capital Berlin as an open-minded metropolis thus finds its historical underpinning in the "old" Berlin of the 1920s.

The shift in public portrayals of Jewish life indicates, however, changes in the national self-conception beyond the special German-Jewish relationship. Like its western neighbors, the reunited Germany is confronted with processes and realities resulting from decades of immigration. In this context, the discussion about the model of a "multicultural society," in Germany as in all western democracies of the 1990s, gains significance. The German debate about multiculturalism is a special case inasmuch as the German state for decades also politically refused to take the factual reality of being a country of immigration into account, through changes in citizenship laws, for example. Accordingly, immigrant minorities are not expected to articulate themselves politically, in contrast to the situation in other European states such as Great Britain.[4] Nonetheless, this discussion provides an important point of reference with regard to the question about the relationship between the majority society and its minority immigrants. Both proponents and opponents of a "multicultural society" at least agree on the definition of the term. To both it means a society in which a multiplicity of ethnic groups exists characterized by a "common conception of origin and consciousness of belonging together and [. . .] by shared aspects of culture and history."[5] This new self-conception of a society which is no longer marked by a homogenous national culture but rather by the plurality of ethno-cultural groups is also documented in the media.[6]

One example of this is the reporting on immigration of Russian Jews

2. Ulrich Motte, "Ostjuden sollen uns willkommen sein," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (31 Oct.- 1 Nov. 1992).

3. Tilmann Krause, "Schtetl in der Großstadt der Neunziger," *Der Tagesspiegel* (30 Nov. 1992).

4. Rainer Bauböck, "Drei multikulturelle Dilemmata," *Multikulturelle Gesellschaft. Modell Amerika*, Berndt Ostendorf, ed. (Munich: Beck, 1994) 238-55.

5. Friedrich Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation. Soziologie inter-ethnischer Beziehungen* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1992) 57.

6. Since the mid-1990s, a shift in cultural representation can be observed in the media which attempts to take into account the diversity of an immigration society. This applies both to daily reporting and to documentaries or television series. That this new self-conception of Germany as a multicultural society is, however, still controversial was most recently revealed in the heated debate in 2000 about a German "*Leitkultur*" [guiding culture]. Opponents as well as supporters here discussed to what extent a modernization of the citizenship laws as well as the introduction of a uniformly regulated immigration law could represent a danger for the maintenance of the "national culture."

to Germany in the 1990s.[7] Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union since 1989 represents a break in both Jewish and German self-conceptions. Over the last ten years, the number of Jews living in Germany has risen from ca. 30,000 to about 100,000.[8] Although still a tiny minority in comparison to other minorities — labor migrants, so-called resettlers of German ancestry, or the Muslim community — the Jewish community receives disproportionately greater public attention in the media.

In what follows, we intend, on the basis of an evaluation of the press,[9]

7. We use the labels "Russian Jew," "Soviet Jew," and "Russian-Jewish immigrant" synonymously. With these terms we always mean Russian speaking immigrants from the former Soviet Union who have based their German admission procedures on Jewish ancestry.

8. Julius Schoeps, et al., eds., *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland? Fremd- und Eigenbilder der russisch-jüdischen Einwanderer* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1999) 9.

9. This article is based on an analysis of print media of a broad spectrum of regional and trans-regional daily newspapers as well as magazines and weekly newspapers in which explicit reports about the immigration of Russian Jews into Germany have appeared since 1990. This systematic press clipping collection can be found in the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin.* Because the print media, in contrast to television and radio, have continuously reported about and commented the immigration process from the very beginning, we have limited ourselves to this genre, since our investigation aimed at following and analyzing the change in public discourse about the immigration. For a more detailed version, see Franziska Becker, Karen Körber, "Juden, Russen, Flüchtlinge. Die jüdisch-russische Einwanderung nach Deutschland und ihre Repräsentation in den Medien", ". . . das Flüstern eines leisen Wehens . . . " *Beiträge zur Kultur und Lebenswelt europäischer Juden*, Freddy Raphael, ed. (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001) 425-51. The selection of articles and quotes here represents, in condensed form, recurring statements about Jewish immigration found in news reporting and in in-depth articles, commentaries, and background reports. Thereby, our analysis is founded on an understanding of media according to which reporting has two primary characteristics: Firstly, they are a source for the patterns of action and interpretation of the various actors involved in the immigration process, such as politicians, representatives of Jewish institutions, employees of social welfare agencies and the immigration bureaucracy; secondly, the media themselves function in the judgement of the immigration as actors and discourse producers when they, for example, pick up on impressions from social welfare institutions or Jewish communities and sometimes cook them down to stereotypical perceptual patterns. This also explains why we, in certain passages, speak of "the media," for we have found a broad agreement among different newspapers. The texts of our sample, which in all comprises the period between 1990 and 1998, document the media discourse which in no small way constituted the German public's knowledge and interpretative model on the immigration. Media are "influential agents of meaning generation and significance transferal." See Stefan Müller-Doohm, Klaus Neumann-Braun, "Kulturinszenierungen. Einleitende Betrachtungen über die Medien kultureller Sinnvermittlung," *Kulturinszenierungen*, Stefan Müller-Doohm, Klaus Neumann-Braun, eds. (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 9-27, here 11. They have a "cognitive function" and beyond this are also "the main source for information about the moral profile of a society." See Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils & Moral Panics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 17. Especially through subjects such as the portrayal of the Jewish community, the media, as discourse transferring instance, contribute significantly to public perception since day-to-day encounters with Jews hardly belong to the realm of experience of German non-Jews nowadays. See Birgit Rommelbacher, *Schuldlos – Schuldig? Wie sich junge Frauen mit Antisemitismus auseinandersetzen* (Hamburg: Konkret, ca. 1994) 50-67.

to present the main images and discourses which have developed in the course of Jewish immigration. Thereby, our analysis focuses on two interpretative patterns: Jews as members of a community of victims, and Jews as a distinct cultural-religious community. While the image of Jews as victims relates to Germany's conception of itself as a community of remembrance, the expectation of the development of a cultural community among the Russian Jews corresponds to the normative concept of a multicultural society. If, however, one observes press reports about the emigration of Russian Jews, a conflict appears between the (disappointed) identity expectations of the receiving German society and the multiple practices and identities of the Jewish immigrants. The example of Russian Jewish immigration shows how a morally based admission procedure can function to the exclusion of precisely those for whom it was originally planned.

Examples for this tense relationship will be shown in three primary dimensions structuring the immigration process of Russian Jews: firstly, the legal classification of the migrants as a refugee group; secondly, the expectation of their subsumation into the Jewish communities; and, thirdly, the admission criterion of Jewish identity. The initial starting point, following the process of the immigration itself, lies in the political debates at the beginning of the 1990s about the admission procedures for Soviet Jews.[10]

The Symbolic Field: Moral Politics

Jewish emigration from the USSR and its CIS successor states began with the fall of the Iron Curtain. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the

10. The investigation of the public discourse about Russian-Jewish immigration to Germany is part of the research projects of both authors. See Becker, Körber. Their two projects are each based on ethnographic field research of many months. On the example of a Jewish community, Körber investigates the relationship between Jewish identity formation, political strategies, and state migration policy. See Körber, "Warum kommen Sie nach Deutschland? Über das zwiespältige Verhältnis der hiesigen Gesellschaft zu den neu eingewanderten sowjetischen Juden," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (22 Sept. 2001); Körber, "Wie entsteht politische Ethnizität? Jüdische Identität und der deutsche Wohlfahrtsstaat," *Zeitschrift für Migration und Soziale Arbeit* 1 (2001): 57-65. Franziska Becker, who has conducted field research in admission homes for Jewish contingency refugees, has investigated the migration experiences of Soviet Jews from the perspective of German migration policy and its legal, institutional, and cultural framework. See Becker, *Ankommen in Deutschland. Einwanderungspolitik als biographische Erfahrung im Migrationsprozeß russischer Juden* (Berlin: Reimer, 2001); Becker, "Die Macht des Feldes. Feldforschung und Politisierung vor Ort," *Die Poesie des Feldes. Beiträge zur ethnographischen Kulturanalyse*, Katharina Eisch, Marion Hamm, eds. (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 2001) 26-48.

internal decay phenomena of the multi-ethnic state, to which awakening nationalism and growing anti-Semitism as well as the easing of exit visa restrictions on the side of Soviet authorities belong, led to a wave of emigration among Soviet Jews. One of their flight goals was East Berlin.[11] What began in 1989/1990 as unorganized entry into the then still existent GDR was, following initial public and political debates after unification of the two German states, transformed into a legally regulated procedure: since January, 1991, the refugee contingency procedure has been applied to the admission of Russian Jews.

From the very beginning, immigration of Russian Jews was included in German identity discourse. Looking at the debate of the German parliament about their admission in October 1990, and the media reaction at the time, the main elements of the interpretive patterns mentioned in the introduction can be found. In this session of parliament, members of all parties emphasized that unity must be demonstrated "on this highly-sensitive subject"[12] and support Jewish immigration to Germany. In view of "our responsibility towards our own German history," particular "magnanimity and generosity"[13] is called for in dealing with Jewish migrants. One representative from the party *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* points out the numerous reactions from the population and reads aloud from a public appeal: "The new German state must not, in the hour of its birth, deny assistance to those the old state persecuted and exterminated."[14] And a liberal weekly newspaper commented: "It is obvious that Germans in the East and in the West should happily provide a new home for the brethren in faith of six million murdered European Jews."[15] In addition to Germany's special moral obligation, the hope for

11. In July, 1990, the last People's Chamber government of the GDR, headed by Lothar de Maizière, decided to grant Soviet Jews the right to permanent residency in the GDR. When de Maizière's request to all Jews at the Jewish World Congress in the same year for forgiveness for the National Socialist crimes had moved some to select the GDR as destination for their migration, the number of immigrants rose rapidly. From April to October 1990 alone, some 2,650 people immigrated into the GDR, primarily to East Berlin. See Erica Burgauer, *Zwischen Erinnerung und Verdrängung. Juden in Deutschland nach 1945* (Reinbek: Rowolt, 1993) 267.

12. *Tagesspiegel* (26 Oct. 1990): Report about the Bundestag's parliamentary round on immigration of Jews from eastern Europe; here, a speaker from the CDU/CSU faction is quoted.

13. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (15 Nov. 1990): Extract from the Bundestag debate on admission of Soviet Jews; statement of a CDU representative.

14. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (15 Nov. 1990).

15. *Die Zeit* (21 Sept. 1990).

Jews"[2] and the "*shtetl* in the big city of the nineties."[3] Thus, the new Jewry gains its significance not least of all because, understood as a renaissance of Jewish life, it supposedly connects back to a past which has repeatedly been characterized as a "German-Jewish symbiosis." The staging of the "new" capital Berlin as an open-minded metropolis thus finds its historical underpinning in the "old" Berlin of the 1920s.

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Moscow sociologist is transformed into the neediness of a [. . .] welfare recipient."[23] That someone can voluntarily leave his property behind to begin again at the bottom lends their refugee admission status additional moral legitimacy and reinforces the image of a persecuted victim of discrimination. Interpreted as a refugees movement, the migration appears as an irreversible and final act.

In the course of the 1990s, however, these positive images were increasingly revised. Press reports express first doubts, above all when the "comparatively high standard of living"[24] of the immigrants also becomes visible in Germany. In contrast to the idea that the Soviet Jews only possess what they could carry across the border with them, employees of one of the admission homes report in the newspaper: "The new arrivals' cars stand in the parking lot [in front of the home], among them large sedans. When television crews from all over the world show up, they drive them behind the house, because they don't fit the picture."[25] It also does not fit the picture that the immigrants appear to join the Jewish communities less out of "religious-cultural" interest than for "material start-up assistance."[26] In the press, experts, such as the former German ambassador to the Ukraine, report that a large number of Jewish emigrants "emigrate to Germany rather than to Israel because the economic conditions in Germany are clearly better."[27] Here we hear doubts about the identity of a group which rejects both a religious and a national (Isrealite) allegiance and instead gives precedence to economic motives by their choice of migratory destination. Anyone who shirks off assigned identity constructs or treats them as optional arouses the suspicion that he has illegally wormed himself into his status and is actually an economic refugee.[28] Jewish emigrants who select neither religious nor national allegiance fall to some extent between the expected categories and bear the blemish of insufficient loyalty.

The interpretative pattern of the disloyal economic refugee is reinforced by the fact that Jewish contingency refugees in general maintain

23. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (3 May 1995).
24. *Focus* (19 Feb. 1997).
25. *Tagesspiegel* (12 Jan. 1991).
26. *Der Spiegel* 22 (1996): Quote from internal assessments of the Foreign Ministry according to which the immigration of Russian Jews had not fulfilled initial expectations.
27. *Focus* (19 Feb. 1997): Interview with the former German ambassador in Kiev.
28. The term economic refugee, with its negative connotation and as spread by the media in connection with the discussion about refugee migration since the end of the 1980s, designates migrants who immigrate primarily for economic reasons.

the native passport of their respective countries of origin in addition to their unlimited German residence permit. Especially the occasional return trip to that country from which one fled invites speculations in which the image of a mobile foreigner without ties unites with that of a trader and business dealer. Crossing the border provokes commentaries in the press according to which the German state's "well-intentioned immigration law" must be reconsidered. On the one hand, "even high functionaries of the former communist system" are granted admission here; and, on the other hand, migrants have been granted a "diplomatic status" which "invites abuse" when, for example, emigrants who remain "registered in their homeland [keep] their real estate and companies and [. . . conduct] their businesses from Germany," "possibly as a supplement to their welfare payments."[29] The image of the persecuted Jew requesting admission has been reversed: He is transformed from a refugee with no way back to a migrant in the literal sense of the term, a "wanderer between worlds" whose Jewish identity has become questionable and whose motives are of instrumental character.

Russians Rather Than Jews

From the very beginning, politicians and Jewish institutions linked the admission of Soviet Jews with the aim of revitalizing the small and elderly German Jewish communities. Accordingly, the Jewish communities were assigned the task of socially and religiously integrating the new emigrants. The assumption was that, in the Jewish communities as a supposed haven of a binding religious culture, Russian Jews would profess an identity which they had previously had to conceal out of fear of discrimination. This expectation also corresponds to the impressions of representatives of the Jewish communities: "The immigrants strive to garner as much as possible of Jewishness. When they come to the synagogue on Saturdays, it is [. . .] because they wish to learn something, wish to hear something they have missed all those decades. They have no admiration for Russian culture. They are only interested in learning here the Jewishness they have missed out on."[30] What is here portrayed as a learning process which Russian Jews pursue with a thirst for knowledge soon receives a clearly more critical evaluation. Articles

29. *Focus* (19 Feb. 1997).
30. *Tagesspiegel* (19 July 1995): Quote from the vice-chairman of the Jewish Community in Berlin.

repeatedly appear in the press in which increasing tensions within the Jewish communities and conflicts between the old established members and the new-comers are reported. In a daily newspaper, for example, the director of the Jewish social welfare agency in Frankfurt/Main refers to reservations of the old established community members towards the new ones, who "only want to use the advantages. [. . .] These people fill up the synagogues, although most of them have never seen a synagogue from the inside; they do not know what *Kashrut* means, the men are not circumcised, *bar mitzvah* is a foreign term for them."[31] In other communities as well, such as in Düsseldorf, Essen, and Berlin, critical voices are heard complaining that the Russian Jews not only have "no idea about religious matters," but also show no real interest in religious life.[32] In the daily press, the impression is increasingly reinforced that the immigrants are trying to redefine the communities. An institution originally foreseen as a place of cultural-religious integration is increasingly transformed into a "social welfare station" which needy migrants at most use for "material start-up assistance." The community becomes "some sort of labor union where you can get something for nothing."[33]

With the growing realization of the migrants' scant readiness to commit themselves in the Jewish communities together with their "German brethren in faith," criticism of Jewish immigration on the whole grows. In 1996, under the headline "As Quietly As Possible," *Der Spiegel* published an internal memorandum of the Foreign Ministry in which growing suspicion toward Jewish immigrants is expressed. Pointing out that this immigration is exclusively for economic reasons and has only "to a reduced extent led to a strengthening of the Jewish communities," the memo suggests thinking about ending Jewish immigration fifty years after the end of the war.[34]

The political considerations appear to correspond to a shift in the media representation of Russian Jews. The less the immigrants live up to the image of the cultural-religious Jew, the more often descriptions appear of their supposed Russian or Soviet mentality. The press repeatedly publishes statements from community functionaries complaining about "Russians" who do not wish to celebrate "Hanukkah [. . .] but

31. *Frankfurter Rundschau* (1 Feb. 1993).
32. *Rheinischer Merkur* (14 Feb. 1992).
33. *Der Spiegel* (29 Mar. 1993): Commentary of a member of the Berlin Jewish Community.
34. *Der Spiegel* 22 (1996).

Christmas instead" and run "gambling halls" instead of "lawyers' offices." Journalists snatch up the established community members' displeasure with the Russians and amplify on it in stereotypical manner. "Women with garish shaggy wool vests and bleached blond hair" and "men with callused hands and USA sweatshirts"[35] are described who behave with ignorance and lack of piety in the presence of religious symbols: "They chat, eat bananas, lean on the memorial. . . ."[36]

The "immigrants' Russian, or rather, Soviet, mentality"[37] is involved to explain their lacking ability and willingness to integrate: "When they find out the community does not work like the Komsomol or indeed a Mafia group of chums for handing out living quarters or jobs, most of them do not come anymore."[38]

Using clichés, descriptions such as this reinforce the idea that the immigrants not only lack a religious identity, but that they also do not correspond to the image of culturally and academically educated Jews. Instead, the migrants are portrayed as members of an obviously consumption-oriented social milieu which is usually classified under the stereotype of the "new Russian" or the "homo Sovieticus." The normative ideal of Jewish immigration considered a cultural enrichment of Germany's own society turns into the fear of the Russian migrant in quest of prosperity.

"Non-Jewish Free Riders"[39]

Suspicion about the legitimacy of Jewish immigration hardens in particular in press reports about falsified birth certificates. The discussion about fake entry documents apparently reduces to the least common denominator a subject that turns out to be a truly complex field of diverse definitions of Jewish identity. Thereby, the historic-moral weight

35. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (16 Feb. 1998): Report about the Berlin Jewish Community in which the author takes up community members' impressions complaining about the dominance of "the Russians."
36. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (16 Feb. 1998): Impressions of a journalist from the Berlin Jewish Community.
37. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (3 Sep. 1992): Commentary of a journalist in an article about Berlin's central welfare agency and its work for Russian Jews.
38. *Tagesspiegel* (27 Aug. 1992): Quote from a functionary in Berlin's Jewish Community.
39. The *Focus* article (7/1997) with the title "Purchased Birth Certificates" says, "If Helmut Kohl and Wolfgang Schäuble hoped to produce new members for the Jewish communities in Germany through the immigration, it is now clear that not a few of the new arrivals are either non-Jewish free riders or not interested in religious-cultural life."

placed on the admissions procedure produces a dilemma which, in the course of the immigration, turns against the Russian Jews.

On the one hand, in consideration of German-Jewish history, no "formal procedure of evidence examination"[40] was planned that would be based on an unequivocal definition of Jewish identity. On the other hand, as with any other immigration, a verifiable entry regulation was necessary. Accordingly, the decisive criterion for immigration is ethnic ancestry, i.e., "Jewish affiliation," which, "as the case may be, is to be lent credence by the presentation of proof."[41] Due to the National Socialist past, however, a magnanimous application of this requirement was planned; after all, "fifty years after the Nazi barbarities," one did not wish again "unwillingly to come into the proximity of the Nuremberg Laws."[42] The attribute of ethnic ancestry was thus extended in some way to the symbolic construction of the community of victims. The essentially morally based decision to keep the admission criterion open was also rooted in a real definition problem. While the Soviet Union understood Jewishness as nationality determined on a patrilineal basis, Germany regards Jews as members of a religious community which is here organized in the Jewish communities. In them, in accordance with Jewish religious law, a Jew is someone who has a Jewish mother.

A consequence of this regulation was that, for example, migrants who were Jews under Soviet law could indeed immigrate to Germany but would not be accepted into the Jewish communities. In return, not everyone who has a Jewish mother therefore feels culturally or religiously connected with Jewry. Media discourse now reduces this divergence between the different definitions of Jewish identity, on the one hand, and the subjective decision for or against an ethnic identity, on the other, to a formal polarity which merely distinguishes between "real" and "fake" Jews. In the debate on falsified documents, in which the subject of Jewish authenticity experiences its criminalistic highpoint, a general suspicion of the migrants gains the upper hand. Thereby, as a rule, only those cases are examined in which Russians buy Jewish papers to be able to emigrate to Germany. In contrast, the

40. From the stipulations for the admissions procedure for Soviet Jews on the basis of the decisions of the Minister-President Conference from January 1, 1991. Reprinted in *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (21 Feb. 1991).

41. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (21 Feb. 1991).

42. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (10 Jan. 1991): Quote from an employee of the central advisory office in East Berlin where new arrivals at first had to register.

frequent practice of reverse falsifications goes without mention, whereby, namely, a Jewish ancestry certification in a passport or on a birth certificate which was deleted in the Soviet Union to avoid anti-Semitic discrimination is restored for the purpose of entry. Also unconsidered remain all those applicants who, because of National Socialist or Stalinist persecution, no longer have any original Jewish documents at all. Precisely because they were persecuted as Jews, they lack proof of identity, or, in other words, in such cases, Jewish identity is proven precisely by the fact that it cannot at all or can only with great difficulty be proven.[43]

The media discourse spotlights neither the difficulties in formal determination of Jewish identity nor its multiple definitions, but rather the abuse of the immigration regulation. Nearly every report about Jewish immigration raises the "question of the true identity of the new arrival"[44] in connection with fraud attempts. High prices are said to be paid for Jewish papers; the Russian Mafia is supposedly smuggling people into the country in this way. Under the headline "With Fake Papers to the West," a daily newspaper reports about a police raid in Berlin in which "manipulated birth certificates and identity documents" were found. The article scandalizes with a further abuse practice whereby Jewish immigrants sold adoption documents to enable non-Jews from the CIS states to immigrate.[45] The chairman of the Jewish community in Düsseldorf complains about the abuse in connection with financial start-up grants because immigrants with falsified papers could make claims.[46] Indeed, the situation of the Jewish communities seems particularly endangered by the falsifications; reports repeatedly appear according to which the "influx of real and less real members" is

43. Because of the complexities of the history of the twentieth century and the violent impositions of two dictatorships, total denial of Jewish identity also belongs to that identity for stretches of time. One of the few articles which deals with this problem is a report in the *Allgemeinen Jüdischen Wochenzeitung* of 25 April 1991, with the headline, "Half a Jewish Life just for Papers." Here, the case of a married couple from Latvia is taken up who had falsified the nationality entry in their birth certificates. That both were German Jews spelled danger for them in Latvia, first annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 and then occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941. The husband therefore had no papers at all, the wife possessed only the carbon copy of a birth certificate which provided no proof of the nationality of her parents. He speaks Yiddish; she, German with a Yiddish accent. Both were convicted in Germany for counterfeiting official documents.

44. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (9 Sep. 1994).

45. *Die Welt* (5 Mar. 1994).

46. *Rheinischer Merkur* (14 Feb. 1992).

becoming an "acid test"[47] for the Jewish communities.

What is here reduced to a question of falsified papers over shadows or even conceals the difficult process of rapprochement between the German and the Russian Jews, which especially erupts into conflicts in the Jewish communities. The debate of falsifications, in which the disappointed identity expectations of the receiving German society also find their high point, ultimately illegitimate the discussion about the cooperation of Russian Jews in the communities when it speaks of "Jewish emigration in quotation marks" which "has recently experienced ever more criticism within the administration."[48]

The fact that immigration movements are always critically observed and commented with regard to potential abuse is in and of itself nothing unusual, especially when it is considered a humanitarian act in which the giving side really wants to be convinced that its gifts are reaching the right recipient. However, if one regards the line of attack of public criticism in the course of the immigration, one detects that it essentially aims at stripping Jewish migration of its Jewishness.

Misjudgment and Paradox

If the Jewish emigrants correspond neither to the image of victim nor to that of pillar of culture, they are stripped of their Jewish identity and at the same time the legitimacy of the immigration is put into question. However, to the extent that the "staging of the good Jew" fails, the "bad Jew"[49] emerges, Jewish identity itself becomes negative and with a collection of stereotypical and anti-Semitic attributes the "typical" Jew is restored.

Thus, the image of the persecuted refugee is transformed into the metaphor of the border-crossing commuter who, on the one hand, has moneyand mobility at his disposal and, on the other, picks the pocket of the German welfare state. By association, the stereotypes of the rich Jew and the lazy Jew, as well as that of the Jew as trader are activated. The Jewish pillar of culture turns into an economic migrant who instrumentalizes his Jewish identity without committing himself to it or to the community with any constancy. He thus serves what Zygmunt Bauman

47. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (16 Feb. 1998).

48. *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (13 June 1996): The Federal Minister for Development Aid during a trip to the Ukraine.

49. Michael Daxner, "Die Inszenierung des guten Juden–Fragmentarische Thesen zu einem auffälligen Interesse," Müller-Doohm and Neumann-Braun, eds. (1995) 336-58. See footnote 9.

analyzed as the distorted picture of the disloyal, ungraspable Jew who proves his identity precisely by hiding it, denying it, and mimicking it.[50] Public expectations of Jewish identity, however, above all reflect the symbolic order of the receiving German society. According to this, Jewish identity is primarily realized by participation in the religious and cultural community of the Jews living in Germany, who are represented by the Jewish Communities as public corporations. This assumption takes for granted that which must first be produced: the existence of a common cultural-religious framework to which both long-time inhabitants and new immigrants can equally relate. Such a process proves to be extremely difficult, because, for one, Jews in the Soviet Union were to a great extent alienated from knowledge and practice of Jewish culture, history, and religion. On the other hand, their life in the Soviet Union engendered other experiences and interpretative patterns which differ from those of Jews living in Germany in many respects.

Among these was also the experience of being defined, and often enough stigmatized, as a Jew without in any way at all having actively fashioned this identity. Thus, the achievement of career positions received a particular significance for identity formation and could partially balance out the experiences of discrimination and marginalization in the Soviet society.[51] If Soviet Jews in the admitting country appear to be more interested in successful social and economic integration than in religious-cultural integration, this refers back to a practice in which Jewish identity in the former Soviet Union was expressed.

If one summarizes the ambivalent interpretations confronting Soviet Jews in Germany, they all indicated a basic misunderstanding: Whereas the Soviet Jews thought they were immigrating into Germany, the German society assumed they were immigrating into Germany's Jewish communities. This expectation ultimately proves to have been a projection corresponding to the needs of the receiving German society, with reference to the revaluation of German culture and in the sense of the illusion of compensation. Beyond the special case of Jewish immigration, a dilemma is revealed for all immigration societies which link the admission and integration of migrants to guiding normative images accompanied by homogenizing and culturalizing attributions. As positive

50. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Oxford: Polity, 1991).

51. Fran Markowitz, "Soviet Dis-Union and the Fragmentation of Self. Implications for the Emigrating Jewish Family," *East European Jewish Affairs* (24 Jan. 1994): 3-17.

and integrative as such constructions may be considered, they not only obstruct the recognition of migrants' difference and life-reality, but they can also very quickly turn into their own opposite, because they hardly leave any room for any other justification for the existence of the immigrants than the group membership assigned them. In the sense that culturalization of immigrants ultimately leads to exclusion and disqualification, Jewish-Russian immigration is no special case.

Translated by Richard Gardner