

Evaluation Report: *ICHEIC-Sponsored Summer Camp*

St. Petersburg, Russia
2005

Daniel Bar-Tal, Ph.D.
Leonard Saxe, Ph.D.

with
Masha Sud Lokshin, M.B.A.
Aviva Androphy



The authors gratefully acknowledge The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) for their support of this research. Our special thanks to Pat Bowditch, CFO and Zvi Inbar, Senior Consultant on Allocations, and to Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger, Chairman of the ICHEIC Board of Directors. We are also very grateful to the leadership, including Alan Hoffmann, Director General, Jewish Zionist Education, and staff of the Jewish Agency for Israel who made our work possible and allowed us unfettered access to their programs. Particular thanks go to JAFI staff Gerda Feuersteir, Nella Feldsher, and Vadim Zicer. We are especially grateful to administrators, staff members and campers at the ICHEIC-sponsored camps in St. Petersburg. They provided the evaluation team with invaluable access and information. We are particularly appreciative of the help provided by Rabbi Yakov Osipov, Chabad, and Genya Lvova, Adain Lo. We also want to thank our St. Petersburg team of interviewers led by Dmitry Linov and Layla Najafova: Alexandra Abelskaya, Julia Antonuk, Yana Antonuk, Masha Maslennikova and Anya Zhelamkova. Finally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to the teenagers and their parents who welcomed us into their homes and were willing to participate in in-depth interviews.

About the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of modern American Jewry. Our mission is to enhance understanding of the Jewish community and the development of religious and cultural identity. The Center's faculty and staff include psychologists, sociologists, and Jewish studies scholars, whose interests include Jewish identity, Jewish culture, family life, religious expression, and Israel-Diaspora relations. A broad range of research is conducted by Center faculty, spanning studies of individuals and institutions. Our research applies cutting-edge methods and theories to the study of modern Jewry and our work is disseminated to both public and academic groups.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
ICHEI-Sponsored Summer Camps	7
Objectives and Methodology	7
Observations and Interviews	8
JAFI Camp (Dubki).....	8
Setting	8
Program.....	9
Impressions	9
Chabad Camp (Komarovo)	10
Setting	10
Program.....	10
Impressions	11
Adain Lo Camp	11
Attracting Campers	12
Recruitment	12
Criteria for attending camps	12
Target population	12
Assessment of Long-Term Impact	13
Methods	13
Interview Instrument	13
Sample.....	13
Findings Children.....	14
Identity.....	14
Demography	14
Jewish background	14
Jewish experiences	14
Jewish identity: Personal	14
Jewish identity: Family	16
Knowledge of the Holocaust	16
Aspirations.....	16

Camp	17
Motivation to go to camp	17
Satisfaction	17
Jewish programs at camp	18
Impact of Camp Experiences	18
Learning new materials about Judaism and the Holocaust	18
Individual changes	19
Influences on family life	20
Social networks	20
Findings: Parents	21
Sample	21
Jewish Identity	21
Knowledge of the Holocaust	23
Camp	23
Motivation to send their children to camp	23
Satisfaction	24
Impact of camp	24
Discussion	25
Conclusions and Recommendations	27
Appendix	29

List of Tables

Table 1: Gender and Background of Campers at JAFI Camp by Session	8
Table 2: Background of Campers at Chabad Camp by Session	10
Table 3: Gender and Background of Campers at Adain Lo Camp by Session	11
Table 4: Number of Children Interviewed by Gender and Camp	13
Table 5: Number of Parents Interviewed by Gender and Camp	21



Executive Summary

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), with support from the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), has developed a summer camp program in St. Petersburg, Russia. Developed in collaboration with the local Jewish community, the goal of the camp program is to “strengthen Holocaust awareness and education as a means to build Jewish literacy and identity among youth in the Former Soviet Union.” Approximately 600 children participated in three distinct three-week camps, one administered by JAFI directly, one by Adain Lo (St. Petersburg’s Jewish Community Center), and one by Chabad of St. Petersburg.

An evaluation team from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University conducted a systematic assessment. The objective was to assess the impact of the camps’ educational programs on campers and their families, specifically focusing on the degree to which the camping experience strengthened knowledge of the Holocaust and enhanced participants’ Jewish identity. The evaluation extends a previous process evaluation study conducted by the Cohen Center and focused on the degree to which camps met the long-term objectives of the ICHEIC program to enhance understanding of the Holocaust and to build Jewish identity. The study included two components: an observational study of the camp environment and a follow-up study (3-4 months later) of campers and parents.

The initial observations were conducted in July 2005, where visits were made to JAFI and Chabad camps, observing daily activities and interviewing staff. (The Adain Lo camp was not in session at the time of the site visit, but the director of the camp was interviewed.) The focus of the site visits was to understand the camp’s educational program and to assess its implementation. During the visits, along with observation of program activities, directors and staff members were interviewed, and campers were asked to talk about their camp experiences.

The evaluators’ impressions of the observations and interviews at the JAFI and Chabad camps were very positive. At the JAFI camp, the director, his staff

and the *madrichim* (counselors) seemed to have a clear understanding of the issues of Holocaust education and Jewish identity development. The director’s conceptual framework for the camp curriculum was highly innovative and was matched by his leadership skills and enthusiasm. The staff at the Chabad camp seemed well-trained and seemed highly motivated. The educational program seemed rigorous and the campers seemed engaged and happy. Although the philosophy of the camp was clearly different from JAFI, a number of ideas had been borrowed from the JAFI camp including some elements of the democracy program.

Follow-up interviews with a sample of campers and families were conducted three to four months after the conclusions of the camp sessions (November 2005), to assess the degree to which camps had engaged a broad group within the Jewish community and whether impact is affected by differences across camps (JAFI, Adain Lo, Chabad), as well as the different backgrounds and age groups served. The sample included 45 campers and parents who had attended one of the three ICHEIC-supported camps in the summer of 2005, along with 15 children (ages 11-16) and their parents who did not participate in the ICHEIC camps. Specific campers/parents were selected randomly from lists provided by each organization.

The interview questions were developed to address family/child demography, personal identity, family identity, knowledge about the Holocaust, personal aspirations, and motivations to attend the camp. Questions were also asked to assess the nature of the campers’ experiences and the impact of those experiences on Jewish identity.

The impact of the camps seems exceptional in light of the diversity of participants. The demography and identity findings show that some of the campers came with Jewish identity, others had a fused Russian-Jewish identity, while another group had little Jewish identity and regarded themselves as simply Russian or had another national identification (including no specific identity). Jewish identity among the St. Petersburg children and

parents we interviewed is decidedly secular and nonreligious. Although families may engage in some Jewish religious practices, it is far from the center of what it means to be Jewish. However, there appears to be strong interest in cultural Judaism and, in particular, in their shared history (such as a deeper understanding of the Holocaust).

Given the secular focus of the St. Petersburg Jewish community, summer camps appear to play an exceptionally important role as a means to help children construct their Jewish identity. The opportunity to spend time with peers, to have fun and, at the same time, be exposed to systematic and wide-ranging knowledge about Jewish history, tradition, culture, Israel, and the Holocaust both fills a need and seems effective. It should not be surprising that informal education is effective, but that it seems to work so well for a broad range of children was surprising. Even though the three camps supported by ICHEIC had different philosophies, foundations, and implementation methods, the data gathered from campers and parents made clear that each had succeeded in creating important and engaging educational experiences.

It is clear from reports of both campers and parents that the organizers accomplished their primary goals. Almost all campers reported learning about Jewish issues, Israel and the Holocaust. The camp experience contributed to the evolution of Jewish awareness and identity and there was much evidence of how the experience had left its mark. For some campers, it is an addition to their already formed identity and knowledge, while for others it is a basis for further construction of their self-identification.

Some of the campers acknowledged the camp's influence and spoke about significant changes that took place in their lives. Also, some of the parents acknowledged that their children brought home new initiatives and knowledge, and they contributed to family Jewish practices. All the children confirmed that they made friends at the camps, but not many keep in touch outside of camp.

Our findings provide strong support for continuation and, perhaps, expansion of the effort to provide summer camp experiences for St. Petersburg's Jewish youth. In terms of expansion in St. Petersburg, the number of Jews living in the community and its surrounding towns is estimated at about 100,000 with 3,000 or more camp-age children. There is, thus, substantial room for growth. The evaluative data suggest that camp experiences are valued across the diversity of Jewish youth. The camp model, as developed by JAFI, seems exceptionally well-suited to Russia and the St. Petersburg community.

The data also suggest that there is potential for similar camps in other areas of Russia and, perhaps, the Former Soviet Union. As ICHEIC continues the development of summer camps for Russian Jewish children, a number of lessons from the experience in St. Petersburg might be drawn:

1. Summer camps can provide safe and fun environments for children, but can also provide serious and impactful Jewish education programs.
2. In the context of a Jewish camp, universal themes (e.g., democracy) can also be taught and may enhance the overall program.
3. The training and motivation of staff is critical, as is the ratio of counselors to campers.
4. Although there seems to be considerable variation, site, quality of food, and logistics are critical.
5. Summer camps should not be seen as an "end product," but rather, a beginning of a relationship between the Jewish community and a family.
6. A key issue in extending JAFI's involvement in other communities is its relationship with local communal organizations. Although support of the community is probably essential, JAFI (and its experts) need the freedom to be able to design and run programs.
7. On-going evaluation, in particular, focused on long-term educational goals, will be important both for development of camps and understanding the needs of the next generation of Jews living in the FSU.



ICHEIC-Sponsored Summer Camp

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), with support from the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), has developed a summer camp program in St. Petersburg, Russia. Developed in collaboration with the local Jewish community, the goal of the camp program is to “strengthen Holocaust awareness and education as a means of building basic Jewish literacy and identity among youth in the Former Soviet Union.”^[1] It is intended to be a model for Jewish youth camps to be developed throughout the Former Soviet Union (FSU). The program was pilot tested in St. Petersburg in the summer of 2004 and again in 2005. In each case, JAFI collaborated with local organizations: Adain Lo (St. Petersburg’s Jewish Community Center) and Chabad of St. Petersburg. In 2005, three distinct camp programs were offered: one by JAFI directly, and one each by Adain Lo and Chabad.

As part of the initial pilot program, in the summer of 2004, about 700 children from St. Petersburg participated. JAFI, with primary funding from ICHEIC, set up two camp sites, one of which was jointly run with Adain Lo and the other of which was run independently by Chabad. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University, in collaboration with researchers from the Kelman Center for Jewish Education at Tel Aviv University, conducted an evaluation focused on the JAFI-Adain Lo camp which served approximately 550 campers. This evaluation study (CMJS, 2004) suggested that, while the educational theories that underlay the development of the camp program were sound, a number of implementation and logistical problems interfered with the program. The evaluators recommended that the pilot program be repeated.^[2]

The recommendation was accepted and, in the summer of 2005, approximately 600 children from St. Petersburg participated in ICHEIC-sponsored camps.

Again, a team of evaluators from CMJS conducted a systematic assessment. In the second summer, JAFI, Adain Lo and Chabad each ran separate camps. To ensure equal educational levels in all major curricular areas across the camps, JAFI was responsible for the counselor selection and training, the development of educational materials, and the building of the basic Jewish program for all three camps. The JAFI camp was held in Dubki, the Adain Lo camp took place in Komarovo, and the Chabad camp took place in Komarovo (girls’ session) and Repino (boys’ session). The camps and programs are described in detail below.

Objectives and Methodology

The objective of the 2005 research is to assess the impact of the camps’ educational programs on campers and their families, specifically focusing on the degree to which the camping experience strengthened knowledge of the Holocaust and enhanced participants’ Jewish identity. Thus, the 2005 evaluation extends the direct assessment of the camp environment to an evaluation of the degree to which camps met the long-term objectives of the ICHEIC program. Long-term,, we are also interested in the degree to which camps engage a broad group within the Jewish community and whether the impact is affected by differences across camps (JAFI, Adain Lo, Chabad), or the different backgrounds and age groups served.

[1] Quote taken from a memo from The Jewish Agency for Israel (30 April, 2004), *An Initiative for Holocaust Education and Awareness as a Means of Fostering Basic Jewish Literacy for Youth in the Former Soviet Union*.

[2] *Evaluation Report, ICHEIC-Sponsored Summer Camp, St. Petersburg, Russia, Summer 2004* (2004). Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. Brandeis University.

Observations and Interviews

The site visits made during July, 2005 focused on understanding the camps' educational programs and assessing whether the initial logistical difficulties had been overcome. During the visits, along with observation of program activities, directors and staff members were interviewed, and campers were asked to talk about their camp experiences.

JAFI Camp (Dubki)

Setting

The principal JAFI camp site is located in Dubki, two-and-a-half hours northwest of St. Petersburg. The "campus" consists of a four-story dormitory-style building, surrounded by woods and facing an unswimmable lake. Inside is a cafeteria, a coffee shop, a main bathroom, group meeting rooms, and dorm rooms. Each dorm room has a bathroom and houses three campers per room, with girls and boys in separate rooms. The camp site seemed appropriate, with adequate space for both indoor and outdoor activities. The dining room was spacious and had recently been renovated. At both lunch and breakfast on the day of the visit, there was an overabundance of well-prepared food and a variety of choices.

The visit took place during the last week of the camp's second three-week session (July 25, 2005), which hosted 181 children ages 14 to 16. The previous session had included 137 children ages 11 to 13. Among the older age-group, about half had not previously attended the JAFI camp, and among the younger group, about three-quarters were new to the camp. Twenty-one percent of all campers were students at a Jewish school^[3] during the year. Table 1 displays the percentage of campers by age, gender, Jewish school and participation in ICHEIC camps in 2004.

Campers were divided into approximately eight co-educational groups per session, and each group had about 22 campers. The ratio of madrichim (counselors) to campers was 2 Russians and 1 Israeli per group. The Russian and Israeli staff appeared to be carefully selected and well-trained. All madrichim were trained over a period of seven months (from November to May), and attended a weeklong joint seminar in Israel prior to camp.

Table 1: Gender and Background of Campers at JAFI Camp by Session

Session	Gender	Attended Jewish School Only		Attended 2004 Camp Only		Attended Both Jewish School and 2004 camp		Attended Neither Jewish School nor 2004 Camp		Total
Ages 11-13	Boys	7	12%	8	13%	6	10%	39	65%	60
	Girls	10	13%	18	23%	6	8%	43	56%	77
Ages 14-16	Boys	9	10%	26	29%	13	14%	42	47%	90
	Girls	7	8%	47	52%	11	12%	26	29%	91
Total		33	10%	99	31%	36	11%	150	47%	318 ⁴

[3] Jewish schools in the FSU are full-day schools supported by JAFI and the Ministry of Education of Israel in the framework of the joint project, known as "Heftziba." The educational programs are comparable to those of Jewish day schools in the United States; however, they are free to families who wish to enroll their children.

[4] Records show that 344 campers were registered to attend the JAFI camp, but due to last-minute cancellations, final attendance was 318 campers.



Program

The educational structure of the camp was developed by the professional staff of the department of education at JAFI, led by the camp director, Dr. Dima Zicer. Dr. Zicer is a St. Petersburg native who moved to Israel in the early 90s, and then returned to St. Petersburg for doctoral training in education. His approach is to create a democratic environment, informed and infused by Jewish values. Campers, guided by their counselors, engaged in a variety of activities designed to foster Jewish identity. They were encouraged to engage in dialogue, inquiry and interpretation as they confronted learning about the Holocaust, as well as their Jewish identity. Campers were given a significant role in determining how the camp was run, although the parameters of what was allowed were clearly defined.

The camp program focused on themes related to Jewish history, traditions and the State of Israel, and used literature, art, and newspaper articles as springboards for discussion. The thematic content for the older group was similar to that of the younger group, but was more advanced in terms of conceptual understanding. A book on Jewish history and identity was developed by JAFI for the campers⁵.

Each camper had to select a group, called a "faculty." The faculties focused on the same themes, but each used a different medium of expression, such as, music, literature, design, advertising, television, newspaper, dance/movement, and theater. The faculties were led by one Israeli and two Russian *madrichim*. The members of each faculty elected a camper to represent their faculty in the *Vaad* (committee), which met daily and made decisions about daily life in the camp. The *Vaad* members elected a leader who coordinated *Vaad* decisions and activities.

At the time of the observation, the camp program was focused on the Holocaust. The director

explained that learning about the Holocaust is an integral part of Jewish identity, and for this reason, two days of camp are devoted solely to this topic. The *madrichim* had developed exercises related to understanding the Holocaust using the media of their specific faculty. Observations of various faculties indicated that campers appeared highly engaged in these activities. A group of survivors had been invited to visit the camp as part of the Holocaust program. We observed the survivors taking part in the activities of the various faculties and conversing informally with campers about their backgrounds and interests.

Impressions

The evaluators' impressions of the observations and interviews were very positive. The director, his staff and *madrichim* seemed to have a clear understanding of the issues of Holocaust education and Jewish identity development. The director's conceptual framework for the camp curriculum was highly innovative and was matched by his leadership skills and enthusiasm. The administrative staff and *madrichim* all seemed highly motivated, well-organized, and dedicated. Their enthusiasm seemed infectious: the campers, as well, seemed engaged, attentive and interested in the program. Although we did not have a chance to observe younger campers, the program structure seems highly adaptable to all ages.

The quality of the educational programs – in particular, the focus on the Holocaust – was particularly impressive to the observers. The camp's emphasis on education through specialized media was more like that of U.S. specialty camps (e.g., computer, theater) than the type of general-focused camps that are typical of Jewish summer camps⁶. Integrating specialized activities with concepts of democracy within a Jewish framework is an innovative approach to the design of a Jewish camping program.

[5] Chen, Roey (2005). *About what happened and what did not happen...* [Title translated from the original Russian]. Jerusalem, Israel: Gesharim.

[6] Sales, A.L. and Saxe, L. (2004). "How Goodly are Thy Tents": *Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, p. 13.

Chabad Camp (Komarovo)

Setting

JAFI, through its ICHEIC grant, also supported Chabad of St. Petersburg in developing a camp program. The visit to the Chabad camp in Komarovo took place during the last week of the second three-week session (July 2005). Komarovo is somewhat closer to St. Petersburg than Dubki and is less secluded. Although also in a wooded area, this facility is alongside a highway, close to a commuter railway. Campers lived three per room; each room had a sink and there was a main bathroom on each floor.

Unlike Dubki, which was co-ed, the Chabad camp was for girls only, ages 11-17. The prior session (in Repino) had been for boys of the same age. Each session had approximately 60 campers. Campers were divided by age into four groups of approximately 16 campers, with two *madrichot* (female counselors) per group, an Israeli and a Russian. The Russian *madrichot* were not necessarily from religious families, although some had attended Jewish schools. The Israeli *madrichot* were affiliated with Chabad.

The girls' and boys' sessions had similar programs, except with respect to physical activity. Boys had more sports while girls had more movement and dance. The camp schedule was similar to Dubki, although the day began and ended a bit earlier, and

included time for *t'fillah* (prayer). Table 2 summarizes the distribution of Chabad campers by session, participation in ICHEIC camps in 2004, and Jewish school attendance.

Program

The camp was directed by Rabbi Yakov Osipov and, as he described the camp to evaluators, it was designed to combine Jewish study and personal development. The educational program was conducted in a variety of formats, mostly experiential, and campers were provided with materials prepared by JAFI (including the book that was developed for the JAFI camp). Specifically, the curriculum included a focus on Jewish history from Biblical times to the inquisition, and through the creation of European *shtetls*, to the Russian Revolution, the Holocaust, Israel, and present-day Judaism.

A similar program was implemented for the older and the younger campers, adapted for the developmental needs of each group. For younger campers, the emphasis was on the timeline of history using storytelling and performances, while for the older group, specific themes were analyzed using lectures and discussion as educational tools. At the time of the visit, the focus of the camp program was the Holocaust. Children had previously prepared projects and created a Holocaust museum through which all campers could learn.

Table 2: Background of Campers at Chabad Camp by Session

Session	Attended Jewish School Only		Attended 2004 Camp Only		Attended Both Jewish School and 2004 camp		Attended Neither Jewish School nor 2004 Camp		Total
Boys Session	15	28%	5	9%	13	25%	20	38%	53
Girls	23	35%	1	2%	17	26%	24	37%	65
Total	28	24%	6	5%	30	25%	44	37%	118 ⁷

[7] Records show that 120 campers were registered to attend the Chabad camp, but due to last-minute cancellations, final attendance was 118 campers.

One question posed to the director, and followed up in interviews with *madrichot*, was how campers choose Chabad, rather than one of the other camps. What emerged was that while some families choose the camp because they want children to be exposed to religious Judaism, others send children because they prefer a smaller camp, or because they know the camp director and are associated with the organization. Nearly 50 percent of the campers were reported to come from Chabad schools or, otherwise, participate in Chabad activities.

Although the camp provided opportunities for children to engage in prayer, the director indicated that he did not assume that children were religious and that participation in prayer services was, in part, a matter of choice. Campers without religious background received guidance on the meaning of prayers and Jewish rituals.

Impressions

Although the Chabad camp had a different “feel” than the JAFI camp, the overall impressions were also positive. The staff seemed well-trained and the environment appeared to be healthy and safe. The *madrichot* in this camp also seemed highly motivated and dedicated. The educational program seemed rigorous and the campers seemed engaged and happy. Although the philosophy of the camp was clearly different from JAFI, a number of ideas

had been borrowed from the JAFI camp including some elements of the democracy program.

Adain Lo Camp

At the time of our initial visit to St. Petersburg, the Adain Lo camp had already completed both sessions. Although it was not possible to visit the camp, the research team was able to interview Genya Lvova, the founder of the Adain Lo organization. She is a computer programmer by training and has worked full-time for the Jewish community since 1995. Adain Lo is one of the principal Jewish communal and family service organizations in St. Petersburg. The camp was established in 1990 and its programs today serve about 1000 families (including more than 3000 individuals). The organization consists of about 100 employees and volunteers. The diverse services and programs which Adain Lo provides make it a unique organization for the Jewish community of St. Petersburg. Along with the camp, the organization runs Jewish kindergartens, support programs for young families, and programs for children with special needs.

Table 3 shows the distribution of Adain Lo campers by age, gender, participation in ICHEIC camps in 2004, and Jewish school attendance.

Table 3: Gender and Background of Campers at Adain Lo Camp by Session

Session	Gender	Attended Jewish School Only		Attended 2004 Camp Only		Attended Both Jewish School and 2004 camp		Attended Neither Jewish School nor 2004 Camp		Total
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Ages 11-13	Boys	10	26%	5	13%	7	18%	16	42%	38
	Girls	2	5%	19	45%	5	12%	16	38%	42
Ages 14-16	Boys	7	25%	8	29%	3	11%	10	47%	28
	Girls	3	8%	12	52%	3	12%	10	36%	28
Total		22	16%	44	32%	18	13%	52	38%	136 ^B

[B] Records show that 150 campers were registered to attend the Adain Lo camp, but due to last-minute cancellations, final attendance was 136 campers.



The first camp session, for children ages 11 to 13, was held from June 12th to July 3rd, and the second session, for children ages 14 to 17, was held from June 19th to July 10th. The camp site was in Komarovo, the same location used by the Chabad camp for girls. The educational program was divided into three-day cycles focusing on the Jewish community and family, Jewish ethics and morals, Shoah memory and commemoration, Jewish identity, and Israel. In contrast to the JAFI and Chabad camps which used younger *madrichim*, not professional educators, Lvova indicated that the Adain Lo staff members were experienced Russian educators, and she referred to them as pedagogical leaders. Visitors from Israel supplemented camp programs but were not part of the regular camp staff. Lvova said that Jewish rituals and traditions were an important element of the camp program, even though the camp was non-religious. For example, Shabbat was celebrated through song and discussion of the weekly Torah portion.

Attracting Campers

Recruitment

The three organizations (JAFI, Chabad and Adain Lo) cooperated in recruiting campers to the ICHEIC sponsored camps. Each organization informed its members about the ICHEIC camps via their pre-established modes of communication: announcements at school, newsletters, and personal phone calls. Additionally, advertisements were placed in daily Russian newspapers, the newspaper of the Jewish community ("Ami") and Russian radio to inform the St. Petersburg community about the ICHEIC camps. A single telephone number was listed, so that parents could learn about the different camps being offered. The caller was engaged in a short conversation and was then advised which camp would be most suitable. The parent was then contacted by the administration of the camp that was deemed most appropriate for the family, and was asked to fill out an application.

Criteria for attending camps

In order to attend an ICHEIC camp established by JAFI, the child must have a grandparent who is Jewish. Thus, the camp accepted only children who are considered Jewish according to the Israeli Law of Return. Though this criterion was strictly maintained, the camps were not designed to promote *Aliyah* (immigration to Israel) and the observers saw no evidence of pressure regarding immigration.

Target population

Based on discussions with several sources, it is estimated that there are approximately 3,000 Jewish children ages 10-17 (and 8,000 ages 0-15) in the St. Petersburg area⁹. All are potential participants in a Jewish summer camping experience. Currently, the three ICHEIC camps accommodate approximately 600 children. By next summer, plans are to accommodate about 700 children for the ICHEIC camps. There is, thus, substantial room for growth.

^[9] There is a disproportionate number of elderly Jews in St. Petersburg. This is a function of the history of World War II, patterns of immigration during the last 20 years, and low birthrate.

Assessment of Long-Term Impact

Methods

Three to four months after the conclusion of the camp sessions, interviews were conducted in St. Petersburg with a sample of campers from each of the programs and with a comparison group of Jewish children who had not attended ICHEIC camps in the summer of 2005. One of the principal investigators, along with a research analyst, came to St. Petersburg to supervise the interviews. They trained a team of local Russian interviewers, conducted a pilot study, and monitored the work of the local staff.

Interview Instrument

The interview questions were developed to address family/child demography, personal identity, family identity, knowledge about the Holocaust, personal aspirations, and motivations to attend the camp (see Appendix). Questions were also asked to assess the nature of the campers' experiences and the impact of those experiences on Jewish identity. The instrument was adapted to interview both campers and parents, as well as non-campers and their parents.

Sample

The sample included 45 campers and parents who had attended one of the three ICHEIC-supported camps in the summer of 2005, along with 15 children (ages 11-16) and their parents who did not participate in the ICHEIC camps. For the camp sample, the number of interviewees from each camp was proportional to the total number of campers in that camp and a stratified sample was selected based, as well, on age, gender, Jewish experience (attending Jewish or non-Jewish school) and camp experience (participation in the Jewish camps financed by ICHEIC in 2004 or not). Specific campers/parents were selected randomly from lists provided by each organization. The interviewees of the comparison group were chosen from a list provided by the Adain Lo organization. In addition to interviewing these 60 children, one of their parents, preferably a Jewish parent, was also interviewed. The demographics of the parent group will be described subsequently. The distribution of the participants in the interviews is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of Children Interviewed by Gender and Camp

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Adain Lo (ages 11-13)	4	4	8
Adain Lo (ages 14-16)	3	3	6
JAFI (ages 11-13)	5	5	10
JAFI (ages 14-16)	6	7	13
Chabad	4	4	8
Comparison	9	6	15
Total	31	29	60

Findings: Children

Few differences were found among campers from the three programs (JAFI, Chabad, and Adain Lo) in terms of personal and Jewish identity; thus, for discussion purposes, the findings from children across settings will be discussed together.

Similarly, there were few differences between the camp and comparison group children in terms of personal and family Jewish identity. Thus, the comparison group will be discussed separately only in terms of issues having to do with the camp experience.

Identity

Demography

Analysis of the familial environment of all of the children in the interview sample (60, including comparison families) showed that slightly less than two thirds (39) live with both parents. Of the remainder, nineteen live with a single mother, and two live with a single or remarried father. Also, sixty percent had at least one sibling. With regard to living conditions, about three-quarters lived with immediate family members and one-quarter lived with additional members of the extended family (grandparents, married siblings or uncles/aunts). These findings reflect the nature of Russian demography – a high rate of divorce, low birth rate and residence within the framework of extended families¹⁰.

Jewish background

A question about Jewish genealogical roots revealed wide differences among families. Thirteen of the respondents indicated that both of their parents were Jewish. Three specified that their Jewish roots are “pure,” meaning that all four grandparents were Jewish. Sixteen interviewees indicated that only their mother was Jewish and fourteen indicated that only their father was Jewish. The remainder of the interviewees had further Jewish roots: twelve cited

grandparents on the mother’s side, five cited grandparents on the father’s side, three cited a maternal grandmother, five cited a maternal grandfather, one noted a paternal grandmother and two cited a paternal grandfather.

Jewish experiences

To assess the degree to which the children are connected to Jewish life, questions about schooling, camping, and organizational affiliations were asked. Again, there was a wide variation in responses. Out of the 60 interviewees, a third attend Jewish school but only six respondents indicated that they had attended a Jewish kindergarten. About half had participated prior to 2005 in a Jewish camping experience (most, in 2004, through the pilot test).

With respect to organizational affiliation, many of the interviewees participate in some type of Jewish extracurricular activity within the framework of Jewish organizations. More than half are involved with JAFI, Chabad or Adain Lo, and attend activities such as Sunday School, teenagers’ clubs, trips, Shabbat and Jewish holiday activities, and even Yiddish and Hebrew classes. Some respondents said that they had previously attended Jewish activities, but cannot anymore due to lack of time. It should be noted that some of the activities of the Jewish organizations do not have Jewish content and serve as general extracurricular activities or hobbies, like computers, math or art. Through these activities, Jewish organizations attract children and provide simple opportunities to engage them in a Jewish atmosphere.

Jewish identity: Personal

To understand how their Jewish roots manifest in their personal identity, several questions were asked about how respondents feel about being Jewish. There was a wide range of responses to the question that inquired about each interviewee’s identity, reflecting the diversity of the interviewed group. Twenty-three of the respondents unequivocally stated that they are Jews.

[10] Chervyakov, V., Gitelman, Z., & Shapiro, V. (1997) Religion and Ethnicity: Judaism in the Ethnic Consciousness of Contemporary Russian Jews. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20(2), 280-305.

Of interest is that seven respondents said that they are the only person in their family who identifies as a Jew. Six others saw themselves as half-Russian, half-Jewish and some even said that they were a quarter Jewish or three-quarters Jewish. Nine categorized themselves as Russians. Among them were seven who do not consider themselves Jewish, but acknowledge their Jewish roots. For example one respondent said, "I'm not sure what I am, but I know that I have Jewish roots."¹¹ About ten respondents said that they do not think about whether they are Jewish or not. One respondent said, "I've got no interest in that at all" and another said "I consider myself just human."

The majority of the interviewees who identified as Jews did not feel specific pride, but rather a mere acknowledgment of association. When asked about how they feel about being Jewish, responses included, "it's all right," and "it's nothing special." A thirteen-year-old boy stated that he does not feel a particular pride in being Jewish, but he feels neither negative nor positive feelings about it. Another respondent said, "It isn't that I don't like it, but it's just like an affiliation with any other nation. It's there and even if it was possible to do anything about it, I rather wouldn't. I'm quite content with being Jewish." A ten-year-old girl said, "I am not proud, but I know that Jews suffered. Anyway I don't regret that I am a Jew."

When asked what it means to be a Jew, several interesting answers were offered. Some interviewees did not seem to think that being Jewish was any different than other identities, exhibited by responses such as, "I'm not a racist," or "All people are the same." Some accept it with indifference, without attaching much meaning, as for example, "It's just a fact and I accept it," or "It's interesting, but it doesn't influence my life in any way."

Other interviewees attached particular meanings to their Jewish identity. For example, a seventeen-year-old boy whose parents are both Jewish was registered as Moldavian, because when he was born

his parents thought it was unsafe to be identified as a Jew. Because of this experience, he has decided that being a Jew is "not to be ashamed of identifying yourself as a Jew." He also talked about feeling a bond with Israel and Judaism (as a religion). He said that as a Jew he feels more keenly about acts of terrorism in Israel as opposed to other parts of the world. A ten-year-old girl offered a different viewpoint about what it means to be a Jew: "For me, it means to be a human being, who, because of nationality, is always ready to face hardships, even now and of course during the Stalin era in the Soviet Union."

A twelve-year-old boy stated that after finding out he was Jewish, "A weight was lifted. I always thought I was Russian, but a miracle happened, I'm Jewish. I feel proud. We have nice traditions and holidays." A sixteen-year-old boy explained that "I'm proud of it. Also, when I do something wrong, I realize that people could think badly not only about me, but about Jews as a whole. So I feel responsible for the whole nation." A fifteen-year-old girl said, "I never feel embarrassed about my being a quarter-Jewish. I'm Jewish, that's why I want to go to Israel. I'm Jewish, that's why I go to the camps and learn something. I'm Jewish, that's it." Anti-Semitic occurrences affected how a thirteen-year-old boy feels about being Jewish. "I feel sad sometimes, because I have to come home earlier when I go out in the evening, because of my looks anything can happen to me. Otherwise it's nice to be Jewish, very nice."

Most interviewees who acknowledged their Jewish identity told interviewers that it is based on a national and not a religious basis. Even so, some reported maintaining certain Jewish practices, such as celebrating Shabbat and other Jewish holidays. Illustrating the variety of practices, some respondents mention celebrating holidays in the home, others talk about celebrating holidays only in the Jewish organizations they attend, while still others do not actually celebrate but send good wishes to family and friends. Twelve of the respondents said that they would like to celebrate

[11] All quotes are translated from the original Russian and have been edited for clarity.

Shabbat at home, but either they or their parents say that there is not enough time for it. One respondent specified that his family tries to keep Passover, Sukkot and Shabbat, but that living Sukkot the whole week is hard, and homework often interferes with observing Shabbat. One interviewee said that his family has some semblance of keeping kosher in that they do not eat milk and meat together for breakfast.

Jewish identity: Family

When asked about the identity of their family, only twenty-one of the campers clearly identified their families as Jewish. Many of our young interviewees indicated that this should only be considered in terms of nationality, not in terms of religion. Thirteen respondents explicitly stated that their families were not considered Jewish. Many had difficulty answering the question and it was clear that they thought that categorizing oneself in terms of religion was not helpful. A typical response was "It's not that we identify ourselves in a certain way." In several other cases, the family observes some Jewish traditions, but the child was not sure that they could be considered Jewish. One respondent who found it difficult to answer whether her family could be considered Jewish actually grew up in Israel. Her father later explained that being Jewish in Israel is different than being Jewish in Russia.

The fact that families find it difficult to define themselves as Jewish in Russia is, perhaps, not surprising. As several scholars have observed, "unlike in North America, where one can be simultaneously 'Jewish' and 'American', in the Soviet Union and its successor states, 'Russian' and 'Jewish' are mutually exclusive since they are both ethnic categories."¹² People can identify themselves as Jews but may not feel Jewish.

Knowledge of the Holocaust

All 60 interviewees were asked if they knew about the Holocaust, and if so, how they first found out about it. Almost all the interviewees knew about the

Holocaust at some level. Only three were unaware of the Holocaust and its events. When asked how they had first learned about the Holocaust, the most common answer was camp (24), followed by school (18). Eleven mentioned that their parents or grandparents had also told them about the Holocaust. One read a book, one saw a film, one learned about it at Adain Lo and two had even visited concentration camps. Even though many of the campers knew about the Holocaust prior to attending camp, most of them said that the camps provided the largest scope of information and the most detail on the subject (See below, p. 14).

Aspirations

The interviewees were asked about their aspirations, including their desire to visit or live in Israel. The responses indicate that although almost every respondent expressed a desire to visit Israel, only seven were enthusiastic about the prospects of moving to Israel. One of these respondents has visited Israel and would much prefer living there. He is unsatisfied with life in Russia, in part, because he faces anti-Semitism. A ten-year-old girl expressed her dream to live in Israel, but admits that this may not be practical since her mother will not allow her to leave. The difficult transition that would occur was one reason cited by those who preferred to stay in Russia. As a thirteen-year-old boy said, even just going abroad to study requires learning a new culture and making new friends which can be difficult. Other reasons given for wanting to stay in Russia include both principled positions (e.g., patriotism), as well as practical (e.g., the cost to move). Only one interviewee, a ten-year-old boy, said that he does not want to move to Israel because of the violence, "Every 5 minutes there's a horrifying explosion and a collapse of some building. In the outskirts there's endless shooting. So you better not go there without a tank."

In general, most respondents indicated complacency with life in Russia. They described their life as being "fine and normal," life in Russia

[12] cf. Chervyakov, Gitelman, & Shapiro 1997

being “all right,” and being used to Russia – “life goes its way.” Some simply said that they had “gotten used to living here.” Six inter-view-ees indicated wanting to leave Russia, not specifically to go to Israel, but other countries including America, Germany, Finland and Monaco.

Camp

To understand the impact of the camp on Jewish identity and knowledge, campers were asked to talk about

- why they decided to go to camp (or, in the comparison group, not go),
- what they liked most at camp,
- whether they had difficulties, and if so, what they were,
- what they thought of the Jewish program, and
- how, if at all, going to camp has changed their life.

As with campers’ identities, again, there were few differences among campers from the three camp programs.

Motivation to go to camp

Several motivations to go to camp were indicated by the interviewees. The most common responses were that friends were going and that they liked camps in general (or this specific one). A fifteen-year-old girl from Adain Lo said that “it’s interesting to be with your peers of the same age. And time just passes there in an interesting way.” A thirteen-year-old boy from Adain Lo said that he liked the atmosphere and the fact that everything is easy-going. A fourteen-year-old girl from JAFI said that she went to camp “to learn something new. My relatives told me that I should go to Jewish camp and find a Jewish boy to marry to keep the Jewish nation. I just like the camp.” A twelve-year-old boy from JAFI explained that “It is known that conditions at Jewish camps are better, so why not go there.” Many of the campers said that they liked the summer camps and continued going every year as one camper said, “It’s just like a tradition.”

The comparison group was asked why they did not attend camp. Answers revealed that children decide not to go to camp mostly because they spend their summer at a dacha (summer house), or that they wanted to stay with their friends. Two respondents commented that the Jewish camp overlapped with other summer activities, such as Math Camp, or the French Gymnasium. Two of the respondents said that their parents did not want to send them to a camp that they considered to be religious, whether it was Jewish or Russian Orthodox. Two respondents who have no affiliation to any Jewish organizations said that they actually would be interested in going to a Jewish camp, but had not been informed about such opportunities.

Satisfaction

All of the respondents liked being at camp and were pleased with the camp program. When asked what they most liked about camp, common responses were the sports program, the faculties (JAFI camp), and the games and entertainment. A fourteen-year-old girl said that she liked the home atmosphere, the *madrivot*, and the friendliness of her peers. Another camper commented that the camp “had lots of role-playing games, and it’s always easier to acquire knowledge playing games. It’s informative, but very fun.” Another said that he never got bored. A twelve-year-old girl commented that “everything was interesting; people who worked there really cared about us and wanted to make our life nice and interesting.” Another example of a positive comment came from a fourteen-year-old girl. “They tell us everything and one may ask anything. They tell you something for one hour and the second hour is more active. I like it very much because I don’t have to sit and listen for three hours, and then come back so tired that I can’t do anything else.”

Many JAFI campers specifically noted the *Vaad* when asked what they liked about camp, while others talked about the *Vaad* when asked if they had difficulties. A thirteen-year-old boy said that he liked the new idea of self-government that was

instituted at camp. A fourteen-year-old member of the *Vaad* said that he liked creating self-government and laws. Another camper mentioned that he did not like that the student government made a lights-out rule. A fourteen-year-old member of the *Vaad* commented that it was "difficult to create the laws and stand by them." A twelve-year-old girl had a similar reaction. "*Vaad* was not easy - a lot of responsibility." She learned a lot from it, but it was hard to make decisions and calm campers down because they did not pay attention to her.

Some campers who had attended JAFI's Dyuny camp the summer before said that this year the camp was organized much better, was more interesting, and the sports program was much better. Campers also mentioned that in 2005 there were fewer people in each room, less time spent sitting and listening to lectures, and "the life was more saturated [with interesting activities]."

Jewish programs at the camps

Questions about the Jewish program at all three camps yielded a variety of responses about how campers learned about Jewish history, tradition, and Israel and how they did so through games, storytelling and their Shabbat experiences. Most respondents said that they enjoyed the Jewish programs and some specified that camp is their only opportunity to learn about Judaism. Along with history, traditions and Israel, campers specifically mentioned learning about Jewish culture, including Jewish dancing, Jewish singing, Jewish tales in theater, Jewish stories, and Hebrew. Others spoke about Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. At the Adain Lo camp, campers enjoyed that Israelis ran programs about contemporary Israeli life and the Israeli army. Most campers mentioned that learning about the Holocaust was very meaningful and all the JAFI and Chabad campers were impressed with meeting the Holocaust survivors. Typical comments from campers included:

I liked it because I do not hear anything like that (Jewish context) in my ordinary life (JAFI camper, 14-year-old girl).

We learned about the Bible and discussed what the Jewish attitudes were. I liked it very much because it felt serious (JAFI camper, 14-year-old girl).

Jewish history, legends, and stories were part of the program. Shabbat Shalom was a great festival. To me there was even too much information. You could learn everything about the Jewish people there (JAFI camper, 13-year-old girl).

On Shabbat we bless challah, wine, and candles, and spice. We would sit down to a meal and the madrich would play guitar, and sing and we would all sing until midnight (JAFI camper, 15-year-old girl).

We studied Jewish history from the ancient times, from the exodus of Jews from Egypt, how Moses led them through the desert for 40 years, and naturally about the Holocaust (JAFI camper, 15-year-old boy).

Learning about the Jewish history and traditions helped me build a Jewish identity (Adain Lo camper, 17-year-old boy).

Impact of Camp Experiences

In terms of the impact of the camp, four areas were assessed: learning about Judaism and the Holocaust, individual change, influences on the family life, and establishment of social networks.

Learning new material about Judaism and the Holocaust

When campers in all three camps were asked if they had learned anything new at camp, most of them reported that they had learned more about Jewish history and traditions, the history of Israel, and the Holocaust.

In the JAFI camp, when asked if they had learned anything new at camp, several of them reported that they had learned more about Jewish history, culture, and tradition. One camper said that she knew nothing about Israel, and camp was the first time she heard about life in that country. An even stronger response was by a fourteen-year-old boy who said that everything Jewish in the camp was new to him.

The Holocaust survivors had a great impact on the JAFI and Chabad campers. The words of campers suggest the importance of these engagements with survivors:

The most touching moment was a meeting with some old women, those who survived but were subjected to the Holocaust. That was the most memorable moment. I was listening to their stories with my eyes open wide, and they impressed me so much. I think it was due to their personalities and their impressive stories (JAFI camper, 13-year-old girl).

We listened to what they told us, and they didn't cry! They cried only because of happiness that they were here, that they had husbands, children, grandchildren and they were here, alive and happy (JAFI camper, 14-year-old girl).

It was very interesting to hear the real thing and not just in a film. It would be interesting to know how I would behave in this situation (JAFI camper, 13-year-old boy).

I felt happy because they were saved. Fascists are really evil! Everyone was affected by the Fascist revolution, Poland, Japan, everyone. It was anti-Jewish (Chabad camper, 12-year-old boy).

Well, there is an old person sitting in front of you, he lived through a tragedy. You cannot estimate the tragedy without seeing it. I'm sorry for these people, but, thank God, it's all over now, and thanks to them, we didn't have to live through it (Chabad camper, 16-year-old boy).

In terms of new learning at the Adain Lo camp, most campers also mentioned the Holocaust and Jewish history and traditions. One camper said that more time was devoted to the Holocaust than to anything else. Another explained that the camp provided him with new knowledge about the Holocaust, "Before the camp, I only knew that they (Jews) suffered a lot during the Second World War. At the camp, I heard much more detail." Some campers mentioned that they knew something about Jewish history, but received much more information at camp. "I am generally aware of Jewish history, but now I know more interesting details." Another said that he also learned more about traditions.

Only a few respondents said that they did not learn anything new at camp. All of these respondents were children who attend a Jewish school. One camper who grew up in Israel said, "I already knew the things they told us, that's why I wasn't surprised at anything." The other camper commented that "they didn't tell me anything new about the Jewish people, they talk about almost the same things every year, the Holocaust, and all these holidays." Yet, this respondent did acknowledge learning something new from the witnesses.

Individual changes

When asked what effect camp had on their everyday life, campers from all three camps said they feel more Jewish since they attended camp. Some of the children talked about attending activities at Jewish organizations more often, and some told of trying to celebrate holidays in the home. A few respondents said that nothing changed in their lives as a result of camp, but these were a minority.

Various responses to how campers were affected by camp:

Well, the camp has changed my life, but I don't know what kind of change it is. There was something in the camp that made us feel unified. I didn't feel so in the usual camp (JAFI camper, 13-year-old girl).

After this year I understood that I am really connected to this culture. I understood that I really want to take part in it (JAFI camper, 14-year-old girl).

It was the first time when I started thinking whether it is good or bad to be Jewish. I thought that it is very good to go to such camps (JAFI camper, 13-year-old boy).

Camp influenced my Jewish self-awareness and changed my attitude (Adain Lo camper, 15-year-old girl).

I want to learn more about Israel now (Chabad camper, 12-year-old girl).

I like celebrations and holidays in general, and sometimes now I will even light a candle for Saturday (JAFI camper, 16-year-old girl).

Influences on family life

Campers were asked how camp influenced their family life. Most campers initially responded that nothing had changed in their family since attending camp. Yet, many of the campers subsequently responded that there was some infiltration of new traditions into the home after returning from camp. Often, they described how they tried to celebrate Shabbat and other holidays at home, but their parents did not support them.

A few campers, nevertheless, commented on how camp has made an impact on their family life. Two campers from the JAFI camp said that their families had been affected. One such comment was, "Now sometimes Jewish issues are touched. Before I went to camp, they were not noticed," and "Sometimes my parents celebrated Rosh Hashanah not by all the rules. Now we prepare everything beforehand, and this is my idea." One Adain Lo camper, who comes from a family where holidays are observed, said that she tells her family about her experiences and they enjoy listening, but "they already know everything anyway. What new can I tell them?" Another respondent who comes from a

family where Jewish holidays are also celebrated says that he learned new things about traditions at camp, and when the next holiday comes he will try to perform the new things that he learned.

In general, however, campers reported that the camp did not have a major effect on familial practice. One camper, when asked if the camps had positively influenced his Jewish family life, said that it didn't affect him at all. "Only maybe even in the other direction. It's useless to celebrate holidays. My family doesn't support it, so sitting at home eating apples is nice, but trying to make it serious, it comes out rather silly". Another camper had a similar experience with her family and says that they are not interested in traditions, so she doesn't give them much information at all.

Social networks

Interviewees were asked about making friends in the camp and about their network of friends at home to understand if camp helped them establish or expand their network of Jewish friends. Most respondents reported having both Russian and Jewish friends, while some said they had only Russian friends. Several explicitly stated that they had an equal number of Jewish and non-Jewish friends, while still others explained that they are not concerned with their friends' nationalities. One camper, when asked if she has Jewish friends, answered, "I never ask every person I meet 'Hello! Are you Jewish?'" In terms of others at her school knowing she is Jewish, she says, "those who are interested in it know about it and don't care about it. The others also don't care about it." Another camper remarked, "I do not divide them into who is Jewish and who is not. They are all just friends."

One camper who attends Jewish school explained that all her friends are partly Jewish. She says she does not have any entirely non-Jewish friends because she "moves in Jewish society." Such responses were typical of those from Jewish schools, but it was also evident among some campers who do not attend Jewish schools. One

such camper said that she has more Jewish friends than non-Jewish and feels that her Jewish friends are more interesting. "It's just interesting to talk to them. Somehow it happens that there are more things to discuss with them."

All the children confirmed that they made friends at the camps, but the answers to whether they still keep in touch with their camp friends varied. Some respondents said that they stay in contact during the year by phone or email. Others see each other during the year at school. Three of the respondents said that though they made friends, they did not keep in touch. One of them said that he had not exchanged phone numbers with his friends and another said "it's hard to communicate with people who you don't see during the year." An eleven-year-old boy said that he had called a friend from camp, but the friend didn't remember him. He concluded that, "friends in the camp are friends only during camp."

Findings: Parents

Sample

Sixty parents (45 camper parents, 15 comparison group) were interviewed about their identity and their motivations for sending (or not sending) their child to the ICHEIC camps. Those parents who sent their children to the ICHEIC camps were asked about their im-pressions of the camp and its programs. Table 5 shows the gender breakdown of the parent groups.

Jewish identity

Almost two-thirds (39) of the 60 interviewed parents identified their nationality as Jewish. Twenty-seven of these parents also indicated that their family was considered Jewish, but again, mainly in terms of national identification, as opposed to religious observance. Since not every Jewish parent indicated that the family can be considered Jewish, it becomes obvious that personal identity does not always carry to the family identity, as for example one father who has always considered himself Jewish said of his family members, "Of course! How else could it be: all are Jewish and one person is suddenly not? No, no." But when asked whether his family is Jewish, he said, "not very, I can't really say."

Central to increasing observance of Jewish traditions in homes is the evolution of the Jewish organizations in St. Petersburg. In many cases the desire to observe Jewish traditions was introduced to the family by the children who attend either Jewish school or other Jewish institutions, including the summer camps. For example, one mother explained that in the past she did not know about holidays, but some Jewish traditions come home with her son from Jewish school. Another mother explained that while she grew up in a traditional Jewish home, she didn't bring these traditions to her own family, but has now reconnected with tradition because of her affiliation with the Jewish organizations she attends. As she said, "I've been respecting traditions for 12 years since I connected

Table 5: Number of Parents Interviewed by Gender and Camp

Camp	Mother	Father	Total
Adain Lo (ages 11-13)	7	1	8
Adain Lo (ages 14-16)	5	1	6
JAFI (ages 11-13)	9	1	10
JAFI (ages14-16)	8	5	13
Chabad	7	1	8
Comparison	12	3	15
Total	48	12	60

to Hesed Avraham¹³ and later to Adain Lo." Because her son studies about Jewish traditions at school, another mother explains that she now celebrates Passover and Shabbat in the home and actually enjoys the holidays. She also does not work on Shabbat and tries to keep the Jewish traditions as much as possible. Maintaining traditions in the home, for another parent, is precipitated by having a grandmother living with them.

In contrast to these "practicing" parents, there are parents who in spite of their defined identity as Jews do not observe Jewish traditions in their home. A forty-nine-year-old mother says that although traditions such as Shabbat were kept in her parents' home and although her grandparents were "observers all the time," she now does not keep traditions in the house. She believes that, "it is enough that the children go to Adain Lo" and are surrounded by traditions there. A fifty-six-year-old father explains that his family does not celebrate holidays because "we just don't have such opportunity," although he does go to Adain Lo for the celebration of the holidays. His connection to Judaism is also expressed through the copious amount of literature he has collected on Jewish topics.

Of the twenty-one parents who did not clearly identify as Jews, eleven indicated that although they were classified by a different nationality, they acknowledged their Jewish roots. For example, one mother said that her passport indicated that she was Russian, but she said she has Jewish roots from her father. She acknowledged that the Jewish line is counted by the mother, yet she says sometimes her Jewishness dominates in her mind when she thinks about her national identity. She now observes the holidays and Shabbat at Adain Lo, although her family does not keep traditions at home. Another parent also noted that her passport says she is Russian and she follows Christianity, but she still has a sense of her Jewish roots. Sometimes she'll attend synagogue, but she also visits Russian Orthodox churches. She celebrates Passover by going to Adain Lo with a distant relative. Another parent said that her

nationality is indicated as Russian in her passport, but she has Jewish roots from her mother. She doesn't follow any religion. She said that she had never considered her Jewish identity until she attended a JAFI seminar where she developed an interest in Judaism, although not to the extent of bringing tradition into the home.

Other parents who were asked if they were Jewish could not clearly define themselves. It seems that these parents are going through the difficult process of self-definition. One mother explains that she is Russian, but that her mother was completely Jewish. She says, "I am probably more Russian, nevertheless, I just want to be Jewish in such a way because of my mamma. It seems a tribute." She also mentioned that when she was growing up in Soviet times, she was taught to be discreet about her Jewish roots. She said that when she had a child, she wanted to know more about Judaism and the traditions, so she sent her child to Adain Lo from the very first grade. Although she does not observe holidays in the home, they celebrate them at Adain Lo.

A thirty-six-year-old mother said, "I actually considered myself as a person without nationality, for a long time I consider myself as nobody. Generally, I probably consider myself just a citizen of Russia. That's the way it is." Later in the interview, she said that she wanted to return to her Jewish heritage. It would be difficult, she was sure, because her family never spoke about their Jewish roots. Her Jewish roots came from her father's side and her parents divorced when she was three. She had no contact with her father since then. One father had an interesting personal story about how he identifies himself: "My way of living has been as an Orthodox Christian for a long time. Then I became quite interested in Judaism, attended a synagogue, even a yeshiva for a while, but I am also interested in Buddhism. I just find it all interesting."

For those parents who do not self-identify as Jews, none identify their families as Jewish. One parent

[13] Hesed Avraham is an organization, supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which helps the Jewish elderly of St. Petersburg by providing them with meals on wheels, home healthcare, medical equipment, and a community center.

commented that, "Once we had a talk with my mom on this topic and I was told that I shouldn't advertise it. I've been saying that I am Russian ever since." Another parent commented on not identifying with the Jewish people because of the "...social aspect of it. I feel very uncomfortable and don't understand the reason for it. My oldest daughter is very quiet and it scares her when she sees so many people in yarmulkes."

Knowledge of the Holocaust

All but two of the parents indicated that they were familiar with the Holocaust. Some indicated that they had learned about it when they were young. For example, a thirty-five-year-old mother and a forty-one-year-old mother said that the Holocaust was studied as part of general history in school. Some parents reported that they knew about family members who had perished in the Holocaust, but did not know about the extent of the atrocities. When asked about the first time she had heard about the Holocaust, one parent responded, "That's hard to answer - I have known since childhood that Jews were oppressed, but learned about mass annihilation only in the University. My mother had told me that my family died proudly in a ghetto." Most of the other parents said that they were not told in school or by their parents, but instead learned about the Holocaust more recently from their children. A few actually mentioned visiting concentration camps, and the Holocaust Museum in Israel.

Camp

Motivation to send their children to camp

Parents' motivations to send their children to camp varied. For some it was the child's choice; for others, it was the desire for an affordable and safe way for the child to spend the summer; for others, it was appreciating the quality of the Jewish program. Ten parents mentioned that it was their child's choice to go to this particular camp because they had been there previously and had enjoyed it or had friends going there. A parent of a fourteen-year-old girl

reported her daughter's feelings about camp: "She is ready to be there night and day." Another dozen parents noted that they had heard that the camp was of "good quality." Another parent said that, "compared to ordinary municipal camps, this one is just superb." A parent of a twelve-year-old boy said, "I know that they deal well with the children, care about them, organize various entertainments. I trust these people completely." One mother said that she has no other place for her child during the summer because they do not have a summer house. The price of the Adain Lo camp was reasonable for her. A parent from the JAFI camp said, "The living conditions and programs seemed attractive, especially financially. It was a familiar and friendly environment, and it was JAFI." One father also mentioned that he is busy working, and wants his daughter to spend the summer in the company of her peers.

A number of parents explicitly noted the Jewish program at the camps as a motivation for sending their children to these ICHEIC camps. For example: "At camp, they can learn something about being Jewish that I cannot tell them," or "I want her to know what I don't know, because they are given lots of information."

Those who specified how they had heard about the camps told our interviewers about a myriad of channels, including through their social networks, a newspaper advertisement, announcements in school and synagogues, and through direct phone calls from the organizations. One parent found out about the three ICHEIC Jewish camps from friends and chose Adain Lo because it seemed like the most secular one. Another said, "My son came up to me and said that kids at his school are going there for the second time, and what about him? So I called JAFI." One father mentioned that, "I saw an ad in the paper and wanted to ship off the kid somewhere for summer." One mother said, "I wanted to send him to camp when he was younger, but he always objected. Now when we were called about this camp and I suggested he go to Jewish camp, he was actually excited."

Satisfaction

Most of the parents expressed satisfaction with their child's camp. Many of the parents talked about the atmosphere of freedom, the loving attitude towards the children, and the games and entertainment. Some of the comments were specific to particular camps and focused on the staff. Parents of Adain Lo campers talked about the professional teachers who ran studios at Adain Lo. Parents of children at the JAFI and Chabad camps talked about the quality of the *madrachim*. Across the board, parents often mentioned the amount of knowledge that their children had learned, the overall organization of the camp, and the friendships that were formed in camp.

Those parents who commented on the Jewish elements of the camp also had positive impressions. Several mentioned the performances on Jewish subjects and the classes on Jewish traditions. One father said that these programs were interesting and that he was, "generally satisfied when they try to combine camp activities and events with some facts from Jewish history." Another parent said, "I wouldn't even object if the Jewish program was more extensive. It's good to know more about your people." One mother said, "I think it is very important that children are told about traditions starting from childhood, while they still absorb everything easily." Another parent said the Jewishness of the camp is good because there is no other place for her son to learn about Judaism, and also mentioned that her son once said, "I learned everything I know about the Jewish nation in JAFI." A slightly different response was given by a father who expressed satisfaction with the Jewish program, but also said that he doesn't really care about whether there's emphasis on Jewish learning in the camp or not. Instead, he cares about the attitude towards the children.

Most parents mentioned being impressed with the Holocaust education. One parent said that the children learn about the Holocaust from various sources, but that camp is an important component

to their Holocaust education. A parent also spoke about the fact that all members of the camp – professionals, musicians and theater members – took part in the Holocaust discussions and made it understandable to the children.

Only three parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the Jewish program. While one mother appreciated that the campers learned about Jewish history and were not overloaded with "boring things," she mentioned that, "all the learning is sort of 'imposed' information like that given at school" and cites this as a reason why the children are not so enthusiastic about learning Jewish history. A similar response was expressed by another parent. "I was worried about the psychological pressure and indoctrination in the camp. My negative attitude is aimed at that psychological climate created by those *madrachim*. If I get it right, they stress moving to Israel from Russia. This I dislike very much." Another parent concurred by saying, "There were too many topics about Israel, this is why I limit contact with JAFI - too much pressure." These views were no doubt genuine, but they were atypical.

Impact of camp

When asked whether changes had taken place in the child as a result of being in the camp, many parents identified growth of their child in terms of

independence, liberal thinking, friendships, and knowledge. Many parents praised the Jewish program at the camp because they felt they also learned about Judaism through their child's education. Several parents said that their children would come home and relate the Jewish traditions and history that they had learned about in camp. One mother said that her son memorized and remembered everything he learned at camp, and would come home and tell his parents. She attributed this to the fact that everything is presented on the children's level so that they can understand their Jewish roots. Similarly, another mother explained that her son tells her about what

he learns in camp and she is very interested. She said, "He tells me a great deal, and I understand how little I know of that." Another parent said that she also turns to her children when she wants to learn something new.

Other parents commented on specific changes resulting from camp. For example, one parent reported that her son became "a different child." Instead of just spending time with his friends, he now wants to read. He had a lot of questions about the Holocaust and discussed it with his mother. "And after all he began on Fridays ... He lit candles himself for the first time and explained to me: 'Mother, you should do it yourself.' He still remembers every Friday." Another parent mentioned her surprise when right after returning from camp her daughter began to write about her Jewish grandfather and her work even won a literary prize at school. A parent of a boy who attended the JAFI camp explained that her son was so positively affected by the camp that he would like to become a *madrich*.

Other parents reported that the Jewish exposure at camp did not seem to affect their children. One parent said that the camp was just a short-term experience, and her daughter's behavior had not changed. Another parent explained the lack of identifiable change in her twelve-year-old daughter by saying, "At this age, you know, I don't think they think a lot about their Jewish identity." Yet another explained that it's difficult to separate the camp from other aspects of daily life in terms of how it affects self-identification.

Discussion

The present evaluation of the JAFI summer camp program in St. Petersburg documents the way in which the camp experience fulfilled initial expectations for what participants would learn about the Holocaust and their own Jewish identities.

The impact of the camps seems exceptional in light of the diversity of participants. Some of the campers came with Jewish identity, others had a fused Russian-Jewish identity, while another group had little Jewish identity and regarded themselves as simply Russian or had another national identification (including no specific identity). It is important to note that all the identities are expressed in ethnic-national terms and not in religious terms. Thus, almost none of the interviewees viewed him/herself as a Jew in religious terms. That the camp was viewed

positively by each of these groups is noteworthy. Strong Jewish identity at the start could have made the learning at the camp seem not as novel or interesting, while weak Jewish identity could have led to children not seeing it as relevant.

An added benefit from this study is the picture that emerges of the next generation of Jews in St. Petersburg and what it suggests about the future of Jewish life in Russia. Jewish identity among the St. Petersburg children and parents we interviewed is decidedly secular and non-religious. Although families may engage in some Jewish religious practices, it is far from the center of what it means to be Jewish. However, there appears to be strong interest in cultural Judaism and, in particular, in their shared history (such as a deeper understanding of the Holocaust). Jewish schools serve a relatively small group of the Jewish children in the community. That means that the informal settings, from Sunday schools to holiday celebrations offered by a variety of organizations, play an important role.

Given the secular focus of the community, summer camps can play an exceptionally important role as a means to help children construct their Jewish identity. The opportunity to spend time with peers, to have fun and, at the same time, be exposed to systematic and wide-ranging knowledge about Jewish history, tradition, culture, Israel, and the

Holocaust both fills a need and seems effective. It should not be surprising that informal education is effective, but it is a bit unusual that it seems to work so well for a broad range of children and can be delivered in different ways. Even though the three camps supported by ICHEIC had different philosophies, foundations, and implementation methods, each camp made the experience interesting and enjoyable.

It is clear from reports of both campers and parents that the organizers accomplished their primary goals. Almost all campers reported learning about Jewish issues, Israel and the Holocaust. The camp experience contributed to the evolution of Jewish awareness and identity and there was much evidence of how the experience had left its mark. For some campers, it is an addition to their already formed identity and knowledge, while for others it is a basis for further construction of their self-identification. Some of the campers acknowledged the camp's influence and spoke about significant changes that took place in their lives. Also, some of the parents acknowledged that their children brought home new initiatives and knowledge, and they contributed to family Jewish practices.

One interesting issue about the impact of the experience concerns their religious nature – particularly in light of how Russian Jews regard their Jewish identity. Along with Jewish education, the camps also observed basic Jewish traditions (expressed, at a minimum, by having Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night). The Chabad camp offered the possibility of voluntary prayer services. Of special significance were the days devoted to the Holocaust. Almost all of the campers were impressed with this part of the program. The JAFI and Chabad camps reinforced the Holocaust theme by inviting Holocaust witnesses to share their stories. The campers who heard these recounts were especially moved with the personal experiences of the Holocaust.

In several cases, the construction of Jewish identity seemed to stem from the child's trying to implement Jewish traditions they learned about at camp into their family life. Several campers noted that after attending camp they now consider themselves the only Jewish member of their family. The camps also had an indirect impact, in particular, as a mechanism for children to form Jewish social networks. For adolescents who do not go to Jewish school, live in non-Jewish environments, and draw their friends from this non-Jewish context, the camps provide a unique opportunity to live in a Jewish social setting in which they meet other Jewish children, and can form Jewish social networks.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2005 test of the camp program was, by all of our measures, extremely successful. The implementation and logistic problems that had affected the camp program in 2004 were remedied and the curriculum was adapted better to the settings. By having a better primary site, smaller groups of campers, and better training, and by offering three distinct programs, the organizers seem to have developed a set of well-received camps. Even more importantly, when we interviewed campers and parents four months following the camping experience, evidence of impact was considerable.

- Our findings provide strong support for continuation and, perhaps, expansion of the effort to provide summer camp experiences for St. Petersburg's Jewish youth. In terms of expansion, the number of Jews living in St. Petersburg and its surrounding towns is estimated at about 100,000 with 3,000 or more camp-age children. There is, thus, substantial room for growth. The evaluative data suggest that camp experiences are valued across the diversity of Jewish youth. The camp model, as developed by JAFI, seems exceptionally well-suited to Russia and the St. Petersburg community.

As has been noted by other researchers who have examined Russian Jewish education efforts, summer camps provide an opportunity for children to have "... an intensive emotional and intellectual learning experience."¹⁴ Separated from the outside world, camps can create a physically and emotionally safe environment that encourages campers to take risks and try new experiences.¹⁵ It is clear that Jewish summer camps in Russia can be an appealing mechanism to attract Jewish children from families that are not otherwise connected to Jewish life.

As ICHEIC continues the development of summer camps for Russian Jewish children, a number of lessons from the experience in St. Petersburg might be drawn:

1. It is possible to develop camps that not only provide safe and fun environments for children, but also provide serious and impactful Jewish educational programs.
2. In the context of a Jewish camp, universal themes (e.g., democracy) can also be taught and may enhance the overall program.
3. Staffing is critical: The selection, training, and supervision of staff is the critical component of camp operations and it seems especially important to have both Russian and Israeli staff. The identification and support of leaders is equally critical.
4. Site and logistics are also integral concerns. If basic safety, shelter, and food needs are not met, it is difficult to run a camp properly.
5. Summer camps should not be seen as an "end product," but rather, a beginning of a relationship between the Jewish community and a family. Many Russian Jewish families have weak Jewish identities and little basis for identifying. Camping changes that for their children and should be built upon.
6. Underlying the redesign of the program this summer was the separation of the community-run and JAFI camp. A key issue in extending JAFI's involvement in other communities is their relationship with local communal organizations. JAFI has invested considerable resources in the development of a model camp. Whether this should be the principal model or whether they should support local efforts is a key question.

Extending the model

The next step for the overall ICHEIC program involves developing camps in other communities, in particular Moscow. It is not clear whether the lessons of St. Petersburg apply universally. The

[14] Weiner, A. (2003) *Renewal: Reconnecting Soviet Jewry to the Jewish People, A decade of American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) activities in the Former Soviet Union 1988-1998*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, p.117.

[15] cf. Saxe & Sales, 2004

community may be somewhat different and, as noted above, careful assessment needs to be made of local capacity and experience. Clearly it may take considerable time to develop elements of the program (logistical, in particular) and some degree of patience may be required as the program evolves. Given the initial logistical hurdles faced in St. Petersburg, substantial effort needs to be invested in finding appropriate sites and, perhaps, consideration should be given to other models (e.g., using different types of sites). JAFI may also want to consider multi-year programs, some of which might incorporate a visit/camping experience in Israel.

Most important, perhaps, is the need to find a means to institutionalize the camp program. That may mean capital investments (e.g., purchasing sites), but it definitely means long-term investments in training leaders and counselors. Building the knowledge base also seems critical. This can be done by disseminating curricular models and evaluation studies such as the present report. The development of age appropriate educational materials, such as the book, *About what happened and what did not happen...*, produced by JAFI to summarize key issues, also seems an important step.

Whether the current generation of Russian Jews will retain their Jewish identity or not is not yet clear. But evident from the results of the ICHEIC-sponsored camp program is that high-quality educational experiences can do a great deal to give young Jews the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their identity.

Appendix

Interview Protocol for Child *(translated into Russian)*

Personal Questions

Name: _____
 Age: _____
 Gender: Male Female
 Residence: _____
 School: _____
 Jewish___ Non-Jewish___
 Membership in organizations (Name and describe)

1. Who are your friends? Where did you meet them: in school, camp, organizations, neighborhood? Are they Jewish?

2. What are your aspirations for the future?

Family

3. Is your family satisfied with life in Russia?
4. Does your family consider itself to be Jewish? If yes, in what sense?
5. Was your family always aware of being Jewish?
6. If yes, how was their Jewishness expressed?

Identity

7. When did you find out that you are a Jew? Tell me about it.
8. How do you feel about being Jewish?
9. How do your parents react towards your Jewishness?
10. What do you know about the Holocaust?
11. When did you learn about it? From whom?

Camp (omit for Comparison Group)

12. Why did you go to the camp this year?
13. Did you go last year too? If yes, can you compare the two times?
14. Did you make new friends in the camp and are you in touch with them?
15. What did you like most about camp?
16. Did you have any difficulties in the camp?
17. Can you tell me about your experiences in your faculty? (only for the JAFI campers)
18. Can you describe the camp program this year? What were the key elements in the program with regard to Jewishness?
19. Did you learn anything new about Jewishness at camp?
20. What were your impressions regarding the testimonies of the Holocaust witnesses?
21. What did you think about the Jewish program at camp?
22. As a result of camp, do you do anything different, or feel any different with regards to being Jewish?
23. Have any changes taken place in your family as a consequence of your being at camp?
24. Would you like to add anything?

For Comparison Group only:

Why did you not attend camp this summer?

Interview Protocol for Parent (translated into Russian)**Personal Questionnaire**

Name: _____
 Age: _____
 Gender: Male Female
 Marital status: _____
 Residence: _____
 Nationality: _____
 Religion: _____
 Membership in (Jewish) organizations (Name and describe): _____
 Hobbies: _____
 How many children do you have? _____
 Age(s) and gender(s): _____

Personal Identity

1. What is your identity?
2. Do you view yourself as a Jew? If yes, what are the behavioral implications of this identity, if any?
3. Can you tell me about the Jewishness of your family? Was it expressed and how?

Spouse

4. What is the identity of your spouse?
5. Does your spouse view him/herself as a Jew? If not, what is the identity of your spouse and what are the behavioral implications of this identity? If yes, what does it mean for her/him to be a Jew?

Family identity

6. Does your family consider itself Jewish? If not, what is the identity of the family and what are the behavioral implications of this identity?
7. If the family considers itself Jewish, please tell me about it.
8. What do you know about the Holocaust? When did you learn about it and from whom?

Camp (omit for comparison group)

9. Why did you send your child to the camp?
10. Are you happy with the camp? With what in particular?
11. Were you unsatisfied with anything in the camp? If so, with what?
12. Are you happy with its Jewish emphases? With what in particular?
13. Did you notice any changes that took place in your child after being at camp? (Any changes in the sense of Jewishness since the camp - practices, customs, talks, plans.)
14. Can you tell me about any changes that took place in the family as a consequence of the child's attendance at camp? Especially in terms of Jewish identity - practices, customs, talks, plans.

For Comparison Group only

Why did your child not attend camp this summer?
 Would you like to add anything?

Thank you for your time.

About the Authors

Leonard Saxe is Professor of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University and Director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute. Professor Saxe is a social psychologist and his work includes a variety of evaluative and policy focused studies of education, mental health issues, psychological testing, and the development of Jewish identity. His work on Jewish identity has involved studies of Jewish camping, Israel experience, and socio-demography. He is the co-author of a 2004 book, *How Goodly are Thy Tents*, an exploration of how summer camps socialize children. Professor Saxe is an author and/or editor of nearly 250 publications. He has been a Science Fellow for the United States Congress and was a Fulbright Professor at Haifa University, Israel. In 1989, he was awarded the American Psychological Association's prize for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest, Early Career.

Daniel Bar-Tal is a Professor of Psychology in the School of Education at Tel-Aviv University. He is the author or editor of nearly a dozen books among them *Group Beliefs* (Springer-Verlag, 1990), *Shared Beliefs in a Society* (Sage, 2000), *Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict: Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society*. (Cambridge University Press, 2005). *The Social Psychology of Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), *Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict* (Springer-Verlag, 1998), *Stereotyping and Prejudice* (Springer-Verlag, 1989), *Patriotism in the Life of Individuals and Nations* (Nelson-Hall, 1997), *How Children Understand War and Peace* (Jossey Bass, 1999) and *Patriotism: Homeland love* (Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2004). He is a leading expert on stereotyping and the evolvment of the psychological repertoire in times of intractable conflict. In that context, he has studied the shared societal beliefs of ethos of conflict, of collective memory, and emotional collective orientations. His research and teaching has been dedicated to understanding how to educate individuals to participate in democratic society and the way in which political processes are shaped by belief systems. He is an expert field researcher and has substantial experience teaching and working in Eastern Europe.

Masha Sud Lokshin is a Research Analyst at CMJS at Brandeis University. Masha holds a BA in Economics from Brandeis University and an MBA from Bentley College. She is a native Russian speaker who lived 8 years in the FSU. In addition to her language abilities she brings knowledge of Russian culture and history as well as organizational expertise to the Center.

Aviva Androphy is a Research Analyst at CMJS. She graduated from Brandeis University in 2005 with a BA in Psychology and Health: Science, Society, and Policy.



This report is a publication of:

The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University, MS 014
415 South Street
Waltham, Massachusetts, 02454-9110
781-736-2060
www.brandeis.edu/cmjs

