Demography of the Contemporary Russian-Speaking Jewish Diaspora*

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In the course of the 1990s most of the second largest Jewish Diaspora population, which resided in the former Soviet Union (FSU), changed their places of residence. Whereas the majority emigrated to Israel, the rest were divided mostly between the USA and Germany. In fact, this was a continuation of the mass migration which started in the 1970s, and was temporarily stopped in the 1980s. However, the emigration of the 1990s was much more numerous than that of the 1970s. The aims of this paper are to present (post-) Soviet Jewish migration and resettlement, to study the demographic transformation in the course of this mass migration, especially in Israel, and to estimate the worldwide size and distribution of the contemporary post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora.[1] In studying the demography of this Diaspora population we shall

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[1] In fact, our demographic study covers the post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora as a whole rather than its Russian-speaking segment for separate coverage of which we have insufficient appropriate data. The most serious obstacle is that the Israeli censuses of 1995 and 2008 collected no information on spoken languages. Thus, we have no data

use data from very different statistical sources collected from the many countries where these Jews live.[2]

Recent Mass Migration

For many years Soviet Jews, like all other citizens of the USSR, had no real possibility to emigrate in sizable numbers, but this situation changed in the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1988, a total of about 291,000 Soviet Jews and their relatives emigrated from the country, the majority of whom – approximately 165,000 – came to Israel (see Table 1).

However, only since 1989 did mass emigration in general, and in particular that to Israel, play a decisive role in the fate of the Jews in the FSU. According to estimated figures, between 1989 and 2009 more than 1.6 million (ex-) Soviet Jews and their relatives emigrated to countries outside the FSU. Approximately 61 percent of this movement (about 998,000) was directed toward Israel, whereas the rest went mostly to the United States and Germany. During this period the number of Jews and their relatives who emigrated from the FSU to the USA may be estimated at about 326,000 and, while the number emigrating to Germany was lower, even this reached 224,000.

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concerning Russian fluency for the most sizable share of this Diaspora. Moreover, in some parts of the FSU Russian fluency among Jews fell dramatically. For example, the last Azerbaidzhani census of 2009 shows that only a small minority of Jews (19.3 percent) in this country speak Russian fluently.

[2] For analysis of migration flows we assembled and used data from the statistical services of the FSU states and statistical information from the countries of destination of that migration (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics [Israel CBS], The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society [HIAS], German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [BAMF]), as well as international organizations (Council of Europe, Eurostat, International Organization for Migration [IOM]). We have also utilized some unpublished tabulations of Israel CBS. For other published and unpublished sources, see below.

Table 1. Emigration of Jews and Their Relatives from the FSU, 1970-2009, Thousands

Year	Total	Thereof to:			Percent of total to Israel
		Israel	USA[a]	Germany	
1970-1988	291	165	126	…	57
1989	72	12.9	56[b]	0.6	18
1990	205	185.2	6.5[b]	8.5	90
1991	195	147.8	35.2	8.0	76
1992	123	65.1	45.9	4.0	53
1993	127	66.1	35.9	16.6	52
1994	116	68.1	32.9	8.8	59
1995	114	64.8	21.7	15.2	57
1996	106	59.0	19.5	16.0	56
1997	99	54.6	14.5	19.4	55
1998	83	46.0	7.4	17.8	55
1999	99	66.8	6.3	18.2	67
2000	79	50.8	5.9	16.5	64
2001	60	33.6	4.1	16.7	56
2002	44	18.5	2.5	19.3	42
2003	32	12.4	1.6	15.4	39
2004	25	10.1	1.1	11.2	40
2005	18	9.4	0.9	6.0	52
2006	10	7.5	0.6	1.1	75
2007	10	6.5	0.3	2.5	65
2008	8	5.6	0.2	1.4	70
2009	9	6.8	0.2	1.1	76
1989-2009	1,634	998	326[c]	224	61
1970-2009	1,925	1,163	…	…	60

[a] Data for 1970-1988 include all destinations other than Israel for those who emigrated with Israeli visas; annual data for 1991-2009 cover only those immigrants who were assisted by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).
[b] Departures from the Soviet Union.
[c] Including migrants who were not assisted by HIAS.
Source: Mark Tolts, "After the Exodus: Post-Soviet Jewry in the Contemporary World," in V.A. Iontsev, ed., *International Migration: Economics and Politics* (Moscow: TEIS, 2006), p. 70 [updated].

This emigration peaked in 1990-1991, the last two years of severe crisis that preceded the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when about 400,000 Soviet Jews and their relatives emigrated outside the USSR; of these, 333,000 (83 percent) went to Israel. The rate of this great exodus has been even much higher than the mass Jewish

emigration from the Russian Empire around the turn of this century.[3] From 1992 to 1998, slightly more than half of those who emigrated to countries outside the FSU chose Israel. Only in 1999 did the share of this country among the emigrants jump to 67 percent when emigration to Israel again temporarily increased after the Russian financial crash in the previous year. On the other hand, since 2000 sizable economic growth has resumed in the FSU countries and emigration to Israel decreased rather steadily. These data clearly show the decisive role of the push factor in this migration movement. Our findings coincide with the generally decisive role of the push factor in the world Jewish migration movements.[4]

In the 1990s the USA introduced quotas which limited the possibility of ex-Soviet Jewish immigration to only those persons who had close relatives in the USA;[5] nevertheless, between 1991 and 1996 the USA ranked second as a receiving country. From 1997 to 2001, more emigrants went to Germany than to the USA, and Germany, which had in the beginning of the 1990s introduced a special program for Jewish immigration from the FSU, became the second-ranking receiving country.[6] After 11 September 2001, the USA ceased to be a major destination for ex-Soviet Jewish

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[3] Zvi Gitelman, "'From a Northern Country': Russian and Soviet Jewish Immigration to America and Israel in Historical Perspective, in Noah Lewin-Epstein, Yaacov Ro'i, and Paul Ritterband, eds., *Russian Jews on Three Continents* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 21-41.

[4] See, e.g.: Sergio DellaPergola, "International Migration of Jews," in Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzhak Sternberg, eds., *Transnationalism: Diasporas and the Advent of a New (Dis) Order* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), pp. 213-236.

[5] Fred A. Lazin, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics: Israel versus the American Jewish Establishment* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 270-279.

[6] The best publication based on the German official statistics concerning the recent FSU Jewish immigration, which data we used in our analysis here and hereafter, is: Sonja Haug unter Mitarbeit von Michael Wolf, *Soziodemographische Merkmale, Berufsstruktur und Verwandtschaftsnetzwerke jüdischer Zuwanderer: Projekt Zuwanderer aus Russland und anderen GUS-Staaten-Jüdische Zuwanderer* (Nürnberg: BAMF, 2007). Updated information presented in a general publication: German Federal Ministry of the Interior with German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, *Migrationsbericht 2009* (Berlin: BMI, 2010).

emigration. From 2002 to 2004 more emigrants went to Germany than to Israel, and Germany temporarily became the first-ranking receiving country. Since 2005, after Germany's admission policy became much more restrictive,[7] the number of Jews and their relatives who emigrated to Germany dropped dramatically, and Israel again became the first-ranking receiving country for ex-Soviet Jewish emigration. This country keeps its borders open unselectively to Jewish immigration in accordance with the Law of Return which was enacted in 1950 by the Israeli parliament (Knesset) and was amended in 1970 to include Jews, their children and grandchildren, and all respective spouses in the group of persons eligible for immigration to Israel (aliyah).

In 2009, a severe world crisis affected the economy of all FSU countries; however its impact on the Israeli economy was much more moderate. In this year the gross domestic product fell in all eleven FSU countries which are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) by 6.9 percent.[8] This decrease was even more pronounced in the principal country of concentration of Jews still in the FSU – the Russian Federation – where it was 7.8 percent.[9] In striking contrast, Israel's gross domestic product increased in 2009 by 0.8 percent.[10] The recent decrease of emigration from the FSU to Israel has been reversed, and numbers of migrants have increased sizably: in 2009 by 21 percent from FSU countries as a whole and by 25 percent from the Russian Federation alone. In this year Israel's share among all the migrants returned to the level of 1991 – 76 percent. The most recent reversed

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[7] See, e.g.: German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, *Evaluierungsbericht: Aufnahmeverfahren für jüdische Zuwanderer aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion* (Nürnberg: BAMF, 2009).

[8] These data do not include Baltic States and Georgia which are not CIS-members.

[9] The Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS in Figures: Annual Data [online data-base]; available at: http://www.cisstat.com/eng/index.htm.

[10] Israel CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010), p. 622.

dynamics again confirm the above-noted decisive role of the push factor in FSU migration movement.

Table 2. Emigration of Jews and Their Relatives from the FSU to Israel, the USA and Germany, by Republic (Country)/Region, 1970-1988 and 1989-2001, Thousands

Republic (country) /region	Total, 1970-1988[a]	To Israel, 1989-2001	To the USA, 1989-2001[b]	To Germany, 1989-2001[b]
Russian Federation	50.4	291.2	81.1	45.0
Ukraine	106.7	299.8	128.5	92.7
Belorussia/Belarus	13.8	70.4	34.4	6.1
Baltic States	27.3	21.4	8.0	7.2
Moldavia/Moldova	29.4	48.3	15.7	8.1
Transcaucasia	41.5	56.5	10.8	2.2
Central Asia	21.7	114.7	35.5	5.0
Unknown	0.0	18.8	0.0	0.0
Total	290.8	921.1	314.0	166.3

[a] Including all destinations for those who emigrated with Israeli visas.
[b] Estimate for republic/region is based on the known distribution of emigrants which was adjusted for the total number for the FSU in this period.
Sources: Mark Kupovetsky, "K otsenke chislennosti evreev i demograficheskogo potentsiala evreiskoi obshchiny v SSSR i postsovetskikh gosudarstvakh v 1989-2003 gg.," *Evroaziatskii evreiskii ezhegodnik 5765 (2004/2005) god* (Kiev: Dukh i Litera, 2005), p. 89; Mark Tolts, "Demography of the Jews in the Former Soviet Union: Yesterday and Today," in Zvi Gitelman, with Musya Glants and Marshall I. Goldman, eds., *Jewish Life After the USSR* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 178; Mark Tolts, "Migration since World War I," in Gershon D. Hundert, ed., *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 1438; Table 1 of this paper.

During the years of mass migration to all three main receiving destinations – 1989-2001 – Israel was the predominant receiver for each sending region. Among FSU emigrants to Israel the numbers and consequently the shares of those who originated in Ukraine and the Russian Federation were about the same – 33 and 32 percent, respectively.[11] Jews and their relatives from Transcaucasia and Central Asia were especially prone to migrate to Israel. The share of migrants from Central Asia

[11] It should be noted that in 1991-1994 and again since 2003 the number of migrants from the Russian Federation to Israel exceeded that from Ukraine, and during 1989-2010 more migrants arrived in Israel from the Russian Federation than from Ukraine: 32.5 and 32 percent of all FSU migrants, respectively.

among newcomers from the FSU in this country was the third – 12.5 percent. During 1989-2001 the recorded number of immigrants to Israel alone from each region (except the Baltic States) was higher than the entire emigration over the previous nineteen years (1970-1988) for that region (see Table 2).

According to estimates for 1989-2001, among those who emigrated to the USA the absolute number of Ukrainian Jews and their relatives was higher by 1.6 times than that from the Russian Federation; the absolute number of Ukrainian Jews and their relatives who emigrated to Germany was actually double the number of those from the Russian Federation. As a consequence, among FSU emigrants to the USA, and even more so to Germany, the share of those who originated from Ukraine was predominant – 41 and 56 percent, respectively; the share of those who emigrated to these two countries from the Russian Federation was much lower – 26 and 27 percent, respectively. Among migrants to Germany the total number of those who originated from Transcaucasia and Central Asia was very low and even equal to that of the Baltic States despite the tremendous discrepancy in the sizes of the Jewish populations in these regions at the start of this migration.

According to the results of the 1989 Soviet census, 31 percent of the Jews in Russia lived in Moscow, 19 percent in St Petersburg, and half in the provinces. The data show that the share of migrants to Israel from St. Petersburg among the total number of emigrants from the Russian Federation peaked in 1990 (31.7 percent), and from Moscow in 1991 (31.6 percent). By 1994 these shares had declined to 11.0 percent from Moscow and to 9.7 percent from St. Petersburg, and in 1998 they were as low as 5.0 percent for each city (Table 3). In the same period, the percentage of emigrants from the provinces (outside the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg) increased steadily until 1998. In 1990-1991, this share was about half; by 1994 it

reached 79 percent and in 1998 it was as high as 90 percent – much more than the percentage of these Jews among all Russian Jewry which was about half.

Table 3. Emigration from the Russian Federation to Israel, by Area, 1990-2009, Percent

Year	Total	Moscow	St. Petersburg	Provinces
1990	100	21.7	31.7	46.6
1991	100	31.6	13.7	54.7
1992	100	22.1	10.6	67.3
1993	100	14.1	9.5	76.4
1994	100	11.0	9.7	79.3
1995	100	9.0	8.8	82.2
1996	100	9.0	8.0	83.0
1997	100	6.6	5.9	87.5
1998	100	5.0	5.0	90.0
1999	100	7.8	7.9	84.3
2000	100	8.3	7.3	84.4
2001	100	7.8	7.1	85.1
2002	100	6.9	6.5	86.6
2003	100	8.0	6.8	85.2
2004	100	8.4	7.6	84.0
2005	100	10.9	8.4	80.7
2006	100	12.5	9.0	78.5
2007	100	18.0	8.2	73.8
2008	100	20.3	9.3	70.4
2009	100	22.0	10.8	67.2

Sources: Computation based on Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption data for 1990-1993; Rosstat data for 1994-1998; and data on Jewish Agency (Sohnut)-assisted flights of migrants to Israel for 1999-2009.

However, in the second half of the last decade the trend reversed. By 2009, Moscow's share in the migration movement from the Russian Federation to Israel increased to 22.0 percent, and it was 4.4 times more than its share in 1998 (5.0 percent); it had returned to its level of 1992. St. Petersburg's share increased to 10.8 percent in 2009, and it was higher than that in 1992 (10.6 percent). However, the great majority of emigrants to Israel from this country – two-thirds (67.2 percent) – originated from the Russian provinces (outside Moscow and St. Petersburg).

Among those Jews who emigrated from the Russian Federation to the Western countries in the 1990s, those who originated from Russia's provinces were a minority whereas Jews from the two capital cities – Moscow and St. Petersburg – made up the majority.[12] The sizable increase in the share of the two capital cities as a whole and from Moscow in particular in the migration movement from the Russian Federation to Israel in the second half of the last decade coincided with the above-noted dramatic decrease in the possibility of emigration to the Western countries, especially to Germany. Thus, we may surmise that the former was caused mainly by the latter.

Table 4. Age Distribution of Jews and Their Relatives Who Migrated from the FSU to Three Main Destinations, 1990/1991-2004, Percent

Age group	Israel, 1990-2004	USA, 1991-2004	Germany, 1991-2004
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-14	20.1	16.9	12.1[a]
15-29	24.3	18.7	15.0[a]
30-44	22.3	21.0	22.2
45-64	21.0	26.5	28.1
65+	12.3	16.9	22.6
Median age	33.6	40.2	45.5

[a] 0-17 and 18-29 age groups, respectively.
Sources: Computation based on Israel CBS data, Moscow IOM office data recorded for Jewish emigration to the USA, and the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) statistics on authorized applications.

The collected data show that age structures of the migrants to the three main destinations were very different (see Table 4). The youngest was the stream to Israel. The most numerous among these migrants were those aged 15-29 years – 24.3 percent, and only 12.3 percent of them were aged 65 and above. Among the migrants to the USA and Germany the most numerous age group was 45-64 years of age: 26.5 and 28.1 percent, respectively. The share of those aged 65 and above was much higher

[12] Mark Tolts, "Mass Aliyah and Jewish Emigration from Russia: Dynamics and Factors," *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2003), p. 80.

among them than among the migrants to Israel: 16.9 percent in the stream to the USA and 22.6 percent in that to Germany. At the same time, the share of children among migrants to Israel was higher than that in the streams to the USA and Germany. Children under 15 made up 20.1 percent of the migrants to Israel, whereas the more comprehensive age group under 18 numbered only 12.1 percent among migrants to Germany.

In 1990-2004, the median age of the migrants to Israel was 33.6 years. In 2009, when a new increase in FSU immigration to Israel occurred, it was even lower – 33.1 years.[13] In 1991-2004, this indicator was much higher for migrants to the USA and especially to Germany: 40.2 and 45.5 years, respectively. This very large differentiation in age structure of the migrants to the three main destinations should lead to many sizable discrepancies in their adaptation processes in the receiving countries and different prospects for future development of the three segments of the contemporary post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora.

Out-Migration from Israel of FSU Immigrants

Debates about the size of out-migration of Jews from Israel in general "tend to be more pervasive and heated than those linked with most other groups,"[14] and there are a lot of ungrounded statements concerning huge numbers of FSU out-migrants from Israel in particular.[15] Following a demographic approach to this problem,[16] we shall

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[13] Israel CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010*, p. 236.

[14] Steven Gold, "The Emigration of Jewish Israelis," in Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns* (Hanover, NH and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), p. 448.

[15] For example, Radio Tehran (Farsi Broadcast, January 29, 2008, 14:00 local time; communicated to this author by Vladimir Mesamed, an Israeli expert on Iranian affairs) stated: "Thousands of former citizens of the Soviet Union who moved to the Zionist state over the last 15-20 years, leave it monthly, returning to their old places of

base our analysis of out-migration from Israel of FSU immigrants on the data from official statistical sources. In order to evaluate these dynamics we shall study the appropriate Israeli statistics, as well as statistics of FSU countries.

Data collected by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel CBS) on the FSU immigrants who arrived since 1990 have provided us with the possibility to study their annual out-migration as a whole. These data are presented as numbers of immigrants who left Israel for all destinations in a designated year and stayed abroad continuously for one year or more (departures), and numbers of immigrants who returned to Israel in a designated year of all those who had previously left Israel for all destinations and stayed abroad continuously for one year or more (returns).[17]

According to these data, the number of departures was highest in 2002 and 2003 – 9,700 and 9,400, respectively. At the same time, in 2001 and 2002 the number of returns decreased to 1,200, whereas it was much higher in the previous two years, 1999 and 2000, – 1,500. Consequently, the annual balance of departures and returns was highest in 2002 – 8,500. By 2009, the last year for which we have Israel CBS data, the number of departures had dramatically decreased to 4,600. Concurrently, the

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residence, to the USA or to European countries. According to various estimates, the number of respective returnees fluctuates from 300 to 400 thousand."

[16] See: Segio DellaPergola, "Migration: Israeli Emigration," in Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, eds., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd ed. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Vol. 14, pp. 218 – 219.

[17] For details on the method for counting out-migration in Israeli statistics, see: Marina Sheps and Ahmad Hleihel, "The Challenge in Creating a Stock of Emigrants from Israel," Paper submitted by Israel Central Bureau of Statistics to Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics organized in collaboration with UNFPA (Edinburgh, Scotland, November 20-22, 2006). According to an assessment of organizations responsible for international statistical cooperation, "[t]his method has produced very promising results on emigrant stocks, thanks to the possibility of linking accurate and individual data on population stocks and flows" [United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Report of the Meeting of Group of Experts on Migration Statistics," Summary of Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics organized in collaboration with UNFPA (Edinburgh, Scotland, November 20-22, 2006), p. 4].

number of returns in this year was the highest – 2,200. As a result, in 2009 the annual balance of departures and returns decreased to its lowest size since 1991 – 2,400 (see Table 5).

Table 5. Departures from and Returns to Israel of FSU Immigrants Who Arrived in Israel Since 1990, Thousands

Year	Departures[a]	Returns[b]	Balance	Departures, per 1,000 FSU immigrants[a,c]
1990	0.4	0.0	0.4	6
1991	3.1	0.0	3.1	12
1992	5.8	0.1	5.7	16
1993	5.3	0.3	5.0	13
1994	5.3	0.5	4.8	11
1995	6.3	0.6	5.7	12
1996	6.2	0.9	5.3	11
1997	6.0	1.3	4.7	10
1998	6.2	1.2	5.0	10
1999	5.6	1.5	4.1	8
2000	6.9	1.5	5.4	9
2001	8.0	1.2	6.8	10
2002	9.7	1.2	8.5	12
2003	9.4	1.5	7.9	12
2004	8.7	1.9	6.8	11
2005	7.5	2.1	5.4	9
2006	7.4	1.9	5.5	9
2007	6.7	2.0	4.7	8
2008	6.0	1.9	4.1	8
2009	4.6	2.2	2.4	6
1990-2009	125.1	23.8	101.3	-

[a] Immigrants who left Israel for all destinations in the designated year and stayed abroad continuously for one year or more.
[b] Immigrants who returned to Israel in the designated year of all those who had previously left Israel for all destinations and stayed abroad continuously for one year or more.
[c] The rate is per 1,000 FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel since 1990 and were still living there by the designated year, not including children born in Israel; computed by the author [Mark Tolts, "Post-Soviet Jewish Demography, 1989-2004," in Zvi Gitelman and Yaacov Ro'i, eds., *Revolution, Repression and Revival: The Soviet Jewish Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p. 298 (updated)], except 1998-2001 [Israel CBS. *Immigrant Population from the Former Soviet Union: Demographic Trends, 1990-2001* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006), p. 146].
Source: Israel CBS data.

We can compute the annual rate of out-migration for the immigrants from the FSU as a whole who arrived in Israel since 1990 and were still living there for each year up to 2009. This indicator is based on the number of FSU immigrants who left Israel for all destinations in any given year and stayed abroad for more than one year. According to this data, the rate was highest in 1992, shortly after the greatest wave of FSU immigrants arrived in Israel during the previous two years, – 16 per 1,000. Over the following years, the rate decreased rather steadily, and in 1999 it fell to 8 per 1,000. By 2002, it had returned to the level of 1995 – 12 per 1,000 and was at the same level in 2003. Since 2004 the rate has been falling and by 2009, the last year for which we have data, it returned to its lowest level of 6 per 1,000.

For our study of the distribution of out-migration from Israel of FSU immigrants by country we shall rely on statistics from the receiving countries.[18] We assembled data on immigration from Israel to the Russian Federation and six European FSU countries (Table 6).[19] The most sizable FSU return migration flow has been to Russia. Immigration from Israel to the Russian Federation was registered in Russian statistics, and these data have been available since 1997 for analysis. We can use these statistics to study the relationship between return migration and economic dynamics.

[18] According to an official responsible for Israel CBS migration statistics, the national statistical service has no information on distribution of out-migration by country of destination, and therefore does not present respective data (this author's conversations with Marina Sheps).

[19] For Estonia we found no data on migration flows for the period before 2004 on national or international databases presented on the internet. However, migration from this country to Israel was the smallest among all FSU countries, rendering absence of Estonian data unimportant. For a review of international migration statistics in the CIS countries, see: Olga Chudinovskikh, "Comparability and Exchange of International Migration Statistics in the CIS Countries," Paper prepared for the Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland, March 3-5, 2008).

Table 6. Immigration from Israel to the Russian Federation and European FSU Countries, 1997-2009

Year	Russian Federation	Ukraine	Belarus	Moldova[a]	Latvia	Lithuania	Estonia
1997	1,626	1,045	…	…	51	…	…
1998	1,528	1,193	230	…	50	…	…
1999	1,425	1,098	214	9	38	12	…
2000	1,508	1,019	198	12	28	9	…
2001	1,373	898	207	38	36	77	…
2002	1,670	1,003	233	40	51	94	…
2003	1,808	1,164	361	68	58	94	…
2004	1,486	1,411	283	90	75	117	13
2005	1,004	1,281	227	94	58	88	14
2006	1,053	1,372	271	72	32	87	17
2007	1,094	1,381	297	131	47	59	22
2008	1,002	1,205	257	95	54	54	29
2009	861	885	268	109	15	33	18

[a] Immigrants with Israeli citizenship, 1999-2006; repatriates from Israel, 2007-2009.
Sources: Compilation based on data of the national statistical services of the respective FSU countries.

The statistics of Rosstat are based on the neighborhood passport office registration of immigrants who resumed residence status in Russia.[20] In 1997 the registered number of immigrants from Israel to the Russian Federation was 1,626. In 1999, a period of severe economic crisis in Russia, the number of immigrants from Israel decreased to about 1,400.

In 2003, in a period of recession in the Israeli economy, the registered number of immigrants to Russia from Israel reached its maximum to date – 1,808. However, in 2004 the number of immigrants decreased to less than 1,500. In 2005 the registered number of immigrants from Israel to Russia fell even more noticeably – to about 1,000. This coincided with the fact that the economic situation in Israel had improved since 2004.

[20] These data also include some people who previously emigrated to Israel from other parts of the FSU.

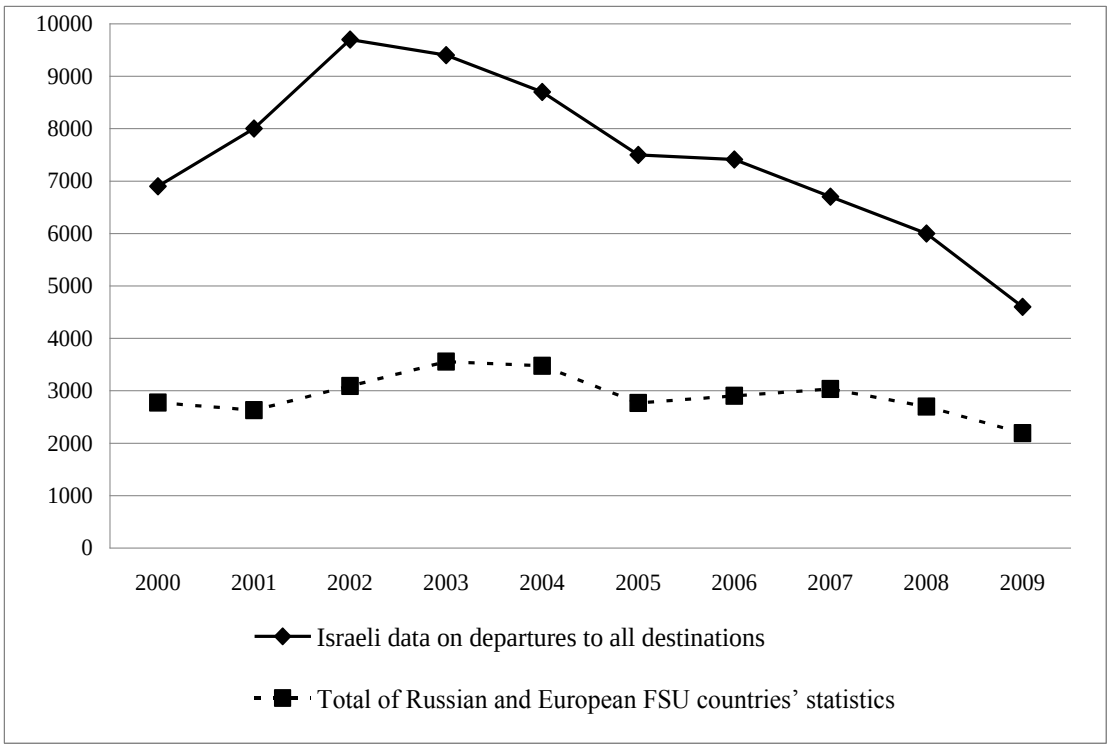
At the same time, even a short-term worsening of the situation in Israel (i.e., the recession caused by the second Lebanon war) led to an increase in the numbers of out-migrants from the country in 2006 and 2007 as shown by the Rosstat data: 1,053 and 1,094, respectively. However, in 2008 only 1,002 immigrants from Israel were registered by Rosstat. This coincided with the strong performance of the Israeli economy in this period. As noted above, in 2009 a world crisis affected the Russian economy even more severely than the CIS countries as a whole, but its impact on the Israeli economy was much more moderate. In this year the registered number of immigrants to Russia from Israel reached its minimum to date – 861. Thus, our findings based on the recent data confirm the previous analysis which found that emigration from Israel is largely dependent on the dynamics of the country's business cycle.[21]

Before 2005 in Ukraine the registered number of immigrants from Israel was consistently lower than that in the Russian Federation (see Table 6).[22] In 2004, the registered number of immigrants to Ukraine from Israel reached its maximum to date – about 1,400. However, in 2005 despite the euphoria after the victory of the Orange Revolution the registered number of these immigrants was lower. As in Russia, in Belarus the registered number of immigrants from Israel reached its maximum in 2003. At the same time, in Latvia and Lithuania these respective numbers reached their maximum in 2004. For the Russian Federation and European FSU countries as a whole the registered number of immigrants from Israel reached its peak in 2003 – about 3,600. This corresponds rather well with the dynamics of out-migration

[21] Cf. Sergio DellaPergola, *World Jewry Beyond 2000: The Demographic Prospects* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 1999), pp. 35, 37.
[22] According to the opinion of a noted expert on CIS migration statistics, the quality of Russian and Ukrainian registered immigrant data is about the same (this author's conversations with Olga Chudinovskikh).

according to the Israeli statistics (cf. Table 5; see Figure 1), which inevitably lagged behind statistics of the FSU countries. Of course, there were some immigrants from Israel who officially resumed residence status in the other FSU countries,[23] and we may conservatively guesstimate that in 2003 the total number of such immigrants from Israel for the FSU as a whole was almost 4,000.

Figure 1. Out-Migration of FSU Migrants from Israel, 2000-2009



A comparison of Israeli data for all destinations with statistics of Russia and European FSU countries as a whole clearly shows that a very sizable part of FSU out-migration from Israel went to Western countries (see Figure 1), mostly to North America. However, we have no appropriate statistical data for the USA. At the same time, according to the 2001 Canadian census, "8,030 individuals born in the Former

[23] In 2000, 80 immigrants were registered from Israel in Kazakhstan and 69 in Uzbekistan (IOM, *Migration Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 2001-2002 Review*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2002, pp. 96, 165).

Soviet Union … came from Israel to Canada after June 1996";[24] that is, about 1,600 per year. Therefore, in this period the average annual number of FSU immigrants from Israel to Canada was higher than that registered in the Russian Federation (cf. Table 6).

Of all FSU immigrants to Israel since 1990, 125,100 had left the country by the end of 2009 and stayed abroad continuously for one year or more. However, a sizable number (23,800) of these have since returned to Israel, and this return is continuing. Thus, at the end of 2009 the registered number of FSU immigrants who left Israel and had not returned to the country was actually 101,300 (see Table 5). In 1990-2009, about 985,100 immigrants arrived in Israel from the FSU. Thus, about 10 percent of this number left Israel without returning. Moreover, a sizable part of the out-migration of FSU immigrants from Israel is circular in character as is true for the entire out-migration from Israel.[25]

New Demography of FSU Migrants: Israeli Case

Even before the large-scale emigration of the 1970s, the balance of births to at least one Jewish parent and Jewish deaths had become negative in Russia and Ukraine. By the end of the 1980s, this balance was decidedly unfavorable in all the republics of the European part of the Soviet Union.[26] As noted above the most sizable group of FSU migrants went to Israel. Fortunately Israeli statistics, as a rare exception, contain

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[24] Charles Shahar and Howard Magonet, *The Jewish Community of Canada: 2001 Census Analysis*. Part 5: Immigration & Language (Toronto: UIA Federations Canada, 2005), p. 8.

[25] See: Yinon Cohen, "Circular Migration in Israel," Paper Prepared for The Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (Firenze, Italy, 2008).

[26] Mark Tolts, "Demography of the Jews in the Former Soviet Union: Yesterday and Today," in Zvi Gitelman, with Musya Glants and Marshall I. Goldman, eds., *Jewish Life After the USSR* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 192.

ample appropriate demographic data on these migrants which can be utilized in our analyses.[27] Absence of appropriate data provides no possibility for such detailed study of other segments of the Diaspora. Therefore, the analysis below is strongly focused on FSU migrants in Israel – not because of ideology but because of limitations imposed by the nature of available sources.

The Israeli Jewish population represents a mix of very different lifestyles and values.[28] Therefore, the demography of its components shows great differentiations.[29] The total fertility rate (TFR)[30] of the Jews in Israel is the highest among contemporary developed countries: in 1985-1989 it was 2.8 and it returned to the same level again in 2005-2009.[31] However, this is only the average. At one end of the spectrum are ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredi) who have a very high average fertility (TFR of about 6-7), whereas at the other end is the non-religious segment of the Jewish veteran population with a TFR of 2.0-2.2.[32] The non-religious majority of FSU immigrants is more similar to the latter.

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[27] Up to the mid-2000s appropriate data on births and deaths of those who immigrated from the FSU since 1990 were routinely processed and published by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in special publications [the last of which is: Israel CBS. *Immigrant Population from the Former Soviet Union: Demographic Trends, 1990-2001* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006)], as well as in the annual *Statistical Abstract of Israel*. Unfortunately, this practice was terminated and the data for the following years, utilized in our analysis, were specially processed.

[28] See, e.g.: Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn and Elihu Katz, "The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel," in Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns* (Hanover, NH and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), pp. 265-284.

[29] Sergio DellaPergola, "Actual, Intended, and Appropriate Family Size Among Jews in Israel," *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2009), pp. 127-152.

[30] The total fertility rate is the average number of children that a woman would bear in her lifetime if current age-specific fertility rates were to remain stable.

[31] Israel CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010*, p. 196.

[32] See: Dov Friedlander, "Fertility in Israel: Is the Transition to Replacement Level in Sight?" in United Nations Secretariat, Division of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Expert Group Meeting on Completing the Fertility Transition* (New York: United Nations, 2002), p. 9.

Analysis of birth dynamics shows that the Jews and their relatives who emigrated to Israel in the 1990s escaped the dramatic fertility reduction which was characteristic of the FSU population as a whole and Jews in particular. By 2001 their TFR was 1.56; that is, at the same level as that of Jews in the Soviet Union in 1988-1989.[33] In 1999-2005 the TFR among (post-) Soviet immigrants registered as Jews was rather steady at 1.7-1.8; that is, it was double the post-Soviet level of Jewish fertility in the FSU and approached the TFR level of Israeli non-religious veteran Jews (2.0-2.2) which was noted above. At the same time, according to our estimate, this indicator for (post-) Soviet immigrants registered as non-Jews in 2002-2005 was also steady and as low as approximately 1.2-1.3; thus, it was similar to the low level of post-Soviet Slavic populations in their home countries.

Actually the most acute demographic problem in most of the contemporary FSU countries, especially in Russia, is mortality; the total Russian population has the lowest life expectancy for males among all the developed countries. A comparison of Jewish life expectancy at age 15 in the Soviet Union (56.8 years for males and 60.1 years for females) and Israel (60.1 years for males and 63.6 years for females) at the onset of the recent mass emigration shows a sizable differentiation between them: the discrepancy for both males and females was more than three years.[34] In 2000-2003, life expectancy at the same age for FSU immigrants in Israel reached 61.0 for males and 67.0 for females.[35] This indicator for FSU immigrant females was very close to all Jewish females in the country (67.4 years in 2000-2004), however for FSU

[33] For detailed analysis of FSU immigrants' TFR dynamics and differentiation, see: Mark Tolts, "Demograficheskie izmeneniia sredi postsovetskikh migrantov v Izraile," *Diaspory/Diasporas*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2009), p. 99-102.
[34] Ibid, p. 104.
[35] Jordis J. Ott, Ari M. Paltiel and Heiko Becher, "Noncommunicable Disease Mortality and Life Expectancy in Immigrants to Israel from the Former Soviet Union: Country of Origin Compared with Host Country," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (2009), p. 24.

immigrant males, despite the pronounced increase, it was still substantially lower than for all Jewish males (63.5 years in the same period).

Thus, positive fertility and mortality dynamics coupled with the favorable age structure of the FSU immigrants to Israel (see above) led to a decisively positive balance of births and deaths. Among all FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel since 1990, 166,400 births and 113,300 deaths were recorded which resulted in a balance of 53,100 in 1990-2009. By 2009, the last year for which we have data, the positive annual balance of births and deaths among them was as high as 4,100 (see Table 7).

Table 7. Balance of Births and Deaths among FSU Immigrants Who Arrived in Israel Since 1990, Thousands

Year	Births	Deaths	Balance
1990	0.7	0.4	0.3
1991	2.4	1.85	0.55
1992	3.4	2.7	0.7
1993	4.6	3.3	1.3
1994	5.8	4.0	1.8
1995	6.75	4.6	2.15
1996	7.5	5.0	2.5
1997	8.2	5.4	2.8
1998	8.9	5.9	3.0
1999	9.3	6.3	3.0
2000	10.1	6.7	3.4
2001	10.3	6.9	3.4
2002	10.6	7.2	3.4
2003	11.1	7.25	3.85
2004	10.9	7.4	3.5
2005	11.0	7.6	3.4
2006	11.2	7.6	3.6
2007	10.3	7.8	2.5
2008	11.6	7.8	3.8
2009	11.7	7.6	4.1
1990-2009	166.4	113.3	53.1

Source: Israel CBS data.

Comparison of components of demographic dynamics among FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel since 1990 shows that since 2004 the number of births has

exceeded the volume of immigration from the FSU as a factor of their numerical increase (cf. Tables 7 and 8). In 2006-2008 the annual positive vital balance of the immigrants was higher than the volume of their net migration (Table 8). In 2009, the last year for which we have data, economic crises caused a sizable increase of immigration to Israel from the FSU (see above), and in this year, despite the continued increase of positive vital balance, the net migration again became – possibly temporarily – the leading factor of demographic dynamics among FSU immigrants.

Table 8. Components of Demographic Dynamics among FSU Immigrants Who Arrived in Israel Since 1990,[a] 2000-2009, Thousands

Year	Immigration from the FSU to Israel	Balance of departures from and returns to Israel of FSU immigrants	Net migration of FSU immigrants	Vital balance of FSU immigrants in Israel
2000	50.8	5.4	45.4	3.4
2001	33.6	6.8	26.8	3.4
2002	18.5	8.5	10.0	3.4
2003	12.4	7.9	4.5	3.85
2004	10.1	6.8	3.3	3.5
2005	9.4	5.4	4.0	3.4
2006	7.5	5.5	2.0	3.6
2007	6.5	4.7	1.8	2.5
2008	5.6	4.1	1.5	3.8
2009	6.8	2.4	4.4	4.1

[a] Not including children born in Israel.
Sources: Tables 1, 5 and 7.

In 2002, the share of the FSU immigrants who arrived since 1990 (including children born to the immigrant mothers in Israel) reached the highest level among total Jews and non-Arab others in Israel – 16.8 percent (see Table 9). By 2009 this share had decreased to 15.4 percent. The most sizable share of FSU immigrants was in the oldest age group 65 and above. After 2002 the increase of the percentage of

FSU immigrants continued only in these oldest ages, and in 2005 their share at those ages was as high as 23.5 percent. However, in 2009 the share of the FSU immigrants in the oldest age group of 65 and above had decreased to 21.4 percent.

Table 9. Percentage of Immigrants from the FSU Who Arrived since 1990[a] among Total Jews and non-Arab Others in Israel, by Age group

Age group	1999	2002	2005	2009
Total	15.7	16.8	16.5	15.4
0-14	11.4	11.8	11.4	11.1
15-29	14.8	15.9	15.5	14.1
30-44	17.3	18.5	17.8	16.0
45-64	18.5	19.1	18.7	18.2
65+	20.3	22.5	23.5	21.4

[a] Including children born to the immigrant mothers in Israel.
Sources: Computation based on Israel CBS data.

The percentage of the FSU immigrants was lowest in the young ages. Even in 2002 their share in the ages under 15 was only 11.8 percent and it decreased to 11.1 percent in 2009. The FSU immigrants despite their demographic revitalization in Israel have the lowest level of fertility in the country. Fast growth of other segments of the Israeli population led to steady decrease of the immigrants' share in the total population and this process will continue.

Table 10. Sex Ratio among Immigrants from the FSU Who Arrived since 1990 and Veteran Israelis, by Age Group, 2002

Age Group	Number of males per 100 females in the same age group	
	Immigrants from the FSU	Veteran Israelis[a]
20-24	101	104
25-29	95	104
30-34	92	101
35-39	92	98
40-44	85	95
45-49	82	94
50-54	82	95
55-59	81	95

[a] Jews and non-Arab others, excluding the total of those who immigrated since 1990.
Sources: Computation based on Israel CBS data.

FSU immigrants and veteran Israelis were characterized by rather different sex ratios in the most marriageable ages. Among the immigrants, females outnumbered males from age 25, and after 40 the sex imbalance became noticeably pronounced: 85 or fewer males per 100 females (see Table 10). However, in the FSU Jewish population in general and in Russia in particular males outnumbered females in the most marriageable ages and male shortage among FSU immigrants in Israel is the result of a selective propensity to migrate by sex.[36]

At the same time, among veteran Israelis, males outnumbered females in all ages under 35, and in more advanced ages the sex imbalance is much more moderate than among FSU immigrants: 94-98 males per 100 females. These differences produce demographic ground for the spread of mixed marriages between the two groups in the Israeli population, and female FSU immigrants according to the situation in the "marriage market" should inevitably be more prone to marry outside their origin group. In fact, according to a study based on the data of the ongoing Labor Force Survey carried out by the Israel CBS, among the FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel in 1989-1991 and were then aged 25-35, during 1989-2009 only 10 percent of the male immigrants married a veteran Israeli, whereas as many as 36 percent of the female immigrants did so.[37]

The positive demographic dynamics of FSU immigrants in Israel is an exception in the contemporary post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora. For a worldwide estimate of the size and distribution of this Diaspora population we should study demographic

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[36] See: Mark Tolts, "Mixed Marriage and Post-Soviet Aliyah," in Shulamit Reinharz and Sergio DellaPergola, eds., *Jewish Intermarriage Around the World* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction, 2009), pp. 89-104.

[37] Sarit Godner-Cohen, Zvi Eckstein and Yoram Weiss, "The Immigrations from the Former Soviet Union to Israel: Evidence and Interpretation," Paper presented at NORFACE Migration Network Conference (University College London, April 6-9, 2011), p. 10.

developments in other countries to which FSU Jews migrated with their relatives, as well as those in the FSU for Jews who remained there.

Worldwide Size and Distribution

The 1970 Soviet census, taken about the time that the mass Jewish emigration began, showed that there were about 2.15 million "core" Jews in the Soviet Union. To evaluate their subsequent dynamics we must estimate the respective balance of births and deaths, and additions to the "core" Jewish population as a result of ethnic re-identification in the process of migration. All other possible dynamic factors are not as influential as these two, including ethnic reaffiliation of people of mixed origin remaining in the FSU. Based on this approach we guesstimated that at the beginning of 2004 there were about 1.6 million self-identified "core" Jews worldwide who had originated from the FSU.[38]

For the period of 1970-2003 the negative vital balance of this population was tentatively guesstimated at about -700,000. For an update of our previously guesstimated figure of the worldwide number of the "core" Jewish population originating from the FSU for the beginning of 2010, we surmise that in the following six years the negative vital balance of this population was about 60,000 which gave us -760,000 for the total 40 year period of 1970-2009.

However, vital decrease was partially offset by inclusions in the "core" Jewish population as a result of ethnic re-identification in the process of migration. This may be tentatively figured based on the discrepancy between the percentages of Jews among the immigrants to Israel according to the Russian/FSU and Israeli definitions.

[38] Mark Tolts, "The Post-Soviet Jewish Population in Russia and the World," *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe*, No. 1 (52) (2004), pp. 52-58.

Israeli official statistics are based on the Ministry of Interior's Population Register whose definition of "who is a Jew" is according to *halakhic* (Jewish religious) criteria. At the same time, "Jews" according to the official Russian/FSU definition, were only those emigrants (aged 16 and over) who were designated as such in their internal passports. For children without passports, ethnicity was defined on the basis of the parents' ethnicity. If the parents belonged to different ethnic groups, preference was given to the mother's ethnicity, although even in the post-Soviet era non-Jewish ethnic affiliation was clearly preferred by the offspring of such couples.[39]

Table 11**.** Percentage of Jews among Migrants to Israel from the Russian Federation and the Entire FSU, 1990-2009

Year	Russian Federation		Entire FSU	Year	Russian Federation		Entire FSU
	Rosstat data[a]	Israel CBS data[b]	Israel CBS data[b]		Rosstat data[a]	Israel CBS data[b]	Israel CBS data[b]
1990		94	96	2000	27	47	45
1991		87	91	2001	25	44	43
1992	64[c]	82	84	2002	24	43	41
1993	60	82	82	2003	(24)	45	43
1994	58	77	77	2004	(22)	45	41
1995	53	73	72	2005	(21)	46	43
1996	49	67	67	2006	(20)	46	45
1997	36	59	59	2007	(22)	48	46
1998	31	54	53	2008		44	45
1999	31	49	49	2009		43	41

[a] Of the emigrants whose ethnicity was known; for 1990-1991 and 2008-2009 the data on ethnicity of the migrants were not processed by Rosstat. In 2003-2007 the registered number of Jews among the migrants was lower than that of people of unknown ethnicity.
[b] Of the immigrants whose ethnicity/religion was known by mid-2011.
[c] Second half of the year.
Sources: Computation based on Rosstat data and Israel CBS data.

[39] Cf. A. Volkov, "Etnicheski smeshannye sem'i v SSSR: dinamika i sostav," *Vestnik statistiki*, No. 8 (1989), p. 8-24; Mark Tolts, "The Jewish Population of Russia, 1989-1995," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, No. 3 (31) (1996), p. 15.

One consequence of the post-Soviet Jewish vital crisis and of rising mixed marriage is the recent pronounced decrease in the share of Jews among the FSU immigrants to Israel, according to official Israeli data: 96 percent in 1990, 72 percent in 1995, 45 percent in 2000 and 41 percent in 2009. These proportions were almost the same as those among the immigrants from the Russian Federation. According to official Russian data, the proportion of Jews among all those who emigrated to Israel fell from 64 percent in the second half of 1992 to 53 percent in 1995, 27 percent in 2000 and 22 percent in 2007, the last year for which such data were processed by Rosstat (Table 11). The different standards for a definition of Jewishness in Israel and the FSU explain the divergence in the respective percentages.

Obviously some of the immigrants, who were considered Jews according to their former Soviet internal passports (as well as in population censuses), that is, the offspring of a Jewish male and non-Jewish female, are counted as non-Jews by Israeli statistics, which are based on *halakha*.[40] Nonetheless, many more immigrants are counted as Jews in Israel than were registered as such in the FSU, and many of these had never identified themselves as Jews before.

By the start of 2004 based on the data above, the number of such immigrants was guesstimated, as we now understand based on new information, too conservatively at about 150,000; however, we noted that it may be higher. Moreover, we based our previous analysis on rather partial sources concerning the role of formal conversions to Judaism in Israel and supposed that this was rather minor. However, by the start of 2010 the total number of formal conversions among FSU immigrants of

[40] According to Jewish law (*halakha*), a Jew is defined as a person born of a Jewish mother or one who converts to Judaism through a formal religious procedure.

the last wave to Judaism reached about 19,000.[41] Therefore, the total number of accessions to the "core" Jewish population (including formal conversions to Judaism in Israel) in connection with migration may be tentatively guesstimated at about 210,000. This recognition of Judaism /Jewish ethnicity of some individuals who had previously neither identified themselves nor been seen by FSU authorities as Jews somewhat slowed the decline of the "core" Jewish population originating from the FSU, and contributed some gains to the Jewish population in Israel.

Table 12. Dynamics of the "Core" Jewish Population Originating from the FSU, 1970-2010, Millions

Dynamics	Number
"Core" Jewish population in the Soviet Union, 1970	2.15
Vital balance, 1970–2009[a]	–0.76
Accession to "core" Jewish population in connection with migration[b]	+0.21
"Core" Jewish population originating from the FSU, 2010	1.6

[a] "Effectively Jewish" births minus Jewish deaths. "Effectively Jewish" births are newborns who are identified as Jews.
[b] Mostly in Israel; figure based on the discrepancy between percentages of Jews among immigrants to Israel according to Russian and Israeli definitions (see Table 11), including also formal conversion to Judaism in Israel (about 19,000), see text.
Sources: 1970 Soviet census; author's guesstimates.

Thus, at the beginning of 2010, according to our updated guesstimates which use the 1970 Soviet census as a baseline, there were about 1.6 million "core" Jews worldwide who had originated from the FSU (see Table 12). On that date in the FSU, the number of remaining "core" Jews was estimated at about 330,000, of whom 205,000 lived in the Russian Federation and 71,500 were in Ukraine. The October 2009 census of Belarus recorded 12,900 Jews and we adjusted this figure upward to 13,300 to include some people of unknown/unstated ethnicity (see Table 13).

[41] According to data-base of the Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption whose information originated from the data of the competent governmental sources (communicated to this author by a Ministry official).

Table 13. Distribution of the "Core" Jewish Population in the FSU, by Country, 2010, Thousands

Country[a]	Number	Country	Number
Entire FSU	330	Kazakhstan	3.6[d]
Russian Federation	205	Lithuania	3.2[c]
Ukraine	71.5	Georgia	3.2
Belarus	13.3[b]	Estonia	1.8[c]
Latvia	9.7[c]	Kirgizstan	0.6[d]
Azerbaidzhan	9.1[d]	Turkmenistan	0.2
Uzbekistan	4.5	Tadzhikistan	0.0
Moldova	4.1	Armenia	0.0

[a] FSU countries are listed in the order of the number of "core" Jews.
[b] According to the data of the October 2009 census of Belarus (12,900) adjusted upward to include some people of unknown/unstated ethnicity.
[c] According to the national register.
[d] According to the data of the 2009 national census.
Sources: Author's estimates.

Ample data on the demographic history and the contemporary situation of the Jews in the FSU have been collected which clearly show their demographic decline.[42] However, wishful thinking is not rare among some segments of the post-Soviet Jewish communities and so their demographic collapse is often denied. For the Russian Federation alone highly inflated figures of the "real" number of the Jewish population of one or two million are in circulation, and there are even fantastic figures as high as ten million.[43] At the same time, the demographic decline of this Jewry has been confirmed by the recent decrease of numbers of pupils in Jewish schools and the contingents serviced by Jewish charities there.[44]

[42] See, e.g.: Tolts, "Demography of the Jews in the Former Soviet Union: Yesterday and Today," pp. 173-206.
[43] See, e.g.: [Anonymous], "Evrei "vozvrashchaiutsia v Rossiiu," published on BBC Russian Service website (October 25, 2004); available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/russian/russia/newsid_3952000/3952609.stm. See also: Anna Rudnitskaya, "Fishing for Jews in Russia's Muddy Waters," JTA (February 23, 2010); available at http://www.jta.org/news/article/2010/02/23/1010779/fishing-for-jews-in-russias-muddy-waters.
[44] See, e.g.: Zvi Gitelman, "Do Jewish Schools Make a Difference in the Former Soviet Union?" *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2007), 377-398; Betsy

An opposite – positive – demographic situation is characteristic of FSU immigrants in Israel (see above). According to the Israel CBS data based on the last 2008 census, by mid-2009 there were in Israel 892,400 Jews born in the FSU, including their Israeli-born children.[45] However, among these offspring 45,000 were born in Israel before 1970, and thus should be excluded from our evaluation. Clearly these are children of an (unknown) number of Jews born to Russian and Soviet immigrants who arrived in the country before 1970, a long time ago. Of course, if they are still alive these veteran immigrants are also included in the above-noted total figure. Moreover, some of their children were born after 1970 as well. At the same time, Israel CBS provides no data for the third generation, mostly grandchildren of the immigrants of the 1970s, and this factor somewhat offsets the above-noted exclusions. Thus, our guesstimated figure for Israel of less than 0.85 million is quite conservative (see Table 14).

Table 14. Distribution of the "Core" Jewish Population Originating from the FSU, by Country, 2010, Millions

Country	Number
Israel	less than 0.85
FSU	0.33
USA	0.3
Germany	0.1
Total	1.6[a]

[a] Including other much smaller ex-Soviet Jewish immigrant communities, see text.

In the USA the guesstimated number of 0.3 million is only a small fraction of the total "core" Jewish population, which numbered 5.275 million.[46] Our figure for

Gidwitz, "Post-Soviet Jewry on the Cusp of Its Third Decade – Part 2," *Changing Jewish Communities*, No. 69 (15 June 2011).

[45] Israel CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010*, p. 156.

[46] Cf. Sergio DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 2010," *Current Jewish Population Reports*, No. 2 (2010), p. 32.

the "core" Jewish population in the USA originating from the FSU remained the same as was earlier guesstimated for 2004. After September 11, 2001, the USA ceased to exist as a major destination for post-Soviet Jewish emigration (see above). The balance of births and deaths is negative among USA Jewry as a whole.[47]

In 1990-2009, 102,533 FSU immigrants joined Germany's Jewish communities.[48] Of course, there are some "core" Jews who are unaffiliated with any official Jewish institutions. At the same time, due to the old age structure of FSU immigrants to Germany (see Table 4), the balance of births and deaths among the FSU immigrants there was decisively negative. These two factors somewhat offset each other. In Germany we guesstimated the number of the "core" Jews originating from the FSU at about 100,000. It is a predominant fraction of the total German "core" Jewish population, which numbered 119,000 in 2010.[49]

Our analysis shows that today Israel, the USA, Germany, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are the main centers of concentration of the Jews originating from the FSU. To this we may add information on two other overseas countries. The 2001 census shows 6,404 Jews from the FSU in Australia.[50] And according to an estimate cited in our previous overview, in 2004 in Canada there were about 25,000 "core" Jews who were born in the FSU and immigrated there since 1970.[51] This figure includes any children who were born after emigration.

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[47] DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 2010," p. 41.

[48] ZWST, *Mitgliederstatistik der jüdischen Gemeinden und Landesverbände in Deutschland für das Jahr 2009* (Frankfurt am Main: Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland, 2010), S. 3.

[49] Cf. DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 2010," p. 49.

[50] Suzanne D. Rutland, "Jews from the Former Soviet Union in Australia: Assimilating or Maintaining Jewish Identities?" *Journal of Jewish Identities*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2011), p. 68.

[51] Estimated by Robert J. Brym; cited in: Tolts, "The Post-Soviet Jewish Population in Russia and the World," pp. 57-58. Unfortunately, this figure based on the data of the 2001 Canadian census was not updated because the next census of 2006 did not

Finally, let us try to estimate the total number and distribution of the post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora population in the world. According to Israel CBS data, there were 926,500 FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel since 1990 and were still there at the end of 2009 (including their children born in Israel). In the previous twenty years, from 1970 to 1989, about 178,000 immigrants arrived in the country from the Soviet Union (see Table 1). Although some of these subsequently emigrated, this decrease was somewhat offset by their decisively positive vital balance. Moreover we have included in our evaluation also the third generation of FSU immigrants, their grandchildren, for which Israel CBS provides no data. Thus, we arrived at a figure of more than 1.1 million for Israel (see Table 15).

Table 15. Distribution of the Post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora Population,[a] by Country, 2010, Millions

Country	Number
Israel	more than 1.1
FSU	less than 1.0
USA	less than 0.5
Germany	0.2
Others	0.1
Total	2.9

[a] For Israel, FSU immigrants, their children and grandchildren. For all other countries, mostly people eligible to immigrate to Israel according to the Law of Return.

According to an authoritative guesstimate, in 2007 in the FSU there were about one million people eligible to immigrate to Israel according to the criteria of the Israeli Law of Return.[52] Our figure for 2010 is less than one million. Since 1989 more than 220,000 FSU Jews and their relatives migrated to Germany. Their vital balance

provide needed information for such an estimate (Robert J. Brym, Electronic mail to this author, April 4, 2011).

[52] Sergio DellaPergola, *Jewish Demographic Policies: Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora* (Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Institute, 2011), pp. 116-117.

was decisively negative and some of these people subsequently re-emigrated. Our estimate for Germany is about 0.2 million.

Since 1970 about 450,000 FSU Jews and their relatives migrated to the USA (see Table 1). We may surmise that during this period about 50,000 people who had first migrated from the FSU to Israel joined them.[53] As noted above, the balance of births and deaths is negative among USA Jewry as a whole. Thus, our guesstimated figure for the USA is less than 0.5 million.

All in all, our total number of the post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora population in the world is guesstimated at 2.9 million. This includes, besides the figures mentioned for Israel, the FSU, the USA and Germany, about 0.1 million people in all other countries.

Concluding Remarks

The results of our study allow us to better understand some Jewish aspects of this Diaspora. The difference between the estimated figure according to the "core" definition by self-identity (1.6 million) and the total number of people belonging to the post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora (2.9 million) is instructive. In countries outside Israel many people included in this difference of 1.3 million are practicing Christians, even without Jewish parentage. Moreover, some scholars suppose the formation of a paradoxical Russian Orthodox Christian Jewish self-identification, especially among baptized Jews in Russia.[54]

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[53] On this group, see: Uzi Rebhun and Lilach Lev Ari, *American Israelis: Migration, Transnationalism, and Diasporic Identity* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), p. 31.

[54] See: Elena Nosenko-Stein, "Aliens in an Alien World: Paradoxes of Jewish–Christian Identity in Contemporary Russia," *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2010), pp. 19-41; see also: Anna Shternshis, "Kaddish in a Church: Perceptions

At the same time, our analysis clearly shows the sizable additions to the "core" Jewish population as a result of the official recognition of Judaism/Jewish ethnicity (and self re-identification) of many immigrants in Israel who had previously neither identified themselves nor been seen by FSU authorities as Jews. In Israel all FSU immigrant children are educated in Jewish schools, and the great majority of the non-Jewish segment of these immigrants is not prone to Christianity. In the first decade of the recent migration wave, 1990-1999, in this country only a small minority of the FSU newcomers who were classified as non-Jews chose to be registered as Christians – 8,700.[55] In the following decade, 2000-2009, this number was as low as 2,100. The great majority of FSU immigrants classified in Israel as non-Jews preferred to be registered with "no religion". They may be seen as a potential increment to the Israeli Jewish population.

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of Orthodox Christianity among Moscow Elderly Jews in the Early Twenty-First Century**,"** *Russian Review*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (2007), pp. 273–294.

[55] Mark Tolts, "Jewish Demography of the Former Soviet Union," in Sergio DellaPergola and Judith Even, eds., *Papers in Jewish Demography 1997* (Jerusalem: The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University; World Union of Jewish Studies; Association for Jewish Demography and Statistics, 2001), p. 117.