

## **Conceptions of history on Jewish-Russian migrants in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Israel – a comparison**

### **1 Central Issue on which the layers of memory are analyzed**

The aim of the project is a comparison of history conceptions of Jewish-Russian migrants in Israel and in the Federal Republic of Germany on the Shoah and Second World War.

Due to the so-called quota regulations, besides Israel the main destination of the migration from the former Soviet Union after 1990 has been Germany. These migrations gave the Jewish Communities in Germany<sup>1</sup> new impulses and bring a "demographic and strategic strengthening"<sup>2</sup> for the Israeli society.

On the other hand, the Jewish identity played only a minor part in the Soviet Union. This circumstance manifests, for instance, in the lacking debate on the Shoah and the one-sided memory on the Second World War in the USSR.

Our intention is to find out to what extent the history conceptions of Jews socialized and educated in the Soviet Union have been modified or still have preserved. For this, it is necessary to establish the influence of the new and free political and religious life on the formation of an own "Jewish identity" and its influence on the way of how to deal with the own history. Another aspect to be analyzed are the shifts in the history conceptions resp. memory discourses in Israel and possibly in Germany, effected by the immigration of Jews.

The importance of the memory on the Second World War resp. The Great Patriotic War for Jewish-Russian migrants can be pointed out by numerous veteran associations in Israel as well as by scientific research papers<sup>3</sup> or the exhibition "Between Soviet Star and Star of David" in Berlin<sup>4</sup>.

### **2 Which steps are planned to work out on this topic?**

Based on a comprehensive bibliographic investigation, the migration movements and the actual living conditions of Jewish-Russian migrants are examined. The main focus will be put on the discourses of memory on the Shoah and the Soviet history conception. The influence of these factors on the socio-political activity in the new milieu of the migrants will be analyzed.

The project will interview socio-politically active persons who have faced this discourse. Not only the migration background of these persons will be investigated, but also how the Jewish identity was formed or modified. Which modifications of memory can be determined, is there an adaptation of the history conception to new knowledge or has the Soviet history conception been preserved? What happens to Jewish identity and with the own (family) history in the new country? Are the interviewed active as contemporary witnesses in schools or museums or do they understand history as "a family matter"?

The questions will be investigated in one German and one Israeli town. This work will be based on existing research publications on Russian-Jewish immigration in the particular countries. The interviews will be led in cooperation with the Jewish communities in Leipzig and Tel-Aviv.

In an group work phase, these interviews will be analyzed with the support of experts. Moreover, the integration and consultation of educational seminars for Russian migrants of the Shoah Memorial Yad Vashem is intended.

### **3 How is the international project team structured? How will the communication between the project partners be supported?**

The project team consists of twelve junior researchers from Germany and from Israel. An important aspect is the interdisciplinary composition of the project team, which consists of historians, political scientists and a translator. On behalf of the Israeli team, Dr. Shmulik Lahar from I&EYE (Israeli &

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1 Melanie Eulitz, jüdische Gemeinde in Leipzig und die jüdischen Migranten aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion, Dipl., Leipzig 2007, S. 20ff.

2 Olaf Glöckner, Juden in Israel, <http://www.bpb.de/themen/QP1NM5.html> , 22.10.2008

3 Andrei Dörre, Transnationale soziale Lebenswelten jüdischer Zugewanderter aus den Nachfolgestaaten der UdSSR, Dipl., Berlin 2004.

4 article from Zukunft, 6. Jahrgang, Nr. 12, 2006. <http://www.zentralratjuden.de/de/article/1182.html>, 22.10.08

## Project outline of the action group "Imparting history"

European Youth Exchanges) will take over the organizational part.

During the preparation and investigation phase, a workshop for the participants will regularly be held in both countries. The exchange of results will be realized via the E-Learning platform of the University Leipzig.

The interviews in Leipzig will be taken by the project participants. They will be analyzed and evaluated at the group work phase in Israel by the binational project team together with those taken in this group work phase in Israel. During this work phase, the analysis and evaluation of the taken interviews will be completed and the presentation of the results will be prepared.

The joint multilingual presentation will be finished by both sides via the E-Learning platform.

### **4 In which form will the project results be presented to the broad public?**

The project results will be summarized in a multilingual booklet and presented to the public. In both countries, a public presentation of the results will be organized. Furthermore, the booklet will be accessible as a PDF document on the project home page documenting the project history and the interviews comprehensively.

### **5 What expenses are necessary to realize the project?**

Number of participants: 10 participants + 2 executives

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. preparation phase including seminar lasting several days in Leipzig (May – August 2009) | 1.550,00 €                |
| 2. Seminar and interviews in Israel (September 2009, 10 days)                              |                           |
| - expenses on airplane tickets (12 persons á 400,00 €)                                     | 4.800,00 €                |
| - local expenses   |                           |
| a) bus transfer, entry fees, guides etc.   | 3.000,00 €                |
| b) accommodation in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Akka  | 3.000,00 €                |
| 3. assessment seminar in Leipzig (September / October 2009)                                | 550,00 €                  |
| 4 production expenses of the project booklet   | 1.500,00 €                |
| <b>Sum total:</b>  | <b><u>14.400,00 €</u></b> |

The preparation and assessment of the project include the conception of a internet project platform.

### **Contact:**

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