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Les migrations des juifs russes dans l'ère post-soviétique

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NOTE DE RECHERCHE

Russian Jewish Migration in the Post-Soviet Era

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Since 1989 mass emigration has played a leading role in the rapid demographic decline of the Jews in all countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU). This migration and the demographic decline of Russia's Jewry have a specific character.

Comparing the Jewish population decline in the Russian Federation with the much faster drop in other FSU countries will allow us to study the process of concentration of remaining FSU Jews in Russia. We shall analyze the dynamics of Jewish emigration from Russia as well as its directions. The place of Russia's Jews in the redistribution of those Jews who have remained in the FSU will be indicated by their migratory balance. Demographic selectivity of the recent Jewish mass emigration from the Russian Federation and its consequences for the Jews remaining there will be examined. Finally, the most recent dramatic increase of Jewish emigration after Russia's financial crash of August 1998 will be depicted.

SHRINKAGE OF THE JEWISH POPULATION

Since 1989, the situation of the Jews has changed dramatically in the FSU. On the one hand, official governmental anti-semitism was abolished, even though it was replaced by grass roots anti-semitic activity. After the break-up of the USSR, Jews in the successor states received rights, and activities to build up the communities were initiated with the help of world Jewry.

On the other hand, together with the total population, the Jews experienced general political instability and crises, or even wars in some parts of the FSU, as well

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as critical ecological situations (consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe and others). All of these exacerbated the already severe difficulties caused by the problems of economic transition in all the FSU countries. At the same time, after the long period of Soviet oppression, free emigration was allowed. Consequently many Jews were « pushed » in great masses to Israel and to the West.

Given these conditions, a new demographic stage characterized by a rapid numerical decline of the Jews in the FSU began, accompanied by a simultaneous concentration of the remaining Jewish population in Russia.

The numbers of Jews according to Soviet census data have been entirely dependent on the self-declaration of respondents. Conceptually, these numbers correspond to what has been defined as the « core » Jewish population (see : DellaPergola, 1993 : 277). The « core » Jewish population is the aggregate of all those who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or, in the case of children, are identified as such by their parents ; it does not include persons of Jewish origin who report another ethnic nationality in the census. A majority of scholars agree that Soviet / Russian census figures on Jewish ethnic nationality for adults correspond very closely with « legal » ethnic nationality as recorded in internal passports. A broader definition, that of the « enlarged » Jewish population, can also be empirically measured, and includes « core » Jews along with their non-Jewish household members (*ibid.*). In the FSU today this group is significantly larger than the « core » Jewish population (see below). However, even the « enlarged » Jewish population is smaller than the total population eligible for immigration to Israel (*aliyah*) according to the Israeli Law of Return which includes Jews, their children and grandchildren, as well as all their respective spouses.

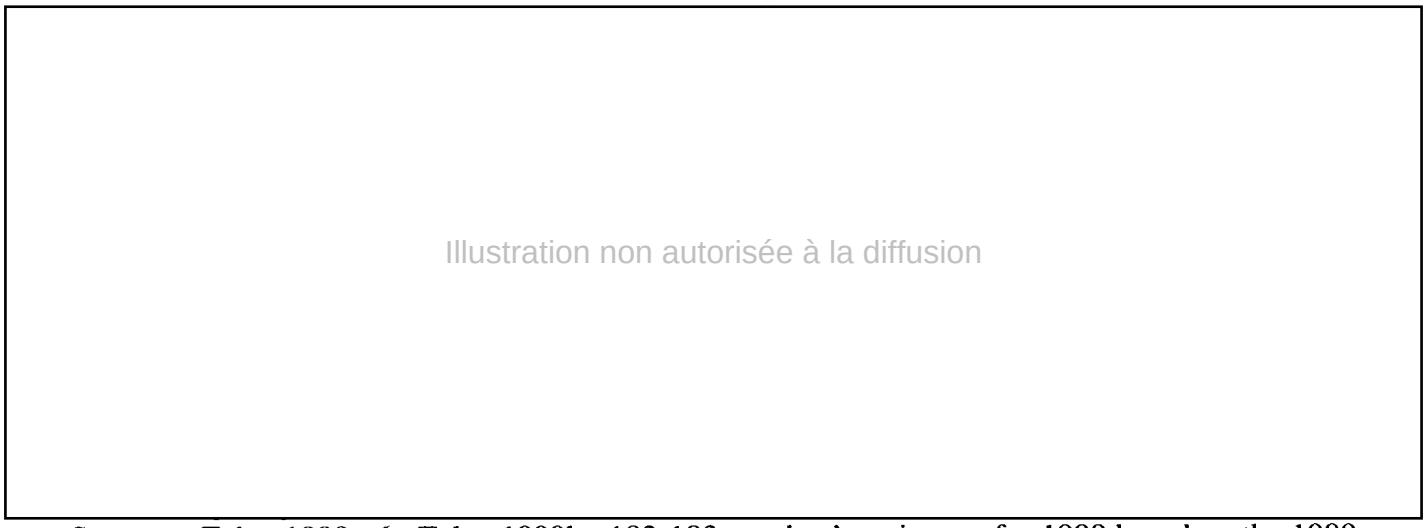
The last Soviet census was in 1989, and thus we have a good base according to which we can measure Jewish population decrease during the recent mass emigration. The first post-Soviet Russian microcensus, which encompassed 5 per cent of the total population as of 14 February 1994, presented a new base for the estimate of the « core » Jewish population, though only for the Russian Federation itself (see : Tolts, 1997b : 151). For subsequent years the estimated number of the « core » Jewish population in Russia has been based on this microcensus sample and subsequent vital and migration statistics.

The recent Jewish population decline has been greater than in the entire three decades between 1959 and 1989 (Table 1)[1] During the first ten years of the recent mass

1 In Soviet censuses, not all Mountain Jews were recorded as Jews ; others were listed separately as « Tats ». By labeling them in this way, the Soviet authorities sought to separate this small part of Jews (according to the 1989 census, there were 19,400 « Tats » recorded in the Russian Federation) from the rest of the Jewish people (Zand, 1991 : 424-426). Recently, however, they have emigrated to Israel in large numbers as Jews under the Israeli Law of Return. The estimates here include the latter. Throughout this paper, the term « Russian Jews » applies only to those Jews living in the former Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) of the Soviet Union and subsequently in the Russian Federation, as Russia is officially known today.

emigration, the number of « core » Jews in the Russian Federation decreased from 570,000 in 1989 to 310,000 in 1999, or by 46 per cent (that is, more than between 1959 and 1989, when the rate of decrease in the republic was the same as in the Soviet Union as a whole – 35 per cent). The absolute number of this decrease in Russia (260,000) was about one-sixth less than that between 1959 and 1989 (310,000).

Table 1 : Dynamics of the « core » Jewish population* in the Russian Federation and the entire FSU, 1959-1999



Sources : Tolts, 1998 : 6 ; Tolts, 1999b : 182-183 ; author's estimates for 1999 based on the 1989 Soviet census, the 1994 Russian microcensus, censuses of FSU countries, vital and migration statistics.

During the recent mass emigration the geography of the Jewish population decline within the Russian Federation shows great regional differences. For the purposes of analysis, Russia's Jewry can be divided into three large groups by area : the Jews of Moscow, St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), and Jews of the provinces. According to the data of the 1989 census, 176,000 (31 per cent) of the « core » Jews in Russia lived in Moscow, 107,000 (19 per cent) were in St. Petersburg and 287,000 (50 per cent) were in the provinces.

In all three groups the recent decrease was greater than in the entire three decades between 1959 and 1989. During the decade since 1989 the decrease of the « core » Jewish population was decisively higher in St. Petersburg (61 per cent) than in Moscow (39 per cent), or in the provinces (44 per cent). Consequently, in this period the share of St. Petersburg's Jews among Russia's Jewry decreased dramatically. According to our estimate, at the beginning of 1999 about 108,000 (35 per cent) of the « core » Jews in the Russian Federation lived in Moscow, approximately 42,000 (13 per cent) in St. Petersburg, and 160,000 (52 per cent) in the provinces.

For most of the FSU countries other than the Russian Federation, post-1989 Jewish population estimates may be computed based only on the 1989 Soviet census figures and subsequent vital and migration statistics. Comparison of the numerical

decline of the Jewish population in the Russian Federation and the other FSU countries shows much greater decrease in the latter than in Russia.

Between 1989 and 1999, the number of « core » Jews in the FSU outside the Russian Federation dropped by 75 per cent – from 910,000 to 230,000. The estimated absolute number of this recent decrease in the other FSU countries as a whole (680,000) was much higher than in the previous three decades between 1959 and 1989 (489,000). In 1999, population censuses were conducted in some FSU countries. The 1999 census of Belorussia was the first which empirically confirmed the dramatic demographic decline of a sizable Jewish community in the FSU outside the Russian Federation. The census data show that during the ten years following the 1989 Soviet census, the total number of « core » Jews in Belorussia dropped from 112,000 to 27,800, or by 75 per cent. During the same period, this number fell from 19,900 to 6,800 in Kazakhstan, and from 6,000 to 1,600 in Kirgiziia.

The estimated figures show that during the first ten years of the recent mass emigration (1989-1998), the total number of « core » Jews in the entire FSU dropped from 1,480,000 to about 540,000. The absolute number of this recent decrease in the FSU as a whole (940,000) was greater than that in the previous entire three decades (799,000), and of course the rate of this drop (64 per cent) was much faster than between 1959 and 1989 (35 per cent).

At the start of the recent mass emigration, Russia's Jews made up 39 per cent of the total number of « core » Jews in the FSU. However, between 1989 and 1999 the population decline of Russia's Jewry was only one-fourth of the total Jewish population decline in the FSU. As a result, by the beginning of 1999 Russia's Jews accounted for 57 per cent of the total number of « core » Jews in the FSU.

Today, Russia differs from other parts of the FSU in that it has retained more than half the number of its pre-1989 Jewish population. Ex-Soviet Jewry remaining in the FSU is concentrated more and more in Russia. Thus, by place of residence it is rapidly turning into Russian Jewry.

On the basis of the 1989 census and the 1994 microcensus, one may arrive at comparable estimates of the « enlarged » Jewish population in Russia. According to our estimates, this population was 910,000 at the start of the recent mass emigration, and 720,000 five years later, a decrease of 21 per cent (Table 2).

Thus, the « enlarged » Jewish population declined less than did the « core » population. In fact, the decline in the number of non-Jewish members of heterogeneous households (by 8.5 per cent) was very moderate. According to our estimate, the ratio of « enlarged » to « core » Jewish population was 1.6 to 1 for the late 1980s, and 1.8 to 1 for 1994.

Migration is more frequent at younger ages (see below). Among Russia's Jews, the younger population has a higher percentage of persons in intermarriage and there is proportionally more offspring of mixed couples in young age. Based on the past dynamics of the ratio of « enlarged » to « core » Jewish population, and presuming continuation in the observed increase of this ratio, we suggest for a conservative estimate a ratio of 1.9 to 1 for 1999.

Table 2 : Dynamics of the « enlarged » Jewish population* in the Russian Federation, 1979-1999, thousands

	1979	1989	1994	1999
1. « Core » Jewish population	713	570	409	310
2. Non-Jewish members of multi-national households with Jewish presence**	387	340	311	280
3. « Enlarged » Jewish population [(1)+(2)]	1,100	910	720	590
4. Ratio of « enlarged » to « core » Jewish population [(3)/(1)]	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9

* « Core » Jews and their household family members ; including « Tats ».
** Persons living in households with at least one « core » Jew.
Sources : Tolts, 1997b : 148 ; Tolts, 1999b : 193 ; and Table 1 of this paper.

Accordingly, the estimated « enlarged » Jewish population in the Russian Federation would be about 590,000. Given these figures, during the first ten years of mass emigration (between 1989 and 1999), the « enlarged » Jewish population fell by 35 per cent (that is, more than double the decrease between 1979 and 1989, when the rate of decrease in the republic was 17 per cent).

In the FSU countries other than the Russian Federation, emigration was higher, and mixed marriage in these countries increased very rapidly (DellaPergola, 1998 ; Tolts, 1997a and 1999a). All these facts lead to a sharp increase in the ratio of « enlarged » to « core » Jewish population. Using the same ratio as for the Russian Federation for 1999, we arrived at a figure of about 1,030,000 for the « enlarged » Jewish population in the FSU as a whole. The total number of people eligible to emigrate from the FSU to Israel according to the Israeli Law of Return is even higher.

RECENT JEWISH MASS MIGRATION

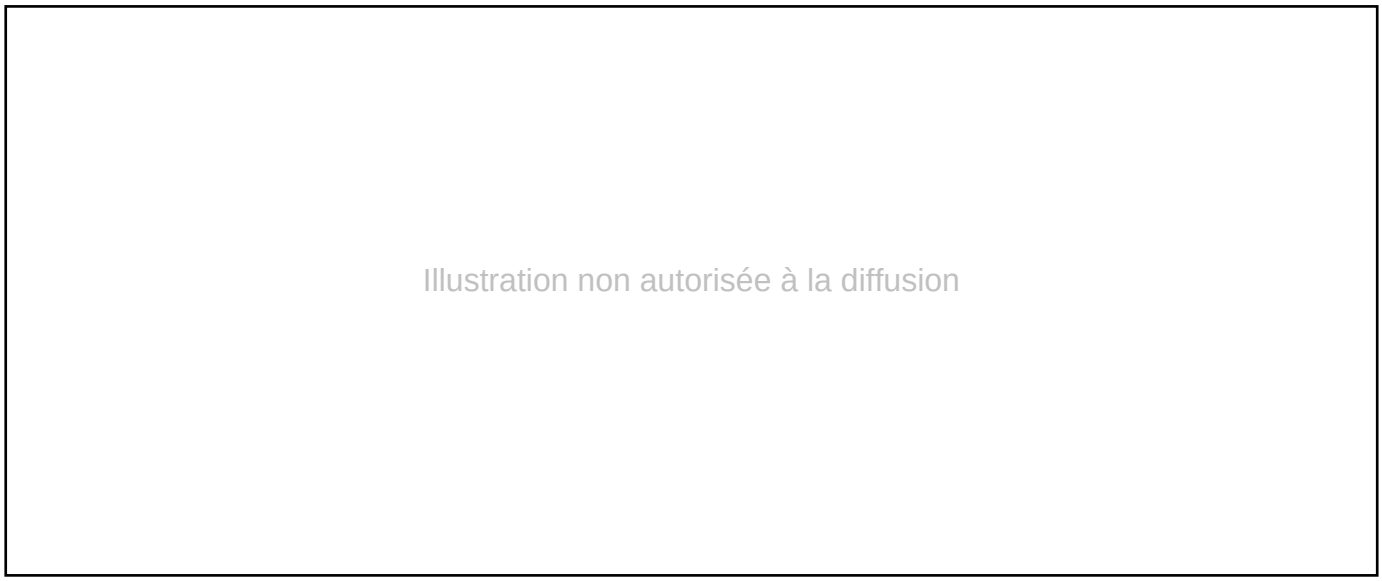
The movement of large numbers of Jews from the FSU to Israel and the West is one of the most outstanding features of the contemporary Jewish world (DellaPergola, 1999). The rate of this recent mass emigration has been even higher than the mass Jewish emigration from the Russian Empire around the turn of the 20-th century (see, e.g. : Gitelman, 1997). According to my estimates, in the ten years between 1989 and 1998 about 1.2 million (ex-)Soviet Jews and their non-Jewish relatives left the FSU[2]. This number is more than four times as great as all the

2 I have based my estimates on the statistics of the countries of destination. For immigration to Israel, *aliyah* data by republics of the FSU from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) have been used, which are quite accurate ; and for immigration to the USA, mainly those of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). Immigration figures to other countries (Germany, Canada, Australia and others) were much less comprehensive and clear, and were estimated roughly from various sources.

emigration over the previous twenty years (cf. Florsheim, 1990). During the entire first ten years of recent mass emigration, the number of Jews and their non-Jewish relatives who emigrated from the FSU to Israel reached about 770,000, and the percentage of emigrants who arrived in Israel as their country of destination was 63 per cent. For the same ten-year period the number of Jews and their non-Jewish relatives who emigrated from the FSU to the USA may be estimated at approximately 290,000. The number of Jews and their non-Jewish relatives who emigrated to Germany was lower – about 110,000.

During the decade from 1989 to 1998, more than 230,000 Jews from the Russian Federation and their non-Jewish household members migrated to Israel (30 per cent of the total number of all FSU immigrants to the State ; Table 3). However, over the same period the recorded number of immigrants from Ukraine to Israel was higher – exceeding 240,000 (31 per cent). Immigrants from the Russian Federation to Israel were the most numerous group between 1991 and 1994, but in 1989-1990 and 1995-1998 more immigrants arrived from Ukraine.

Table 3 : Immigration to Israel from the Russian Federation and entire FSU, 1989-1998, thousands



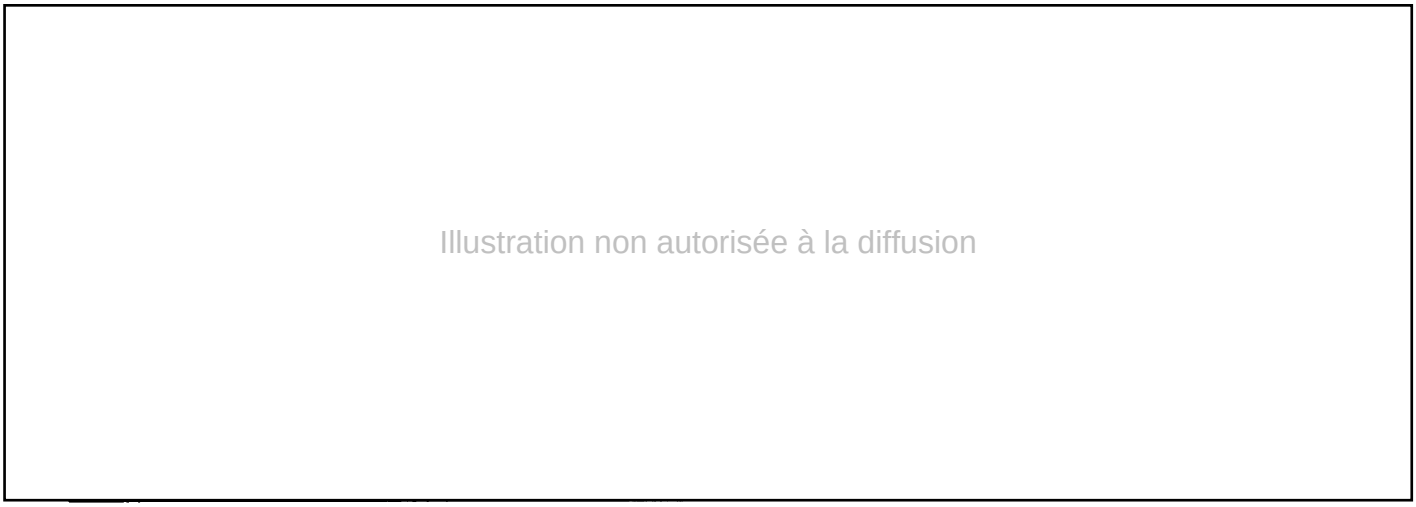
Sources : Israel. CBS data ; Gur-Gurevitz, 1996 : 282 (Russia for 1989).

All these figures relate to the « enlarged » Jewish population, which includes Russia's Jews and their non-Jewish household members. They also include some persons belonging to households with non-Jews of Jewish origin, there being no « core » Jews in these households. The percentage of Jews (by any definition) in this migration has declined from the start of this recent mass emigration to the most recent period. For example, according to official Russian data based on internal passport records, the proportion of Jews among all those who emigrated to Israel fell from 64 per cent in the second half of 1992 to 49 per cent in 1996, 36 per cent in 1997 and 31 per cent in 1998.

According to the halakhic (Jewish religious) approach, which is used in Israeli statistics, the proportion of Jews among immigrants was much higher ; according to this approach a Jew is a person born to a Jewish mother (female lineage is instructive and the number of generations backwards is not determined), or one who converted to Judaism (DellaPergola, 1998 : 85-87). For example, in 1997, according to official Israeli data, the share of Jews among all immigrants to Israel from the FSU was 59 per cent, and this percentage was about the same – 60 per cent – among the immigrants from the Russian Federation.

Clearly, in our analysis of the « core » Jewish population in the Russian Federation we should use another kind of migration data which is comparable to the definition of the « core » Jewish population. Fortunately Russian governmental statistics contain some of these necessary data, according to which more than 168,000 Jews emigrated to countries outside the FSU in 1989-1998 (Table 4). The data show that emigration peaked in 1990-1991 (28,600 and 31,000, respectively), after which it decreased steadily ; the recorded total number of Jewish emigrants was 18,200 for 1993 and 13,100 for 1996 ; by 1997 it had fallen to 9,500 and in 1998 it was 7,200.

Table 4 : Registered international migration events of the Jews in the Russian Federation, 1989-1998, thousands



Sources : Russian governmental migration statistics.

In addition to the figures cited above, official Russian statistics for 1993-1996 separately provided data on Jews who emigrated « for permanent residence abroad ». This category of official emigration statistics covered people who received permission from Russian authorities for permanent emigration. These figures are somewhat lower (e.g., 14,000 for 1993 and 12,500 for 1996) than those cited just above which also included Jews with other reasons for emigration (e.g., for the purpose of education). The rates based on the numbers of those who emigrated « for permanent residence abroad » show a rather stable level from 1993 to 1996. In 1993 this rate was estimated

at 34 per 1,000 « core » Jews, and in 1996 it was 36. However, in 1997[3] the total rate of emigration fell to 29 per 1,000 « core » Jews and in 1998 this indicator decreased further – to 23 per 1,000 « core » Jews. In 1994-1996, the level of emigration to Israel was also stable : 18 per 1,000 « core » Jews. In 1997 it decreased to 14 per 1,000 « core » Jews, and in 1998 the level of migration to Israel was about the same as in the previous year – 13 per 1,000. This drop in the rate of emigration of « core » Jews was coupled with a serious decline in the percentage of Jews (by any definition, see above) in the number of immigrants from the Russian Federation to Israel.

According to official Russian data for the period before 1999, slightly more than half the Jews who emigrated to countries outside the FSU after the peak of 1990-1991 chose Israel. The number of Jews who emigrated to the USA fell from 4,805 in 1993 to 3,158 in 1996 ; in the same period the number of Jews who emigrated to Germany rose from 1,100 to 2,718. Consequently, the share of the USA fell from a peak of 35 per cent in 1993-1994 to 25 per cent in 1996, when emigration to Germany climbed to 22 per cent. Moreover, in 1998 more registered Jewish emigrants went to Germany (1,868, or 26 per cent) than to the USA (1,171, or 16 per cent), and Germany ranked second as a receiving country for Jewish emigration from the Russian Federation (Table 5). According to these data emigration to all other countries has not been high.

Table 5 : Registered emigration of Jews from the Russian Federation to outside the FSU, by country of destination, 1992-1998, per cent

Sources : Russian governmental migration statistics.

There were great differences in the propensities to emigrate outside the FSU among the Jews of various regions. The levels of the propensities to emigrate by the three large groups noted above can be measured as a percentage of the « core » Jewish population according to the 1994 microcensus. In 1994-1998 in the Russian Federation, the estimated average indicator of emigration was 13.9 per cent. For the same period

3 The Russian population as a whole perceived this year as the most stable and least difficult in the 1990s (see, e.g. : Shevtsova, 1999 : 236).

this indicator was as low as 9.5 percent in the city of Moscow, but it was 17.7 per cent in St. Petersburg. That is, the indicator for the second largest city of the Russian Federation was higher by a factor of about 1.9 than that for the capital of the country. This high level of recent Jewish emigration from St. Petersburg coincided with the great decrease found for the previous period (between the 1989 census and the 1994 microcensus) for the Jewish population of this city.

One should also note that the high propensity of St. Petersburg Jews to emigrate during this period exceeded that of total provincial Jewry of the Russian Federation outside Moscow and St. Petersburg. For the Jews of the provinces the indicator was 15.6 per cent. From this we may surmise that Jewish emigration has not been simply dependent on city size but rather on the given socioeconomic situation and its regional dynamics.

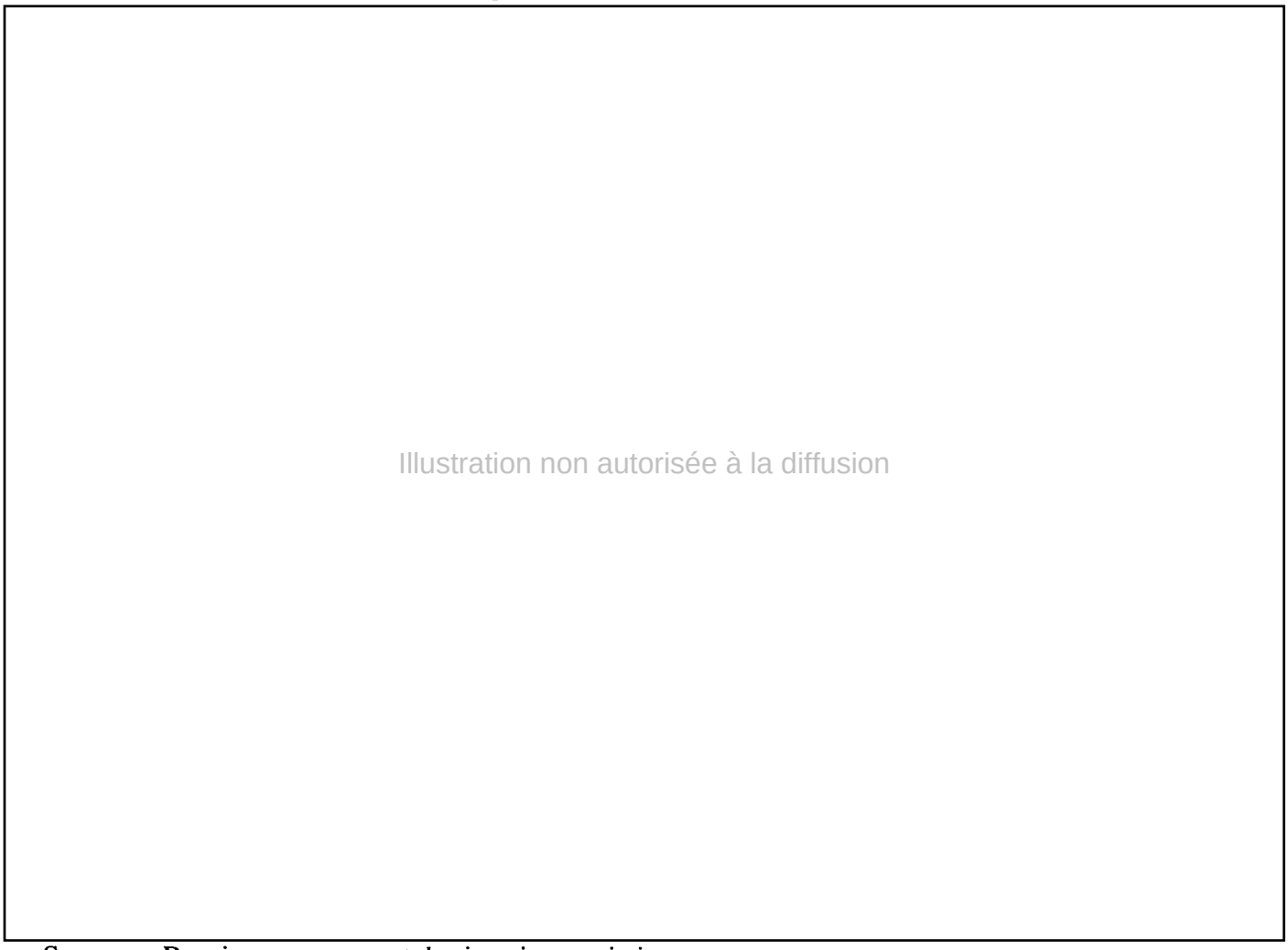
In 1994-1998, the Jewish autonomous *oblast* (Birobidzhan) sent the greatest number of emigrants to Israel (7,500, or 11.9 per cent) of all regions of the Russian Federation[4]. It should be noted that in 1998 neighboring Khabarovsk *krai* ranked second as a sending region for emigration from the Russian Federation to Israel. Combining Siberia with the Russian Far East gave 28.4 per cent of the total number of emigrants to Israel from the Russian Federation in 1994-1998 (and this percentage dramatically increased from 17.4 per cent in 1994 to 37.7 per cent in 1998), whereas their share in the « enlarged » Jewish population of the country as a whole was estimated at only 12 per cent for 1994. This coincides with a sizable total outflow from Siberia and the Russian Far East (see, e.g. : Zayonchkovskaya, 1999).

During the 1990s, coincidental with the ongoing mass emigration, other migratory movements affected the number of Jews in the different parts of the FSU. These movements were mostly migration to and from the Russian Federation, for which we collected statistical information. In 1989-1998 according to official Russian data, 20,577 Jews arrived in the Russian Federation from other parts of the FSU, and 14,637 Jews from Russia emigrated to other parts of the FSU. Thus, the recorded migratory balance for Russia's Jews with other parts of the FSU was positive – 5,940 (Table 6).

The data show that in 1989-1991, Russia's Jews had a slightly negative migratory balance (864) with other republics of the FSU. In this period, preceding the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's Jewish migration balance was negative with all parts of the country except Transcaucasia and Central Asia. But between 1992 and 1998 the registered migratory balance was positive, and this by more than 6,800. Since

4 This oblast has the second lowest level of human development index (after Tyva, where the number of Jews was about nil) among all the regions of the Russian Federation (UNDP, 1999 : 101-103). According to the data of the 1994 microsensus in the Jewish oblast were only 7,700 « core » Jews and the « enlarged » Jewish population of this oblast was 12,600 (less than 2 per cent of the total number of Jews in the Russian Federation). There are different names for regions at the same level of administrative division in the Russian Federation, namely, oblast and krai.

Table 6 : Registered migration of the Jews* in the Russian Federation with other parts of the FSU, 1989-1998



Sources : Russian governmental migration statistics.

1992 immigration of Jews from the Baltic States and Moldavia has exceeded Jewish emigration from the Russian Federation to these republics. And since 1994, Russia has had a positive Jewish migration balance with the Jews from Ukraine.

There were two principal sources of immigration to Russia – Transcaucasia and Central Asia. These two regions are the most conflict-ridden areas in the FSU, and in some cases emigration to Russia was simply a possible option for Jews to escape ethnic conflicts and wars. For example, during 1989-1998 the registered Jewish migration from Azerbaidzhan and Georgia to the Russian Federation consisted of about 7 per cent of the total number of Jews in each republic (not including « Tats ») according to the last Soviet census of 1989. For this period Russia's positive migration balance was more than 3,400 for movements of the Jews to and from Transcaucasia, and approximately 3,300 for those from Central Asia.

Some of these Jewish immigrants to Russia were refugees from other parts of the FSU. By the beginning of 1997 the number of officially registered Jewish refugees

in Russia exceeded one thousand, a figure which had doubled over the previous two years. Although the return of ethnic Russians to the Russian Federation from other parts of the FSU has received attention, the estimated rate of Jewish immigration to Russia for 1995 – 5.5 per 1,000 – was about the same as that of ethnic Russians.

We may also assume that official data to some extent underestimated the actual number of Jewish immigrants from other parts of the FSU because these data are based on Ministry of Internal Affairs registration (with the local police [*militsia*]), which in turn is dependent on residence permits (*propiska*) or registration. In recent years many immigrants of different origins – including Jews – have had no such registration, especially in Moscow. This fact is generally well known to all who have attempted to study Russian migration (see, e.g. : Zayonchkovskaya, 1999).

From 1994 to 1998, Jewish immigration to the Russian Federation from other parts of the FSU was a substantial factor in compensating for the emigration of Russia's Jews to countries outside the FSU. In this period Russia had a positive balance of Jewish migration with all other parts of the FSU (except Belosussia, with which this balance was about nil), and the unique position of Russia's Jews was dependent on this balance to partially offset their strongly negative vital balance. The leading input factor of Russia's total Jewish demographic balance was Jewish immigration from other parts of the FSU and not Jewish fertility.

At the same time, the sizable immigration to Russia of non-Ashkenazic Jews from Transcaucasia and Central Asia is changing the ethnic subdivision of the Jewish population in the Russian Federation somewhat, especially in Moscow.

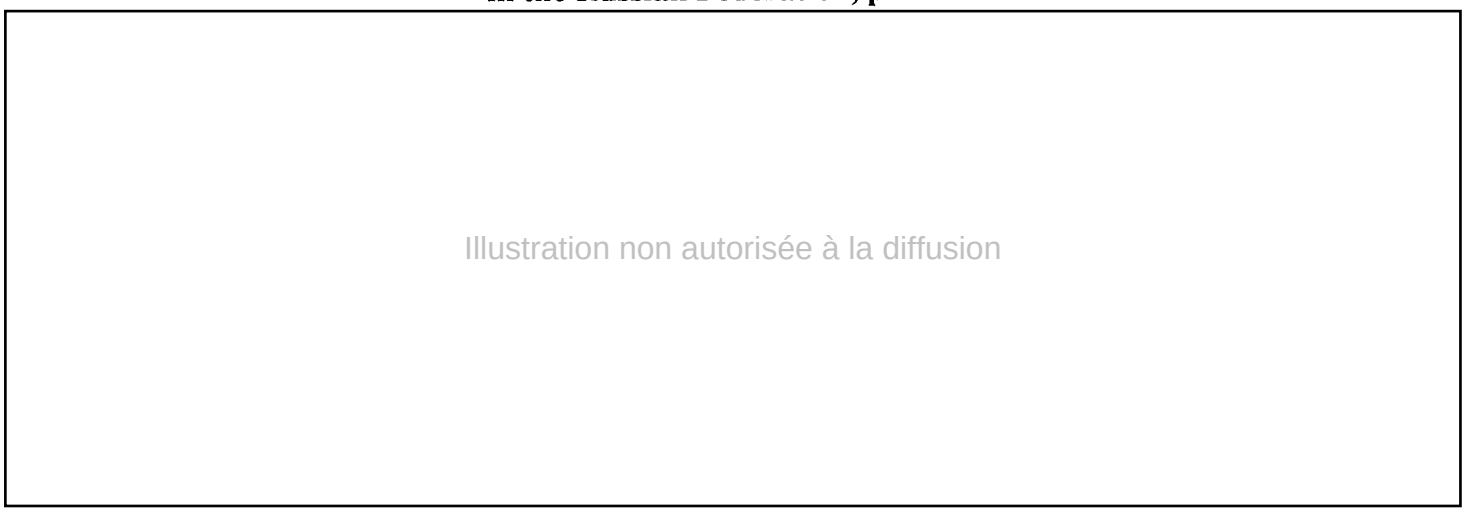
DEMOGRAPHIC SELECTIVITY OF MIGRATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

From the Second World War till the start of recent mass emigration the age structure of Russia's Jewish population substantially worsened, a factor which is linked mainly to the decline in fertility (Tolts, 1993). According to data from the 1989 census on all the Jews in the Russian Federation, the population aged 65 and over reached 26.9 per cent of the total, or three times more than in 1959 (8.9 per cent for Ashkenazic Jews). During the same period, the median age of Russian Jewry rose from 41.2 to 52.3 years.

The recent mass emigration has accelerated this process. According to data from the 1994 microcensus, 32.4 per cent of the Ashkenazic Jews in the Russian Federation were aged 65 and over. At the same time the median age of these Jews reached 56.0, which was 3.4 years more than in 1989 (Table 7). In the entire previous decade between the 1979 and 1989 censuses this indicator for total Russian Jewry rose by only 3.2 years.

To update our knowledge on the process of aging during the recent mass emigration we used an estimate based on the 1994 microcensus, the 1993-1994 life

Table 7 : Age structure of the « core » Jewish population in the Russian Federation, per cent



Sources : 1979 and 1989 censuses, and 1994 microcensus.

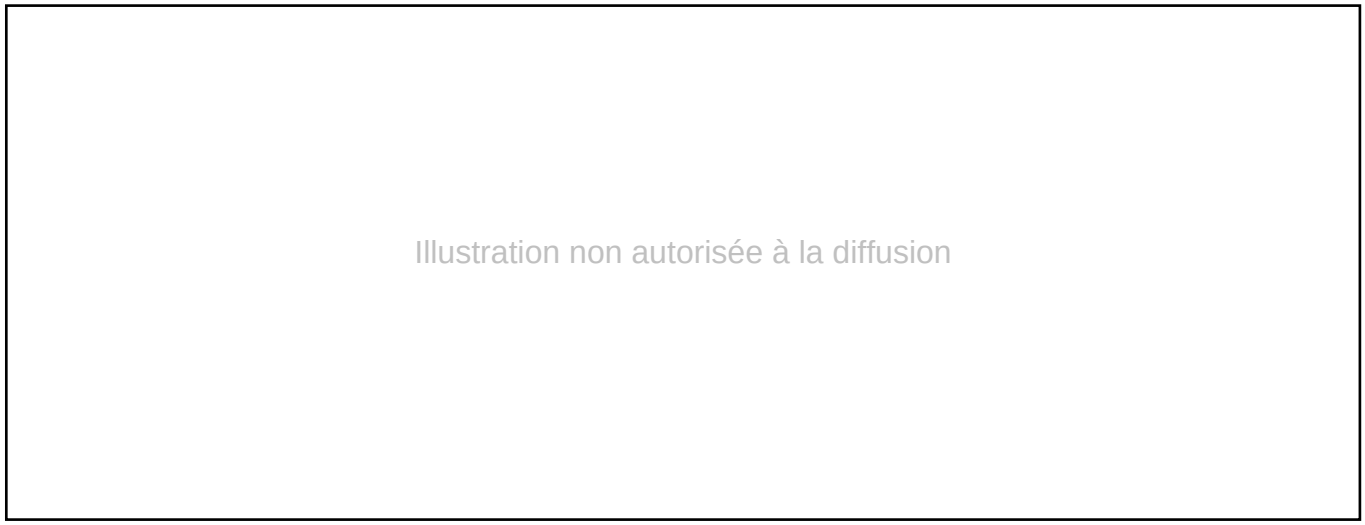
tables, and age-sex migration rates consistent with observed population decline (DellaPergola *et al.*, 1996 : Tables 1-5 ; Tolts, 1997b : 176). According to this estimate, by 1999 about 35 per cent of the « core » Jews in the Russian Federation were aged 65 and above and the median age of these Jews reached 58.2 years.

Aggregate aliyah data are more dependent on the age structure of the « enlarged » Jewish population than the « core » Jewish population. In 1994 the median age of all immigrants to Israel from the Russian Federation was 32.0, or 24 years less than the « core » Jewish population of the country of origin ; the percentage aged 65 and above among immigrants was only 12.2 per cent. For the same year, the median age of all immigrants to Israel from the Russian Federation was 14.8 years less than the « enlarged » Jewish population in this country. Especially low was the share of immigrants aged 75 and over : only 3.8 per cent, or fewer by a factor of about 4 than in the « core » Jewish population of the Russian Federation (Table 8).

These data clearly show the highly selective character of emigration by age, which is very important for the future of the Jewish communities in the FSU. Moreover, emigration is selective also by level of Jewish identity, and is obviously higher among the more strongly identifying Jews (see, e.g. : Brym and Ryvkina, 1996). These are the ones who have left – and are still leaving – the FSU.

In the demographic approach to the problem of nuptiality, decisive significance is attached to the availability of potential candidates for marriage. Examination of the ratio of females to males in the relevant age groups shows that possibilities for Russia's Jewish males to select a suitable marriage candidate from their own ethnic group had already become limited before the start of the recent mass migration.

Table 8 : Age Structure of the « core » and « enlarged » Jewish populations in the Russian Federation, and all immigrants from the Russian Federation to Israel, 1994, per cent



Sources : Tolts, 1997b : 153 ; Soroko, 1998 : Tables A2-A4 ; Israel. CBS, 1995 : 97.

According to the 1979 census, the number of Jewish men in Russia was higher than that of Jewish women in all ages up to 50, and, according to the 1989 census, even up to 60. Analysis reveals that the analogous unique age-sex structure in the total Soviet Jewish population (according to the 1989 census, the male surplus existed up to age 55) was a consequence of the small mortality difference according to sex. In part, this dearth of potential Jewish brides in the Russian Federation stems from an earlier migration of predominantly male Jews from Ukraine.

According to the 1994 microcensus, this shortage had advanced to ages 60-64, and among all those under fifty at the time of the 1989 census, the sex ratio even worsened during these five years. For example, the ratio was 87 : 100 at ages 25-29 in the 1989 census, but had fallen to 80 : 100 for the same cohorts at ages 30-34 in the 1994 microcensus.

There must be a reason for this important phenomenon. However, it cannot be explained by the difference in mortality rates between sexes, as male mortality rates are always higher than those of females in modern developed countries. A more plausible explanation is that in the period of recent mass emigration more women than men emigrated. An alternative interpretation, such as higher rates of ethnic assimilation of Jewish women in mixed marriages and / or higher rates of ethnic reaffiliation with the Jewish people for men of mixed parentage, seems less relevant.

Moreover, a peculiarity of the Jewish population's age structure in the Russian Federation is its « regressive » nature, that is, most preceding generations are more numerous than those following them. This is the result of extremely low fertility over a long period. In view of the sex ratios in adjacent age groups of the Jewish population, the chances of a Jewish male to find a candidate for marriage within his own ethnic community are further reduced.

Even before the start of the recent mass migration, the shortage of Jewish marriage partners for Jewish males provided the demographic basis for the spread of intermarriage. Since the Second World War one of the outstanding features of Russia's Jews has been the great increase in mixed marriage. This process had actually begun already between the two world wars. In 1988, the frequency of mixed marriages among all marriages involving Jews was 73.2 per cent for males and 62.8 per cent for females (a relative increase of 23 and 46 per cent respectively, as compared to 1978).

The recent mass emigration has hastened the erosion of the Jewish marriage market in the Russian Federation. As a result of the above-noted sex imbalance, during this period the total number of currently married Jewish females per 100 currently married Jewish males decreased considerably : from 71 in 1989 to 66 in 1994. According to my estimate, by 1994 the percentage mixed-married among all those currently married reached 63 per cent for Jewish males and 44 per cent for Jewish females, an increase of five and four percentage points from 1989.

Rising intermarriage was naturally accompanied by a sizable increase in the proportion of children born to mixed couples. From 1988 to 1998 in the Russian Federation the proportion of children born to Jewish mothers and non-Jewish fathers, out of all children born to Jewish mothers, rose from 58 to 74 per cent.

In some of Russia's Jewish female cohorts we see the unusual phenomenon of an increased percentage of never-married. For example, according to the 1994 microcensus, for all the women who were between the ages 40-54 at the time of the 1989 census, the percentage of never-married had grown. This may be explained only by the fact that in the period of recent mass emigration a lower percentage of never-married women emigrated than did women of other marital statuses.

The selective character of emigration has also exacerbated the rise in the percentage of Jewish women who never bore children among the cohorts of women who had already finished their childbearing. For example, in 1994 among Russia's Jewish women aged 55-59, 19.0 per cent had never given birth, but five years before, the 1989 census reported that this indicator was only 15.1 per cent for these same women, who were then aged 50-54.

The vital crisis of Russia's Jewry has intensified rapidly since the start of the recent mass migration. In 1988-1989 the total fertility rate of Russia's Jewish population was 1.5. For 1993-1994 this fertility indicator was estimated at about 0.8 ; that is, it had fallen dramatically by 46 per cent (Tolts, 1997b : 161). This coincides with the general negative dynamics of fertility in the Russian Federation during this period.

One special aspect of the interrelationship between emigration and Jewish fertility in the Russian Federation should perhaps be mentioned here. According to Israeli statistics, the level of fertility among immigrants (*olim*) from the FSU was rather high during their first year in the country (Israel. CBS, 1998 : 79 ; Sicron, 1998) : some Jewish women obviously preferred giving birth in Israel, and this lowered the level of Jewish fertility in the Russian Federation.

LATEST TRENDS

Stabilization in the Russian Federation and a decline in Jewish emigration in 1997 and the first half of 1998 were only short-lived phenomena. In fact, the situation in Russia was seriously aggravated after the financial crash of August 1998. Simultaneously, Jews were openly accused by the opposition concerning many issues, especially Russia's financial problems. All these factors gave new impetus to emigration.

In 1999, the number of immigrants to Israel from the Russian Federation more than doubled to 31,100 ; the percentage of Russia's immigrants to Israel of the total number of all FSU immigrants to the State jumped to an unprecedented share - almost half (47 per cent ; cf. Table 3). The level of aliyah returned to its 1990 rate, and was about 5 per cent of the estimated Russia's « enlarged » Jewish population at the beginning of 1999.

The share of aliyah among the Jewish emigration also jumped, and according to official Russian data, 68 per cent of the total number of Russia's Jews who emigrated to countries outside the FSU chose Israel (cf. Table 5). However, in 1999 as well as in previous years, most of the Jewish emigrants from Moscow (72 per cent) and St. Petersburg (59 per cent) went to other countries. In this year only the great majority of Russia's provincial Jews (82 per cent) chose Israel as their destination. In 1999, among the total number of immigrants to Israel from the FSU, for the first time less than half (49 per cent) were classified by Israeli statistics as Jewish ; in 1998 this indicator was more than half (53 percent). However, in 1999, according to official Russian data based on internal passport records, the proportion of Jews among all those who emigrated to Israel was at the same level as in 1998 – 31 per cent.

The worsening situation in the country caused a decline in the immigration of Jews from other FSU countries to the Russian Federation which, according to our findings in part previously offset the negative Jewish internal balance there. At the same time, this situation gave a push to the emigration from these FSU countries to Israel as an alternative destination. And in 1999, the number of immigrants to Israel from Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia, Azerbaidzhan, Georgia and Uzbekistan was higher than in 1998. In 1999 immigration to Israel from the FSU as a whole increased by 45 per cent to 66,800. In 2000, with the adaptation of the population to the new situation in the Russian Federation, and with the solution of the problem of power transition from Yeltsin to a new president, emigration of Russian Jews decreased.

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