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Ethnic Purification and Its Three Types of Refugees

Images of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and the millions of internal and external refugees that it has produced are familiar to people throughout the world. The international community has been appalled by the reports of bloody massacres, rapes of young girls, concentration camps and massive uprootment of the Muslim population of this region. Unfortunately, what is happening in former Yugoslavia today can be replicated in a number of other regions of the former Soviet bloc countries that have received far less media coverage. Policies of ethnic purification have been adopted by nationalist governments in the Baltic, central Asia and the Caucasus. In some instances these policies have translated into discrimination against members of ethnic minorities in these states. In others, they have involved more violent clashes.

We can identify three types of refugees in the area. First, there are those refugees who have been displaced through armed confrontations. Among them are Croatians and Bosnian Muslims from former Yugoslavia, Armeni-

ans from Azerbaijan, Azeries from Armenia, Ossetians from Georgia, Ingushetians from northern Ossetia (southern Russia), Greeks and Russians from Abkhazia (Georgia), Jews in central Asia and in southern Russia, and members of conflicting tribes in Tadjikistan.

Second, there are those refugees who are pushed out of their homes through less violent means. Among them are two

million Russians who have been forced out of the Baltic, Central Asian and Caucasian states by such policies as denial of employment, of the right to educate their children in Russian, of citizenship, of a right to own property, and of franchise. Many Russian-speaking Jews in these regions have received the same treatment. However, unlike the Russians who flee predominantly to Russia, Jews have

Contents:

Ethnic Purification and Its Three Types of Refugees

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Tanya Basok and Alexander Benifand</i> | 1 |
| Forced Migration and Refugee Flows in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina <i>Silva Meznaric and Jelena Zlatkovic Winter</i> | 3 |
| Needy Guests, Reluctant Hosts? Refugee Women from the Former Yugoslavia in Hungary <i>Éva V. Huseby-Darvas</i> | 6 |
| Russian Policy and the Intensification of Civil Wars in Georgia, Tajikistan and Moldova <i>Alexander Benifand</i> | 12 |
| Jews in Moldova, Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Georgia <i>Tanya Basok</i> | 16 |
| Psychosocial Changes in East German Refugees <i>Ralf Schwarzer and André Hahn</i> | 17 |
| Book Review: Refugee Communities <i>John Sorenson</i> | 18 |

MOLDOVA

The armed conflict between the Romanian and Slavic populations of the Trans-Dniestria region has alarmed many Russian-speaking Jews. In the last two and a half years 32,500 Jews came to Israel from Moldova. There are 40,000 Jews still living in the region, 70 percent of whom have Israeli letters of invitation. Among them 8,000 live in the Trans-Dniestria region, with 2,500 in Bendery and Tiraspol. One-third of the Jews who fled the armed confrontations in that region are already in Israel, while others are becoming very anxious to leave.⁹

Armed conflicts and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism are forcing Jews out of Central Asia, Georgia and Moldova. Simultaneously, the growing number and power of nationalist forces in Russia have repercussions in the other regions of the former Soviet Union. The open demands of these nationalist organizations for a reunification of the Russian empire makes many Jews residing in the newly formed independent states wary of the future. ■

NOTES

1. Shimon Chertok, "Prognosi—Vesch Netochnaya" ('Forecasts Are Not Exact'), *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* (September 25, 1992): 6.
2. Ben Rose, "Jewish Agency Plays Key Role in Rescuing Jews, Says Dinitz," *The Canadian Jewish News* (September 3, 1992): 2.
3. Shimon Chertok, "Prognosi—Vesch Netochnaya."
4. Georgii Samoilovich, "Izgnanie Naroda" ['Expulsion of a Nation'] *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* (June 26, 1992): 6.
5. Shimon Cherton, "Prognosi—Vesch Netochnaya."
6. Batsheva Tsur, "Airlift from Tajikistan Arrives," *The Jerusalem Post International Edition* (October 3, 1992).
7. Georgii Samoilovich, "Izgnanie Naroda."
8. Batsheva Tsur, "Akhkazi Jews Set for Exodus," *The Jerusalem Post International Edition* (August 29, 1992): 4.
9. Shimon Cherton, "Prognosi—Vesch Netochnaya"; Allison Kaplan, "Moldavian Jews Arrive," *The Jerusalem Post International Edition* (August 15, 1992).

Psychosocial Changes in East German Refugees

Ralf Schwarzer and André Hahn

During the breakdown of the communist system in 1989, more than 300,000 East German citizens left their country and moved to West Germany. As part of this exodus, more than 50,000 refugees settled in West Berlin. Some came via the West German embassies in Warsaw, Prague or Budapest, while others fled under various dangerous conditions. However, many crossed the border after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.

A study was launched in October 1989 (before the fall of the Berlin Wall) to examine the emotional reactions, coping strategies, social adaptation and health of these refugees in their new environment. The project was planned as a longitudinal study, with three measurement points during the first two years after their flight. The East German refugees, who were contacted individually in their temporary living quarters, were asked to take part in a psychological investigation on their new life in the West. The first stage of the study took place in the fall and winter of 1989-90, the second-stage data were obtained in the summer of 1990, and the third set was collected in the summer of 1991. A total of 1,036 refugees agreed to participate and, thus, constituted the first-stage sample. The analysis was performed on the basis of 235 refugees who had participated in all three stages. These 126 males (mean age was 31 years) and 109 females (mean age was 32 years) filled in a questionnaire measuring (among other variables) employment status, social support, anxiety, depression and health complaints.

There was a stable relationship between one's employment status and self-reported ill health, but this relationship was further elucidated when sex differences were taken into account. More extreme symptoms were reported for men than for women. Apparently, joblessness is more detrimental for men, or else ini-

tial health problems inhibited job search and hiring. At all three stages, women reported more ill health than men.

A related research question was whether social support could buffer the effect of joblessness on ill health. Those refugees who were employed reported low physical symptoms, regardless of whether or not they received social support. For the refugees who were always jobless, however, social support made a considerable difference. Those who suffered from two stressors simultaneously, i.e., unemployment and lack of social support, continued to report the highest level of ill health at the three points of study. It was most interesting that those who remained jobless but received social support showed a remarkable decline in ill health over time.

This is an example of the often hypothesized buffer effect of social support within the stress and health relationship. Similar results were found for depression and anxiety (Schwarzer, Hahn and Jerusalem 1993). ■

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- Schwarzer, R., A. Hahn and M. Jerusalem. 1993. "Negative Affect in East German Migrants: Longitudinal Effects of Unemployment and Social Support." *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping: An International Journal* 6 (in press).

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