The Jewish Emigration from the Former Soviet Union to Germany

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the 1980s a massive emigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union (FSU) can be observed. Israel and the United States were the most important receiving countries, followed by Germany, a comparatively new immigration destination for Jews from the successor states of the USSR. One of the reasons the German Government allowed the admission of Jews from post-Soviet states was the Jewish community's claim that this immigration might rejuvenate the German Jewish population in the longer run. Using an index of demographic aging (Billeter's J), the following article examines if this has actually happened. Findings suggest that immigration actually initiated a process of rejuvenation in the Jewish population in Germany. However, it was reversed during the end of the 1990s because of an unaffected low fertility.

INTRODUCTION

Since the liberalization of emigration regulations in the late-1980s and shortly thereafter with the break up of the Soviet Union, an exodus of Jews from the successor states of the USSR took place. The Jewish out-migration resulted in a dramatic decline of Jewish communities in the post Soviet Union. Initially most Jewish emigrants headed toward Israel and the United States. In the beginning of the 1990s Germany became the third important receiving country for the post-Soviet Jewish emigration because of an official regulation governing the admission of Jewish immigrants from the former USSR. According to the

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German Federal Administration Office, approximately 128,000 Jewish migrants, including their family members, came to Germany between 1990 and 2000.

The Jewish immigration from the FSU has been responsible for the growth of Jewish communities in Germany since 1990, turning Germany into the only country in Europe with an expanding Jewish population. One of the reasons the German Government allowed the admission of Jews from the former USSR was the Jewish community's claim that this immigration might rejuvenate the German Jewish population in the long run. In the following article it will be examined if this has actually happened.

As an introduction to the subject, the demographic development of the world Jewish population in Israel and the Diaspora will be described in the second section. The third section examines the history and the present situation of the Jewish population in Russia and the FSU. The emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and its successor states will be investigated in section four; the admission of Jewish immigrants in Germany in section five; and finally, in section six, the impact of Jewish immigration on the demographic development of the Jewish community in Germany will be explored.

PAST AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD JEWISH POPULATION

It is not an easy task to analyse the size and structure of the world Jewish population. No comparable international statistics exist on this subject because most countries with a Jewish population do not specify Jews in their population censuses. The statistical information on the Jewish population is exhaustive only in Israel. The demographic information on Jews in the Diaspora predominantly stems from Jewish sources, which are inconsistently compiled through the different countries. As an exception, the former USSR registered the Jewish population in its official statistics since the first all Union census in 1926. It is important to note, however, that the nationality of Soviet citizens in the censuses before World War II was recorded according to the national affiliation (narodnost'), while in the post-war censuses in 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989, the nationality category (national'nost) was based on ethnic self-identification (Karklins, 1986: 33).

Due only to the efforts of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has it become possible to create a reliable database on the demographic development of the world Jewish population. In 1939, before World War II, there were approximately 16.7 million Jewish people. After the loss of almost one-third of the Jewish people during the Holocaust the number had been reduced to 11 million in 1945. Since that time the Jewish population increased to 13.8 million in 1967 (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1971: 896).

Afterward the world Jewish population nearly stagnated, amounting to 13.0 million in 1995 (DellaPergola, 1997: 545). This development was the result of a growing Jewish population in Israel, while the Jewish Diaspora population decreased (Table 1). Between 1995 and 2001 a small growth – about 1.5 per cent – in the Jewish population has been observed. However, the demographic development of the Jewish population in Israel and the Diaspora showed different tendencies. In the end of 1995 about 8.5 million of the total Jewish population lived in the Diaspora; this number declined to 8.3 million by 2001.

TABLE 1

THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA,
31 DECEMBER 1995 AND 1 JANUARY 2001

Country	Jewish population (thousands)		In % of the world Jewish population		In % of the Diaspora	
	1995	2001	1995	2001	1995	2001
United States	5,690	5,700	43.6	43.0	66.9	68.7
Israel	4,549	4,952	34.8	37.4	–	–
France	525	520	4.0	3.9	6.2	6.3
Canada	362	364	2.8	2.7	4.2	4.4
Russia	360	275	2.8	2.1	4.1	3.3
Great Britain	292	275	2.2	2.1	3.4	3.3
Argentina	206	197	1.6	1.5	2.8	2.4
Ukraine	180	112	104	0.8	2.4	1.3
Brazil	100	97	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.2
South Africa	95	79	0.7	0.6	1.1	1.0
Australia	92	98	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.2
Germany	62	98	0.5	0.7	0.7	1.2
Hungary	54	51	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6
Mexico	40	40	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5
Others	452	396	4.9	3.4	5.1	4.7
Total	13,059	13,254	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: DellaPergola, 1997, 2001.

In the beginning of 2001 the largest Jewish community in the world was in the United States, which includes more than two-thirds of the Diaspora Jewish population. Its total number (5.7 million) was considerably greater than the Jewish population in Israel (4.95 million). These two Jewish communities comprised 80.4 per cent of the world Jewish population. In comparison, the number of Jews in Russia, the Ukraine, and Germany has been small, ranging below 3 per cent of the world Jewish population in all of these countries. Mainly because of migration movements, a sharp decrease of the Jewish population

occurred in Russia and the Ukraine between 1995 and 2001, while the Jewish population in Germany grew considerably.

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

The Jewish population in the Soviet Union traditionally settled in the European part of Russia, in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, Latvia, and Lithuania.[1] A small Jewish minority lived in the Caucasus – in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and in middle Asia – in Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan. The Soviet census data in 1926, 1939, 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989 provide an overview of the demographic development of the Jewish population (Table 2).

TABLE 2

THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE SOVIET UNION*

Year	Soviet Union	Russia	Ukraine	Belorussia	Moldova**	Uzbekistan
1926	2,600,900	624,800	1,574,400	407,000		37,700
1939	3,028,500	948,000	1,533,000	375,000		51,000
1959	2,177,800	875,000	839,000	150,000	95,000	95,000
1970	2,150,700	808,000	777,000	148,000	98,000	103,000
1979	1,762,000	692,000	633,000	135,000	80,000	74,000
1989	1,378,000	536,800	486,000	112,000	66,000	65,000

Notes: *Not including Mountain Jews, Georgian Jews, Central Asian Jews, Krymchaks, and Tats; **From 1924 to 1940, the Moldavian ASSR belonged partly to the Ukraine, partly to Romania.

Source: Soviet Population Censuses, 1926, 1939, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989.

Shortly before World War II (1939) more than 3 million Jews resided in the USSR, excluding regions annexed between 1939 and 1940. In the Ukraine and Belorussia, Jews were the third largest population group in 1939, holding a share of 4.9 per cent and 6.7 per cent of the total population respectively (Katz, 1975).

The sharp decrease of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union between 1939 and the first population census after World War II in 1959 must be attributed to the consequences of the war and the Holocaust. The further decline of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union after 1959 was the result of emigration, low fertility rates, and assimilation processes, which were reinforced by mixed marriages. Since World War II mixed marriages increased considerably among the Jews in the Soviet Union (Tolts, 1997: 171). When the USSR broke up, the Jewish population declined from 2.2 million in 1959 to 1.4 million in 1989. The urbanization rate of Jews in the Soviet Union had reached 99 per cent in 1989. In Russia more than half (52.3%) of the Jewish population was

concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with 175,000 and 106,000 Jewish inhabitants respectively.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Jewish population continued to decrease. Available data show a Jewish population loss of 43 per cent between 1990 and 1994 (Konstantinov, 1995: 9). It must be attributed to a very high emigration, a low fertility rate, and on-going intermarriages (Tolts, 1992). Between 1989 and 1994 the share of children born to Jewish mothers by non-Jewish fathers increased from 58 per cent to 68 per cent (*Goskomstat Rossii*, 1994). In 1994, the number of mixed "Jewish-Russian" households in Moscow was higher than the number Jewish households. In Russia, the average size of mixed households in the Jewish population in 1994 was 3.1 members, considerably larger than Jewish households with just 1.9 members (*Goskomstat Rossii*, 1994). Furthermore, the Jewish population aged to a higher degree than other nationalities in Russia (*Goskomstat Rossii*, 1995: 151, 160; Tolts, 1997: 166).

THE JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS SUCCESSOR STATES

The Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and its successor states has its own specific history, which can be traced back to the beginning of the 1920s. Although the constitution of the USSR never contained any guarantee of freedom of movement beyond its borders, in rare cases the Soviet legislation did permit emigration. Soviet citizens were allowed to leave the country primarily for the reunification of families (Heitman, 1987: 14-15). In addition, emigration from the USSR occurred in connection with flight, forced banishment, and political exile.

In the literature, emigration from the FSU has been analysed in the context of four major "emigration waves" (Vishnevsky and Zayonchkovskaya, 1994). These emigration movements were sharply distinguished from each other with respect to the emigration motivation, the ethnic and social structure, the duration, and the intensity. In the first wave shortly after the 1917 revolution, military personnel, political opponents against the communist regime, and civilians left the USSR, escaping from the new Soviet authorities. It has been estimated that between 1.5 and 3.5 million persons took part in this emigration. The second wave (1941-1947) was related to displaced persons who had crossed the borders of the USSR during World War II and refused to come back or were abandoned. The second wave did not comprise more than 500,000 emitters and refugees. The third (1948-1986) and fourth emigration waves (since 1987) were the most important for the Jewish population in the FSU. Between 1948 and 1986 emigration was kept under strict control by the Soviet authorities and the party apparatus and was mainly accepted in case of family reunification. In this context, the intervention

of foreign states on the part of groups wishing to emigrate played an important role. The main beneficiaries of this policy were Jews, Germans, Armenians, and Greeks, whose families had been wrenched apart by the events of World War II or the Iron Curtain and whose potential recipient countries (the US, Israel, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, and France) supported their cause (Zaslavsky and Brym, 1983). According to Heitman (1987: 108), about 290,000 Jews, 105,000 Germans, and 52,000 Armenians left the USSR between 1950 and 1986.

The fourth emigration wave began after *perestroika*, when the effects of the "new thinking" were discernible in emigration policy (Dietz and Segbers, 1997: 149). Although legislation itself had not yet changed, the number of individuals authorized to leave the country shot up since 1987. It is reasonable to attribute this development to internal political factors in the Soviet Union and to subsequent changes in foreign relations. In May 1991 a new law on emigration was approved by the Soviet Government, which the Russian legislation later confirmed. Among other things, the new emigration law accepted reasons for emigration other than family reunion and recognized the individual right to travel.

As Table 3 shows, since 1948, Jews constituted a large part of the total emigration from the USSR. Available data show that more than half (52.1%) of all emigrants who left the Soviet Union between 1948 and 1990 were Jewish (Heitman, 1991: 5). The most important destination areas for Jewish emigrants were Israel and the United States (Sabatello, 1994).

Until the mid-1970s practically all Jewish emigrants from the FSU went to Israel. In the subsequent years this picture changed – between 1980 and 1989 only 25.9 per cent of all Jewish emigrants moved to Israel, 72.5 per cent preferred the United States, and a small minority settled in other countries, first in Canada and in some European states (Sabatello, 1994: 262). During that time some Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union who had originally applied for an exit visa to Israel stayed in large European capitals like Vienna or Rome (Leshem, Rosenbaum, and Kashanov, 1989). Some of them moved to West Germany, mainly to West Berlin. This was the beginning of a Jewish emigration movement to Germany, which became increasingly relevant in the 1990s.

The most important sending countries of the Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union in the 1970s had been the Baltic republics, the Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia, Northern Bukovina, the Trans-Caucasus, and middle Asia (Aptekman, 1993: 15). In the 1980s and 90s the emigrants came from almost all regions of the former USSR. In relative numbers the Ukraine and Belorussia had the highest Jewish out-migration. Although the largest Jewish population lived in the Russian Federation, the number of Jewish emigrants from Russia was considerably lower than from the Ukraine (Florsheim, 1990). This was related to less insecure economic and political perspectives in Russia and to better integration and social acceptance of Jews in the Russian Federation.

TABLE 3

THE JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE FORMER USSR TO ISRAEL, THE UNITED STATES, AND GERMANY, 1974-2000.

Years	Israel	United States	Germany
1974	16,816	3,490	
1975	8,531	5,250	
1976	7,279	5,512	
1977	8,348	6,842	
1978	12,192	12,265	
1979	17,614	28,794	
1980	7,570	15,461	
1981	1,767	6,980	
1982	731	1,397	
1983	387	887	
1984	340	489	
1985	348	570	
1986	206	641	
1987	2,072	3,811	
1988	2,166	10,576	
1989	12,172	36,738	
1990	181,759	31,283	
1991	145,605	34,715	
1992	64,057	45,888	
1993	69,132	35,581	16,597*
1994	68,100	32,835	8,811
1995	64,489	21,693	15,184
1996	58,213	19,501	15,959
1997	54,591	14,531	19,437
1998	46,020	7,371	17,788
1999	66,848	6,309	18,205
2000	50,817	5,880	16,538

Note: *This number includes all Jewish immigrants who came to Germany between 1990 and 1993.

Source: Israel: 1974-1994, Tress, 1995: 40; 1995-2000, running statistics of the Dept. of Immigration and Absorption. US: 1974-1994, Tress, 1995: 40; 1995-2000, running statistics of HIAS. Germany: Federal Administration Office.

GERMANY: A NEW IMMIGRATION DESTINATION FOR JEWS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

In July 1990, the last GDR Government decided to grant asylum to Jewish citizens from the Soviet Union who were threatened by persecution or discrimination (*Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen*, 1997: 307). A number of Jews from the USSR made use of this offer and moved to East Germany, mainly to East Berlin. Nearly all of these emigrants travelled

with a tourist visa. After the German reunification all Jewish immigrants who had come to Germany between 1 June 1990 and 15 February 1991 were recognized retroactively as so called quota refugees. The quota refugee regulation was based on a law (*Kontingentflüchtlingsgesetz*), which had been established in 1980 for the admission of refugees from South-East Asia to Germany. The law regulated the admission and distribution of refugees according to a quota system over the federal countries.

After 10 November 1991 it was no longer possible for Jewish immigrants from the FSU to be admitted as refugees after arrival in Germany with a tourist visa. Instead, immigrants had to apply for an entry permit at German embassies in the countries of origin. The procedure for being accepted as quota refugee is as follows (Dietz, 2000): the prospective immigrant has to request an application form at the German embassy in the country of origin and deliver it with sufficient proof of his/her Jewish identity; the application is sent to the federal administration office in Germany, which distributes it among the federal countries according to the quota system; the Department of the Interior in each of the federal countries decides whether the applicant for immigration will be admitted – only in very rare cases has the admission of Jewish immigrants from the former USSR been refused so far; after the federal country has accepted a prospective Jewish immigrant on the basis of the quota refugee regulation, the application form is returned back to the federal administration office, which forwards it to the embassy in the country of origin; the embassy informs the prospective immigrant that she or he may apply for an exit visa to Germany; within a year the immigrant must organize the out-migration, otherwise the entrance permit will expire.

According to the information of the Federal Administration Office, 157,694 Jewish applicants were allocated to one of the federal countries between February 1991 and December 2000. Of that number, 128,519 actually arrived. In addition, 8,535 Jews from the former Soviet Union, who either came before 10 November 1991 or who arrived by a tourist visa afterwards and were not send back, have been admitted to Germany (*Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen*, 1997: 307).

For Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union there were several motives for leaving the country of origin. First, anti-Semitism was a push-factor. Economic crisis, political instability, ecological catastrophes, and ethnic tensions in the successor states of the USSR further contributed to the emigration decision (Schoeps, Jasper, and Vogt, 1999: 150; Doomernik, 1997: 19). According to survey studies the admission to Germany was particularly attractive for Jewish immigrants who wanted to leave the FSU but felt insecure about going to Israel or the United States (Doomernik, 1997: 81). Plus, some Jewish immigrants already had relatives, friends, or acquaintances in Germany, making it easier for newcomers to adapt to the economy and society.

If one looks at the Jewish immigration from the FSU to Germany, it has to be noticed that immigration figures differ fundamentally, depending whether the statistics of the Federal Administration office or those of the Jewish communities are used (Table 4).

TABLE 4

APPLICATION, RECOGNITION, AND IMMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION TO GERMANY, 1990-2000

Year	Federal Administration Office			Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany
	Applications	Accepted Applications	Immigration	Immigration
1990				1,008
1991	19,288	12,583		5,198
1992	19,232	15,879		3,777
1993	14,299	15,785	16,597*	5,205
1994	27,704	16,466	8,811	5,521
1995	29,824	22,777	15,184	8,851
1996	17,302	13,211	15,959	8,608
1997	21,098	12,931	19,437	7,092
1998	11,251	12,233	17,788	8,299
1999	24,854	15,549	18,205	8,929
2000	27,030	20,280	16,538	7,405

Notes: *This number includes all Jewish immigrants who came to Germany between 1990 and 1993.

The Federal Administration Office includes all immigrants in the Jewish quota refugee regulation who are Jewish by the documents of the post-Soviet administration or who belong to the group of non-Jewish spouses and relatives of Jewish immigrants. In contrast, the Jewish communities refer to the Jewish religious law (*halakha*) and accept as Jewish only those immigrants whose both parents are Jewish or who were born by a Jewish mother. This regulation was invalid in the FSU, where either parent could be Jewish. Jewish identity in the FSU was defined through the ascription by the state and was not primarily related to religious or cultural practices (Tress, 1997: 36). Therefore, many Jewish immigrants from the FSU arrive in Germany with little knowledge of the Jewish religion and cultural traditions (Schoeps, Jasper, and Vogt, 1999: 109).

In that respect they differ fundamentally from Jews in Germany, which led to tensions between these two groups (Schoeps, Jasper, and Vogt, 1996: 154; Tress, 1995: 50).

THE JEWISH IMMIGRATION AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN GERMANY

As Table 5 indicates, in the beginning of 1956 the Jewish communities in West Germany counted only 16,029 members compared to 503,000 in 1933 (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1971: 492). After the Holocaust a very small group of Jews had survived the end of the Nazi regime in Germany. Of those, a great number left after the end of World War II and moved primarily to Israel and the United States. In the beginning of the 1950s, the religious and cultural life of Jews in Germany had been reestablished by the newly organized Jewish communities and the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany.

Since the 1950s a slow growth of Jewish communities could be observed until 1977 when the first insignificant reduction occurred. In 1980 the members of Jewish communities increased again until a second reduction between 1983-1986 was followed by a period of stagnation until the year 1990. With the break up of the Soviet Union and the new admission regulation for Jews from the successor states of the USSR in Germany, the Jewish communities in Germany grew considerably from 29,089 community members in 1991 to 87,756 in 2001.

In analysing the demographic development of the Jewish communities in Germany, the natural population development has to be distinguished from other structural changes. For example, a comparison of the development of the crude birth rate and the crude death rate reveals that the increase of the Jewish population in the 1990s cannot be explained by the natural population development (Figure 1). Since the beginning of the 1950s the birth rate of the Jewish population in Germany has been extremely low. In the 1950s and 60s this was related to the fact that a great part of the Jewish population in Germany had survived the Holocaust and was particularly old in a demographic sense. Also in later years the fertility of the members of the Jewish communities in Germany remained far below the replacement level (Figure 1).

A decline in death rate could be observed in the 1970s and in the early 1980s. This has to be attributed to a population momentum, as most of the older survivors of the Holocaust – who were the largest age group in the Jewish population in Germany in the 1950s and 60s – had died. In the 1990s, a further decline in death rates was related to the Jewish immigration from the FSU, which strengthened the young and middle age cohorts in the Jewish population.

TABLE 5

MEMBERS OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN GERMANY,
1 JANUARY OF THE RESPECTIVE YEAR

Years	Members	Years	Members
1956	16,029	1979	27,295
1957	16,904	1980	27,768
1958	19,436	1981	28,173
1959	21,449	1982	28,374
1960	21,643	1983	28,202
1961	21,755	1984	27,791
1962	22,078	1985	27,561
1963	22,412	1986	27,538
1964	23,027	1987	27,533
1965	25,132	1988	27,684
1966	25,757	1989	27,552
1967	26,134	1990	27,711
1968	26,241	1991	29,089
1969	26,243	1992	33,692
1970	26,314	1993	36,804
1971	26,704	1994	40,917
1972	26,779	1995	45,559
1973	26,611	1996	53,797
1974	26,772	1997	61,114
1975	27,199	1998	67,471
1976	27,933	1999	74,289
1977	27,379	2000	81,739
1978	27,316	2001	87,756

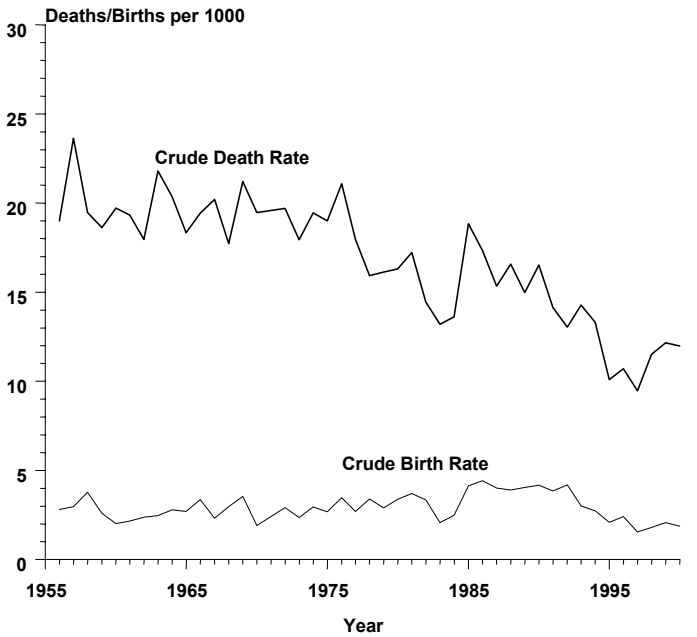
Source: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany.

Altogether, the remarkable growth of the Jewish population in the 1990s (Table 5) can only be explained by the massive immigration from the FSU. To illustrate this, emigration and immigration rates which describe the Jewish emigration and immigration related to the Jewish population in Germany will be presented (Figure 2). Since 1956 the emigration of Jews out of Germany decreased significantly. With the exception of one year (1983), the Jewish population in Germany experienced a net immigration. In the beginning of the 1990s a sharp increase in the immigration rate could be observed, which was later followed by a certain decline. This has to be explained against the background of a considerably growing Jewish population since the beginning of the 1990s, while immigration figures in absolute terms nearly kept stable.

What are the most important consequences of the Jewish immigration for the demographic development of Jews in Germany? It might be expected that the age structure of the Jewish community in Germany has become considerably

younger. To prove this and to compare the aging of the Jewish community in Germany with other populations, for example, the population in Germany and Russia, a particular age measure is needed which can be calculated on the base of the statistical information available. In addition, the calculation should be able to measure the aging of different populations in comparison, as well as changes in age structures.

FIGURE 1
NATURAL POPULATION DECREASE OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN GERMANY SINCE 1956



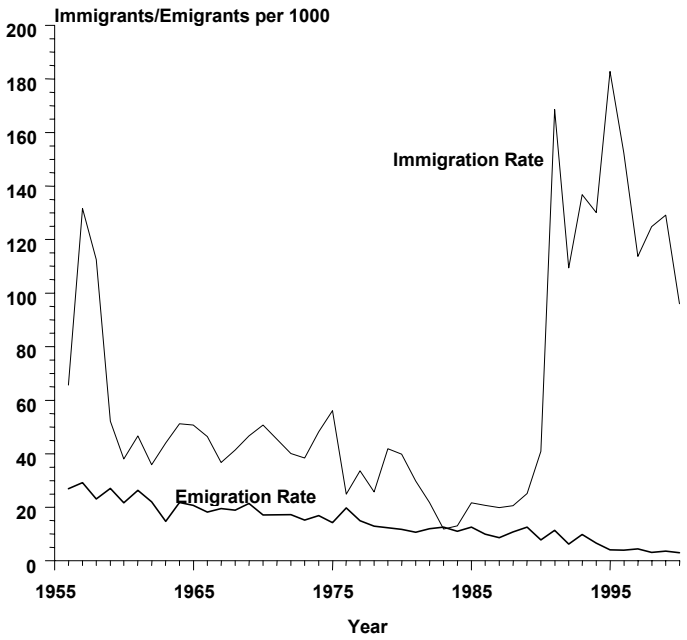
Source: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany; data before 1989 refer to West Germany; data after refer to the United Germany.

A simple index, which satisfies the conditions stated above, is the age measure developed by the Swiss statistician Billeter (Billeter, 1954). This demographic measurement divides a population into three parts: the age group before reproduction age (0-14), the reproductive age group (15-49), and the age group after reproduction (over 50). The age indicator *J* according to Billeter is defined by:

$$J = \frac{P(0-14) - P(50+)}{P(15-49)}$$

FIGURE 2

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION ON THE POPULATION GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN GERMANY SINCE 1956



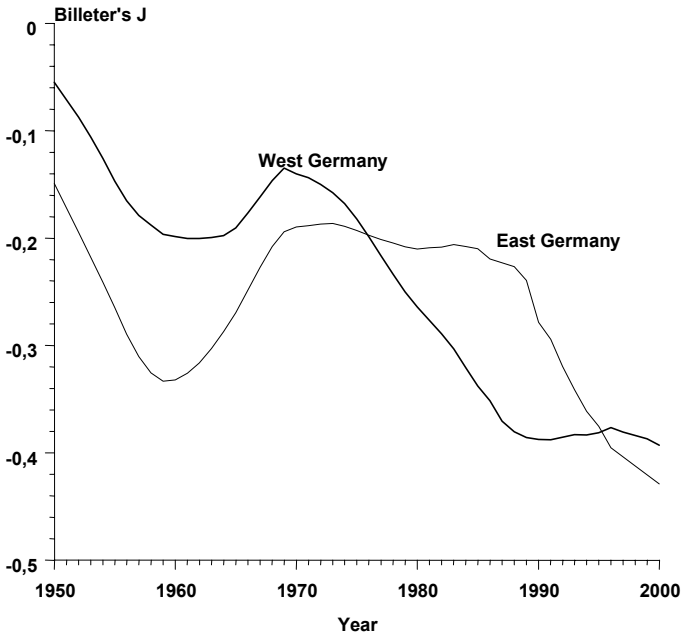
Source: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany; data before 1989 refer to West Germany; data after refer to the United Germany.

Demographic aging occurs, if *J* declines on a time axis. On the contrary, demographic juvenation can be observed if *J* grows in time. The value 0 has no normative character; it is a value like all the others. The efficiency of Billeter's *J* has been convincingly proved by a study comparing demographic aging in West and East Germany since 1950 (Dinkel and Lebok, 1997a). In the beginning of the1950s East Germany had an older population than West Germany. Because of massive emigrations the age difference was reinforced (see Figure 3). The construction of the Wall and an East German state policy actively supporting fertility rates resulted in a demographic rejuvenation of the East Germany population. Until 1990 the population in East Germany was remarkably younger than that in the West. This again changed in the process of reunification, accompanied by significant East-West migrations and an unique fertility decline in TFR-values to about 0.8 in the period between 1992 and 1995. Consequently Billeter's *J* indicated a faster aging in the Eastern part of Germany compared to the West (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

DIFFERENCES IN DEMOGRAPHIC AGING IN WEST AND EAST GERMANY

(Billeter's J)



Source: Dinkel and Lebok, 1997a.

Figure 3 illustrates large differences in demographic aging between the two sub-populations in Germany, using Billeter's *J*. Currently both German sub-populations belong to the oldest populations worldwide. Higher values of Billeter's *J* can only be found in Spain, Italy, and Greece.

Table 6 compares the development of the indicator *J* for selected countries with a reasonably high Jewish population. In nearly all of these countries demographic aging occurred. In comparison to 1950 only the population in Uzbekistan has become younger. Of the countries analysed, Germany has the oldest population. Because of the fertility crisis in post-Soviet states (Haub, 1994; Andreev et al., 1995; Zakharov and Ivanova, 1996), it must be expected that fast demographic aging will occur in countries like Russia, Belorussia, and the Ukraine.

The populations in West and East Germany are considerably older than in Russia, but still remarkably younger than the Jewish population in Germany (Figure 4). In the 1950s Billeter's *J* of the Jewish population in Germany amounted to 1.5, caused by the age structure of the survivors of Holocaust. Without immigration and/or an increasing fertility the Jewish population in Germany was threatened by severe population losses in the 1950s and 60s (Figure 4).

TABLE 6

DEMOGRAPHIC AGING IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
1950-1995, BILLETER'S J

Country	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
Israel	0.3338	0.3973	0.2876	0.2834	0.2383	0.1764
USA	0.0894	0.1707	0.0822	-0.0670	-0.0726	-0.0732
Canada	0.1880	0.3022	0.1949	-0.0073	-0.0708	-0.0890
Russia	0.2245	0.2135	0.1016	-0.0750	-0.1081	-0.1939
Ukraine	0.1463	0.0731	0.0197	-0.1420	-0.2133	-0.2268
Belorussia	0.0982	0.1396	0.1561	-0.0582	-0.1195	-0.1342
Uzbekistan	0.2724	0.4780	0.7637	0.6065	0.6099	0.5849
Moldova	0.1744	0.2756	0.2823	0.0998	0.1025	0.0746
Australia	0.0739	0.1670	0.1355	0.0270	-0.0487	-0.0695
Argentine	0.2801	0.2468	0.1796	0.1840	0.1843	0.1359
Brazil	0.6703	0.7224	0.6674	0.5081	0.4000	0.3355
South Africa	0.5318	0.6120	0.6165	0.5941	0.5208	0.4891
Great Britain	-0.0951	-0.1445	-0.1395	-0.2346	-0.2469	-0.2330
France	-0.1066	-0.0665	-0.0462	-0.1347	-0.1849	-0.2003
Germany	-0.0788	-0.2210	-0.1461	-0.2464	-0.3545	-0.3624

Source: UN-World Population Prospects, 1996 revision.

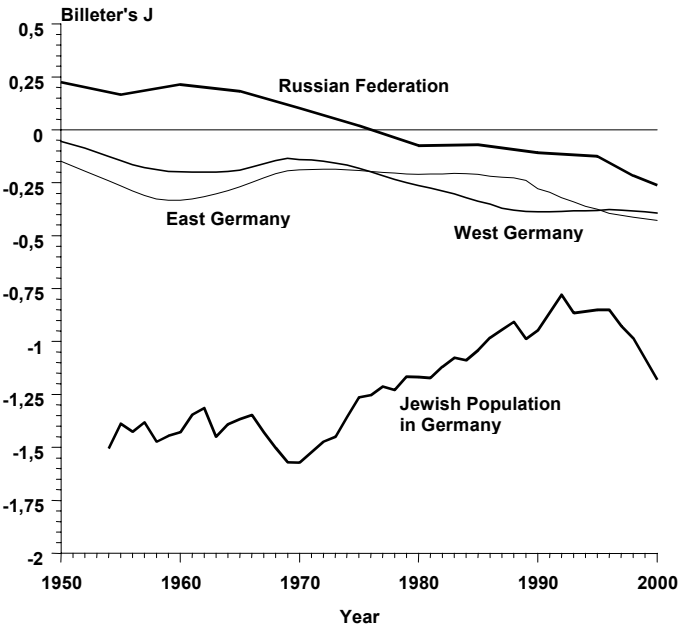
The Jewish population started to rejuvenate in 1970, while the population in Germany and Russia both experienced a process of demographic aging along the time axis. The rejuvenation of the Jewish population in Germany during the 1970s was a result of the high death rates. The decease of survivors of the Holocaust in old age – who were the largest age group in the Jewish population in that time – caused an increase in the age measure Billeter's *J* after a time lag. However, the rejuvenation based on mortality effects had only been of short duration if no Germany. Because this was the case in the Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union, Billeter's *J* showed a population rejuvenation until 1996.

The unique process of rejuvenation in the Jewish population in Germany reversed in the end of the 1990s, although net immigration virtually stayed constant. The reason for this development can be seen in unchanged low birth rates in an otherwise growing population. Longer run changes in demographic aging could only occur if fertility and – as a consequence – birth rates would increase

simultaneously. Nevertheless, the birth rates of the "new" Jewish population in Germany remained on an unaffected low level in the 90s. In this respect, no positive demographic changes occurred, although Jewish immigrants from the former USSR constituted the majority of Jews in Germany.

FIGURE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC AGING OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN GERMANY



Source: Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany

SUMMARY

With the break up of the Soviet Union, the emigration from its successor states increased considerably. Like other ethnic groups, Jews moved out wishing to escape ethnic discrimination, political instability, and economic crisis. Since the beginning of the 1990s a newly introduced admission procedure for Jews from the former Soviet Union turned Germany into the third most important receiving country for post-Soviet Jewish immigrants after Israel and the United States.

After the end of World War II, the Jewish communities in Germany had nearly ceased to exist as a result of the persecution of Jews during the Nazi Regime and the Holocaust. In 1933 the Jewish communities in Germany consisted of more than 500,000 members, yet in 1955 only 16,000 were counted. Although the

number of Jewish community members slowly increased to more than 27,000 in 1987, Bensimon (1992) noted at the conference on the World Jewish Population in Jerusalem in October 1987 that the German Jewish population seemed to lack the demographic forces for self renewal. However, in the 1990s the Jewish communities in Germany experienced a remarkable growth. The major source of this recent population growth had been the immigration of Jews from the FSU. Consequently the Jewish population in Germany started to rejuvenate, although this process slowly reversed in the end of the 1990s because of an unaffected low fertility. Immigration could reduce the problems of an extremely aging population, but it could not guarantee the long-term renewal of the Jewish population in Germany.

NOTES

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EMIGRES JUIFS D'EX-UNION SOVIETIQUE EN ALLEMAGNE

Depuis la fin des années 80, on observe une émigration massive de Juifs de l'ex-Union soviétique. Israël et les Etats-Unis sont parmi les principaux pays de destination, suivis de l'Allemagne, une destination relativement nouvelle pour les immigrants juifs originaires des Etats issus de l'effondrement de l'URSS. L'une des raisons pour lesquelles le Gouvernement allemand a autorisé l'immigration de Juifs en provenance des Etats post-soviétiques est l'argument avancé par la communauté juive selon laquelle cette immigration rajeunirait à long terme la population juive d'Allemagne. Sur la base d'un indice du vieillissement démographique (Billeter's J.), les auteurs de cette étude tentent d'établir si tel a véritablement été le cas. L'étude montre qu'un processus de rajeunissement de la population juive en Allemagne a effectivement été amorcé, mais que la tendance s'est inversée à la fin des années 90 à cause du faible taux de fécondité, auquel cet apport extérieur n'a rien changé.

LA EMIGRACIÓN JUDÍA DE LA EX UNIÓN SOVIÉTICA A ALEMANIA

Desde finales de los años ochenta se ha registrado una emigración en masa de judíos de la ex Unión Soviética. Los principales países de acogida han sido Israel y los Estados Unidos de América, seguidos por Alemania, que comparativamente es un nuevo país de inmigración para los judíos de los países de la ex Unión Soviética. El Gobierno de Alemania aceptó a los judíos de esos países, en parte, porque la comunidad judía afirmaba que esa inmigración podría rejuvenecer, a la larga, la población judía en Alemania. En este artículo se recurre al índice de envejecimiento demográfico (el de Billeter) para ver si ese ha sido el caso. Los resultados demuestran que en realidad la inmigración inició un proceso de rejuvenecimiento de la población judía en Alemania. Sin embargo, en los años noventa se produjo una reversión a raíz de la baja tasa de fertilidad.