DIASPORAS and ETHNIC MIGRANTS

Germany, Israel and Post-Soviet Successor States in Comparative Perspective

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The Dissolution of the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Ethnic Migration: The Return of Diasporas?

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The ethnic map of the Russian and Soviet empires was shaped over the centuries by the conquest and annexation of neighbouring territories and populations, and the subsequent inland migration or emigration of some of the new subjects. Likewise, the migration of Russians, Ukrainians and certain other groups to the new peripheries of the empires played a role in shaping the ethnic map. Such migration, sometimes voluntary, sometimes forced, became particularly important in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century and has led to both the intermixing and the dispersion of ethnic groups.

Spatial dispersion was and is typical for many ethnic groups living within the territory of the former USSR. For some groups, this dispersion was a result of forced migration or deportation. For others, it was a result of their own imperial or colonial activity, while in certain cases, it was engendered by the mixing of peoples living in the same geographical area where there was no strict territorial delimitation. Historical and current political realities became intertwined and determined the emergence and dynamics of diasporas (see Table 9.1).

The dissolution of the USSR had a dramatic effect on these dynamics. On the one hand, the new political frontiers have cut off certain ethnic groups from their territories of compact settlement, automatically transforming them into new ethnic minorities and raising the question of repatriation. On the other hand, for certain older ethnic minorities, new opportunities to emigrate to their homelands have appeared. Six diasporas – the Jewish, Armenian, Russian, Ukrainian, German and Tatar diasporas – are analysed to illustrate these shifts.

Table 9.1
Ethnic groups of the USSR by area of settlement and mother tongue, 1989

Ethnic groups*	Total population (thousands)	Members of the ethnic group living outside of their union republic, autonomous republic or autonomous region		Per cent claiming as mother tongue:	
		Thousands	%	National language	Russian
Ethnic groups with a union republic (90.3 % of the total population of the USSR)					
Armenians	4,627	1,545	33.4	91.7	7.6
Tajiks	4,217	1,049	24.9	97.7	0.8
Belorusians	10,030	2,133	21.3	70.9	28.5
Kazakhs	8,138	1,606	19.7	97.0	2.2
Russians	145,072	25,264	17.4	99.8	99.8
Moldovians	3,355	564	16.8	91.6	7.4
Uzbeks	16,686	2,563	15.4	98.3	0.7
Ukrainians	44,136	6,766	15.3	81.1	18.8
Azeri	6,791	990	14.6	97.7	1.7
Kyrgyz	2,531	303	12.0	97.8	0.6
Turkomans	2,718	194	7.1	98.5	1.0
Estonians	1,027	64	6.2	95.5	4.4
Latvians	1,459	72	4.9	94.8	5.0
Georgians	3,983	194	4.9	98.2	1.7
Lithuanians	3,068	144	4.7	97.7	1.8
Total	257,839	43,450	16.9		
Ethnic groups with an autonomous republic or region (2.4% of the total population of the USSR)					
Tatars	6,649	4,884	73.5	83.2	16.1
Mordovians	1,154	841	72.9	67.1	32.7
Maris	671	347	51.7	80.8	18.8
Chuvashs	1,842	935	50.8	76.4	23.3
Bashkirs	1,449	585	40.4	72.3	11.2
Udmurts	747	250	33.5	69.6	30.0
Ossets	598	198	33.1	87.0	7.0
Chechens	957	222	23.2	98.1	1.7
Avars	601	105	17.5	97.2	1.9
Total	6,865	2,642	38.5		
Ethnic groups without territorial autonomy (1.59% of the total population of the USSR)					
Jews**	1,378	1,378	100.0	11.1	86.6
Germans	2,039	2,039	100.0	48.7	50.8
Poles	1,126	1,126	100.0	30.5	28.6
Total	4,543	4,543	100.0		

* Ethnic groups with more than 500,000 members only. Groups are ranked according to the proportion of the ethnic group living outside their Soviet republic or autonomous region.
** Formally, the Jews have their autonomous region with the capital of Birobijan in the Far East. However, in 1989, there were only about 9,000 Jews living in this region. Of these 7,800 claimed Russian as their mother tongue.
Source: *Nacional'ny sostav* 1991.

THE JEWISH DIASPORA

Until the end of the eighteenth century, Russia's Jewish population was very small. After the partition of Poland and the annexation of its eastern sector

by Russia, however, the Russian empire became the state with the largest Jewish community in the world. During the course of the nineteenth century, its role as the main area of settlement of the Jewish diaspora continued to grow. In 1880, some 53 per cent of the world's Jewish population lived in Russia (*Kratkaja* 1994: 385). In spite of the size of the Jewish community in Russia (5.2 million in 1897), its situation and the conditions for the majority of the Jewish population were very unfavourable. In the nineteenth century, the emancipation of European Jews did not affect Russian Jewry. The Jews of the Russian empire remained deprived of the most important economic and civil rights. Their perception of an unstable, but at the same time unchangeable, situation in Russia motivated the Jews to leave the country. Emigration took on massive proportions after the pogroms of the early 1880s.

The scale of emigration grew rapidly; from 1881 to 1885, the average annual number of Jewish emigrants to the United States alone was around 12,900. Between 1886 and 1890, it rose to 28,500, and between 1891 and 1910 to 44,800. During the 'rush years' 1906–10, Jewish emigration reached 82,200 annually (Rogger 1973: 28; *Kratkaja* 1994: 383). The total number of Jewish emigrants between 1881 and 1914 is estimated at two million (*Kratkaja* 1994: 383), or nearly two-fifths of Russia's total Jewish population in 1897.

After 1900, the net emigration of Jews exceeded natural growth (*Kratkaja* 1994: 384). The principal destination for Jews of Russian origin was the United States. Between 1871 and 1920, they accounted for 41.5 per cent of all Russian emigrants to the United States and 72.4 per cent of all Jewish emigrants coming from Europe (including Russia) to the United States (Kabuzan 1996: 322).

Nevertheless, on the eve of the First World War, there were still more than five million Jews in Russia. As a result of post-war and post-revolutionary changes to state frontiers, about 55 per cent of the Jews of the empire became citizens of other states (Obolensky-Ossinsky 1931). Some of those who had remained in the Soviet Union were assimilated into their Russian, Ukrainian or Belarussian environments. The census of 1926 enumerated 2.7 million Jews in the USSR, the census of 1939, 3.0 million (Pinkus 1988: 89).

In 1939, as a result of the new frontier revisions and the annexation of Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, Bessarabia and the Baltic states to the USSR, the Jewish population of the Soviet Union again increased, but it dropped sharply thereafter due to the enormous loss of Jewish life in the Holocaust and in war casualties. At least 2.5 million Soviet Jews died or were killed during the Second World War (Pinkus 1988: 261). After the Second World War, the Jewish population of the USSR never again reached its pre-war size. After the war it initially increased slowly, but then began to shrink again as a consequence of assimilation processes, of low fertility and finally due to massive emigration.

While there was no free emigration from the Soviet Union, during periods of détente between East and West, the Soviet authorities occasionally gave members of certain ethnic or religious groups, including Jews, permission to leave the country. The number of Jewish emigrants between 1948 and 1990 is estimated at 592,000, of whom 301,000 emigrated after 1986 (Heitman 1991: 2). According to the first post-war census of 1959, 2.3 million Jews were counted in the USSR (1.1 per cent of the total population compared with 2.5 per cent in 1940). By then, the United States had become the country with the largest Jewish population in the world. In the mid-1950s, the number of Jews in the US reached nearly 5 million (Chaliand and Rageau 1997: 57), while the Soviet Jewish diaspora continued to decline. In 1970, it numbered 2.2 million, in 1979 1.8 million and in 1989 1.4 million.

During the late 1980s, free emigration from the Soviet Union came to be permitted and increased yearly. The dissolution of the USSR accelerated this process. The significance of the Russian Jewish diaspora, previously the world's largest, rapidly dwindled. According to recent estimations, the size of the Jewish population still living in the territory of the former Soviet Union is somewhat more then one-third of the Jewish population of 1989, one quarter of the Jewish population of 1959 and about one tenth of the Jewish population of 1897 (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2
The Jewish population in the Soviet Republics and in post-Soviet successor states in 1959, 1989 and 1998 (in thousands)

	1959 Census	1989 Census	1998 Estimate	1989 as % of 1959 population	1998 as % of 1959 population
Russia	880	570	325	64.8	57.0
Ukraine	840	487	132	58.0	27.1
Belarus	150	112	19	74.7	17.0
Moldova	95	66 7	69.5	9.8	
Uzbekistan	94	95	11	101.1	11.6
Georgia	52	25	8	48.1	30.0
Azerbaijan	46	41	8	89.1	19.5
Latvia	37	23	9	62.2	40.9
Kazakhstan	28	20	10	71.4	50.0
Lithuania	25	12	5	48.0	40.8
Tadjikistan	12	15	1.4	121.0	9.3
Kyrgyzstan	8.6	6	2.2	69.8	36.7
Estonia	5.4	4.6	2.4	85.2	52.2
Turkmenistan	4.1	2.5	1.0	61.0	40.0
Armenia	1.0	0.7	0.1	70.0	0.0
Total	2,278	1,480	540	64.9	36.5

Source: Tolts 1999b: 23.

During the period 1990–99 the majority of Jews leaving the former USSR went to Israel (according to official Israeli sources 823,000, including their non-Jewish family members). This last Soviet and post-Soviet wave of immigration to Israel in the early 1990s caused a significant increase in the number of Jews in Israel. It was comparable with the highest wave of immigration to Israel, between 1948 and 1952, when immigration reached 855,000 (Della Pergola 1996: 20–2). Considerable numbers of Jews did leave the former USSR for the United States and Germany, where they remain part of the diaspora. Emigration from Israel also contributes to this process, though it is not generally typical for the newcomers from the Soviet Union (Della Pergola 1996: 20–2). On the whole, the dispersion of Jews throughout the world remains very important, though the last 'post-Soviet' immigration has diminished it significantly.

Table 9.3
World distribution of Jews, 1997–98

	Thousands	%
World total	13,093	100.0
Israel	4,702	35.9
Diaspora	8,391	64.1
United States	5,700	43.5
France	522	4.0
Former Soviet Union	540	4.1
Russia	325	2.5
Ukraine	132	1.0
Other Successor States	83	0.6
Canada	362	2.8
United Kingdom	280	2.1
Argentina	203	1.6
Brazil	100	0.8
Australia	96	0.7
South Africa	92	0.7
Germany	78	0.6
Other countries	418	3.2

Source: Della Pergola 1999: 549, 578.

THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA

An important Armenian population appeared in the Russian empire in the late 1820s after Russia had conquered and annexed traditional Armenian settlement regions formerly belonging to Persia and the Ottoman Empire. These events were accompanied by the massive resettlement of Persian and Turkish Armenians in these henceforth Russian territories. Before the resettlement, there were 133,000 Armenians in Russia – around 6–7 per cent of the total number of Armenians in the world, whereas more than 80 per cent of the world

Armenian population lived in Ottoman Turkey. The bulk of Russia's Armenians, some 107,000, lived in Russian Transcaucasia. It was estimated that during the late 1820s to early 1830s alone about 200,000 Armenian immigrants arrived in Transcaucasia. Thereafter the stream of immigrants diminished greatly, but did not cease altogether. In the 1860s, the Armenian population of Russia numbered more than 530,000 including almost 480,000 in Transcaucasia (Kabuzan 1996: 104–5.).

In Turkey in the mid-1890s, ethno-religious conflicts between Turkish and Kurdish Muslims and Christian Armenians started to become violent. Large-scale massacres between 1894 and 1896 killed about 200,000 Armenians, and many survivors fled. Between 1897 and 1916 about 500,000 Armenians arrived in Russia (Kabuzan 1996: 203). By the eve of the First World War, the Armenian population of Russia numbered 1.8 million, only a little less than that of Turkey (2 million).

The tradition of Armenian repatriation to Transcaucasia, namely to the Armenian republic which was created as an independent state in 1918 and incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1924, persisted for many decades. There were three large waves of immigration and repatriation during the Soviet period: from 1921 to 1936 (42,000), immediately after the Second World War (90,000–100,000) and from 1962 to 1982 (32,000). The total number of Armenian immigrants and repatriates during the whole Soviet period is estimated at 180,000 (Mouradian 1990: 172).

The adaptation to Soviet realities was not easy for many of the repatriates and the aspiration of leaving the USSR began to grow among them and their children. Emigration, mainly to Western countries, started in 1956. The total number of Armenian emigrants from the USSR from 1956 to 1989, primarily to the United States (more than 80 per cent of the total), is estimated at 77,000 (Heitman 1991: 2).

Table 9.4
World distribution of Armenians, late 1980s to early 1990s (thousands)

Countries		Countries	
World total	6,400		
Former Soviet Union	4,623	Other countries	1,800
Armenia	3,084	USA	600
Russia	532	France	250
Georgia	437	Iran**	100
Azerbaijan*	391	Lebanon	100
Upper Karabakh	145	Syria**	80
Ukraine	54	Canada	50
Uzbekistan	51	Argentina**	50
Turkmenistan	32	Australia	25
Kazakhstan	19	Others	545
Other republics of the USSR	23		

* Without Upper Karabakh.
** Rough estimates only.
Source: Nacional'ny sostav 1991: 148, 120; Chaliand and Rageau 1997: 89.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the total number of Armenians in the world was estimated at 6.4 million. Seventy-two per cent of the total Armenian world population, or 4.6 million Armenians, lived in the USSR, including 3.1 million living in the Armenian Republic. Another 1.8 million were dispersed throughout the world (Table 9.4).

The situation changed drastically in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The disintegration of the USSR had a significant impact on the Armenian population which was intensified by other regional events, in particular the earthquake of 1988, the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan and, after 1991, the growing political tension in Transcaucasia, the North Caucasus and Central Asia. On the one band, these changes provoked forced migration of Armenians from Azerbaijan, North Caucasus and Abkhazia. The number of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan in 1988–91 alone is estimated at 350,000 (Arutiunian 1999). On the other hand, the deterioration of the economic and political situation in Armenia entailed a massive emigration from Armenia, which was largely facilitated with the help of relatives and friends belonging to the diaspora, either in Russia, in other former Soviet republics or in Western countries.

Between 1990 and 1998, according to official Russian data, the net migration of Armenians to Russia reached 312,000 persons, but it is likely that not all immigrants were included in official data. Taking into consideration natural increase, the number of Armenians in Russia in 1999 is estimated at no less than 875,000. In 1989 the number was 532,000 (Bogoyavlensky 1999). Moreover, a wave of Armenian emigration occurred not only to other former Soviet republics, for example to Ukraine, but also to Western countries. The total number of Armenian emigrants to the United States in the first half of the 1990s was estimated at 80,000 (Ter Minassian 1995: 32). According to estimates by Armenian experts, the total emigration between 1990 and 1997 amounted to 700,000 persons or 20 per cent of Armenia's total population (Arutiunian 1999: 71). It appears that the Armenian dispersion throughout the world is growing again.

THE RUSSIAN DIASPORA

In contrast to the diasporas arising from expulsion or flight, there are also diasporas which are created by voluntary migrations which are undertaken 'in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions' (Cohen 1997: 180). A classic example is the ancient Greek diaspora resulting from the creation of Greek colonies in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region.

This is a recent notion for ethnic Russians. The Russian colonization was

considered to be internal. Leaving Russia's heartlands for Siberia, Central Asia or the Caucasus, the Russians continued to perceive themselves as being at home. Relatively small numbers of Russian emigrants outside the Russian or the Soviet empire did not, as a rule, constitute stable ethnic communities and dissolved quickly. The situation changed after the dissolution of the USSR, when more than 17 per cent of all ethnic Russians remained outside the newly created Russian Federation. In a way they have become dispersed, and may be considered as a Russian diaspora.

Such considerations correspond to the feelings of many ethnic Russians living in the Soviet successor states outside Russia. After the disintegration of the USSR, they perceived themselves for the first time as an ethnic minority, experienced a loss of social, cultural and political status and began to strive for the reinforcement of the links with the homeland or for repatriation to Russia. It may be that not all ethnic Russians living outside the Russian Federation are yet fully aware of their new situation, while the situation itself is not yet completely clear. Nevertheless, during the 1990s, return migration of ethnic Russians has become more and more important (Table 9.5).

Table 9.5
Return migration of ethnic Russians, 1990–98

Country	Ethnic Russians in 1989, (thousands)	Net migration of Russians to Russia 1990–98 (thousands)	Net migration in % of the total ethnic Russian population of 1989	Share of ethnic Russian return migration by country of origin (%)
Armenia	51.6	29.4	57.0	1.0
Azerbaijan	392.3	177.5	45.2	6.2
elarus	1,342.1	28.9	2.2	1.0
Estonia	474.8	57.45	12.1	2.0
Georgia	341.2	148.4	43.5	5.2
Kazakhstan	6,227.5	1,006.1	16.2	35.3
Kyrgyzstan	916.6	211.2	23.0	7.4
Latria	905.5	90.2	10.0	3.2
Lithuania	344.5	43.5	12.6	1.5
Moldova	562.1	50.7	9.0	1.8
Tajikistan	388.5	214.6	55.2	7.5
Turkmenistan	333.9	81.5	24.4	2.9
Ukraine	11,355.6	306.5	2.7	10.7
Uzbekistan	1,653.5	407.4	24.6	14.3
Total	25,289.5	2,853.3	11.3	100.0

Source: *Demograficheskiy ezhegodnik Rossii* [The Demographic Yearbook of Russia], (*Moscow*: Goskomstat, different years).

Return migration of ethnic Russians is not a completely new phenomenon. Their out-migration from other 'national' republics was

observed prior to the 1990s. In the 1990s, however, the pace of this process accelerated. During the nine years from 1990 to 1998, more than 2.8 million ethnic Russians, or more than 11 per cent of all ethnic Russians living in former Soviet republics outside Russia, returned to the Russian Federation.

The relative importance of ethnic Russian return migration varied between the outflows from different post-Soviet states. It did not affect the Russian communities of the two other Slavic Republics – just 2–3 per cent of all Russians living in Ukraine or Belarus left the country for good. Nor was ethnic Russian emigration very significant in Moldova or in the Baltic states. On the other hand, there were very high outflows from the four countries of Central Asia, comprising 28 per cent of their combined Russian population, and in particular from Transcaucasia. More than 45 per cent of all ethnic Russians previously living in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia left these countries. In the four Central Asian countries, where the size of the ethnic Russian population is half as large as that living in Kazakhstan, the net out-migration of ethnic Russians almost equals the out-migration from Kazakhstan alone. Central Asia and Kazakhstan together provide two-thirds of the net inflow of ethnic Russians to Russia.

In Turkmenistan and, in particular, in Tadjikistan, the outflow of Russians in the 1990s exceeded their total increase over the four decades between 1959 and 1989. In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the outflow was equivalent to about 70 per cent of the increase over the previous 40 years. In Kazakhstan it reached only about 40 per cent of this previous increase. In Transcaucasia, on the other hand, the ethnic Russian population had already diminished between 1959 and 1989. Here, the outflow of the 1990s can be interpreted as the continuation of a trend which had already existed before the dissolution of the USSR.

THE UKRAINIAN DIASPORA

While the Ukrainian and Russian diasporas have many similarities, significant distinctions can also be identified. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were about 26–27 million Ukrainians in the world. There have also been higher estimations – up to 34 or even up to 37 million (Sembratovytch 1907: 22–3, 29). In 1910, some 80 per cent of all Ukrainians, as identified by mother tongue, or about 22.4 million lived, in the Russian Empire. In addition, a large number of ethnic Ukrainians were to be found in the Austro-Hungarian empire. According to the census of 1910, the Ukrainian population of Austria-Hungary numbered about four million, of whom 3.2 million, essentially the members of the Uniate Church, that is, Greek Catholics, were

concentrated in Galicia, 0.3 million, essentially the Orthodox, in Bukovina and almost 0.5 million, mainly Greek Catholics, in Transcarpathia (Auerbach 1917: 24, 257, 272, 342, 381). Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ukrainians were divided by state boundaries, hut they were not dispersed.

Nevertheless a diaspora of Ukrainians existed. Before the First World War, several hundred thousand Ukrainian emigrants were dispersed throughout the world: about 250,000 to 300,000 Ukrainians from Galicia and Transcarpathia lived in the United States, about 170,000 in Canada and several tens of thousands in Brazil (Subtelny 1994: 541, 545, 547).

Besides these overseas emigrants, there was a Ukrainian diaspora in the Russian Empire. Though the Ukrainian settlements were frequenrly mixed with the Russian ones, at tbe beginning of the twentieth century there were well-defined areas with an overwhelmingly ethnic Ukrainian population. The Ukrainians formed a demographic majority in nine of the 50 provinces (*goubernii*) of European Russia. These nine provinces later formed the territory of the independent Ukrainian state (1918–19), then became Soviet Ukraine within the frontiers which existed herween 1919 and 1939. Bnt by 1897, according to the census, the total population of these provinces comprised only 76 per cent of all Ukrainians living in tbe Russian empire. The others lived either in neighbouring provinces with predominantly Russian or Polish populations or in regions characterized by Russian-Ukrainian settlements that emerged following imperial expansion and subsequent migratory colonizarion of Siberia, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The census results of 1897 accounted for 223,000 ethnic Ukrainians in Siberia and 102,000 in Central Asia. This settlement continued during the first decades of the rwentieth century.

> Berween 1896 and 1906 . . . about 1.6 million Ukrainians migrated eastwards. . . . By 1914 about two million Ukrainians lived permanently in the Far East. Moreover, proportionately almost twice as many Ukrainians as Russians moved eastward in search for land. Thus, at exactly the same time West Ukrainians from the Habsburg empire colonized the prairies of western Canada, their East Ukrainian counterparts were bringing the plough to Russia's Pacific coast. (Subtelny 1994: 262)

As a consequence of this process, the geographic dispersion of Ukrainians inside the Russian empire grew. It was obviously also accompanied by a rapid Russification of Ukrainians leaving their homeland, facilitated by the considerable cultural and linguistic proximity of Ukrainians and Russians.

Table 9.6
Ukrainians in the USSR, 1926

Republics and regions of the USSR	Ethnic Ukrainians (thousands)	Ethnic Ukrainians (%)	Ukrainians, urban population (%)	% Claiming Ukrainian as mother tongue	
				Total Ukrainian population	Urban Ukrainian population
USSR	31,195	100.0	10.5	87.1	64.9
Ukraine	23,219	74.4	10.9	94.1	74.5
Russian SFSR	7,873	25.2	8.9	67.0	31.7
Siberia	828	2.7	3.6	56.6	36.9
Kazakhstan*	861	2.8	3.7	76.5	39.8

* In 1926 Kazakhstan still formed part of the RSFSR.
Source: *Vsesojuznaja perepis' naselenia 1926 g.* [The All-Union Population Census of 1926] vol. IX, 34,40; vol. XI, 8, 10; vol. XVII, 8, 14.

As a result of the Second World War and the changed boundaries in Central and Eastern Europe, most members of Europe's divided Ukrainian community were incorporated into the Soviet Union and united within the confines of a single state. As a result, the share of Ukrainians living in the Soviet Ukraine grew after the Second World War to some 85 per cent (86.3 per cent in 1959, 86.6 in 1970, 86.2 in 1979 and 84.7 per cent in 1989).

Migration of Ukrainians to other republics of the USSR continued, but remained relatively small and had no further impact on the geographic dispersion of Soviet Ukrainians. Those living outside Ukraine, however, were rapidly Russified. In 1989, more than half of the Soviet Ukrainians living outside Ukraine had Russian as their first language (Table 9.7). This fact can be variously interpreted. One could say that Russian-speaking people of Ukrainian origin identified themselves as Ukrainians due to tradition rather than through ethnic consciousness whereas, in reality, they were already completely assimilated to Russian language and culture. But one could also argue that linguistic assimilation, on the contrary, did not change their underlying Ukrainianness. This argument could be extended even to some of those who, according to census data, identified themselves as Russians. Such assumptions are the basis for a revisionist interpretation of the 1989 Soviet census results. According to certain Ukrainian authors, the real size of the Ukrainian diaspora in Russia in 1989 was not 4.4 million as the census data show, but 10 million or more (*Informacijny buleten*, 1995, 54).

Table 9.7
Ukrainians in the USSR by area of settlement and mother tongue

	All Ukrainians		Ukrainians with Russian as mother tongue	
	Thousands	%	Thousands	as % of all Ukrainians
USSR	44,186	100.0	8,309	18.8
Ukraine	37,419	84.7	4,578	12.2
Russia	4,363	9.9	2,487	57.0
Other republics	2,404	5.4	1,243	51.7

Source: *Nacional'ny sostav* 1991.

In addition to being dispersed in the successor states of the Soviet Union, ethnic Ukrainians are dispersed throughout the world, mainly as a consequence of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century emigration to the New World, mostly from territories now belonging to Western Ukraine. An advanced process of linguistic and cultural assimilation of Ukrainians can be generally observed and, from the point of view of certain Ukrainian scholars, leads to the underestimation of the 'true number' of Ukrainians in the world. According to their estimations, more than one-third of all ethnic Ukrainians live outside their homeland and even by the official or lowest estimations, 21 per cent of all Ukrainians are part of the Ukrainian diaspora (Table 9.8).

Table 9.8
Distribution of Ukrainians throughout the world, early 1990s (thousands)

	Official data or minimal estimation	Maximal estimation		Official data or minimal estimation	Maximal estimation
Ukraine	37,419	37,419	Western Europe	119	140
FSU	6,767	17,208	North America	1,693	2,300
Russia	4,363	10,600	Canada	963	1,000
Kazakhstan	896	4,000	United States	730	1,300
Moldova	600	800	Central and		
Belarus	291	1,000	South America	580	585
Kyrgyzstan	108	300	Brazil	350	350
Others	508	508	Argentina	220	220
Central Europe	562	1012	Others	10	15
Poland	250	500	Australia and		
Romania	150	300	Oceania	30	30
Czechoslovakia	150	200			
Others	12	12	Total	47,171	58,694

Source: *Ukraine and Ukrainians* 1994: 9–10.

The dissolution of the USSR was accompanied by expectations of massive flows of ethnic Ukrainian return migration. According to the sociological poll in 1992, 10 per cent of the ethnic Ukrainian diaspora in the Russian Federation wanted to acquire Ukrainian citizenship, of whom half wanted to do so as soon as possible. In the Central Asian republics, this tendency was even more pronounced (Piskun 1999: 258). In fact, starting in 1991–92, Ukraine became a region experiencing more immigration than emigration, the result of the inflow of people leaving other successor states. About 40 per cent of this inflow consisted of Ukrainians leaving Russia, mainly its northern regions (Zajonchkovskaia 1999: 60).

However, 'beginning in 1993, ...owing to the aggravation of the socio-political situation, the process of repatriation was suspended' (Piskun 1999: 258). Migration streams altered, and in-migration to Ukraine became less important than out-migration. The migration balance of ethnic Ukrainians moving between Ukraine and Russia between 1992 and 1997 was positive for Russia at 165,000 persons, as more ethnic Ukrainians left Ukraine for Russia than vice versa. At the same time, return migration from the Western world, particularly from Canada and the US, was negligible.

THE GERMAN DIASPORA

The ethnic German diaspora of the USSR represented a different type of ethnic dispersion. In 1897, the census recorded some 1.8 million Germans in the Russian Empire, including 1.3 million in European Russia, 0.4 million in the Polish provinces, 57,000 in the Caucasus, more than 5,000 in Siberia and about 9,000 in Central Asia (*Pervaya* 1905: Table 1). Their ancestors, mostly peasants, artisans and sometimes members of liberal professions, for instance physicians, had arrived in Russia during the rule of Peter I and later by invitation of the German-born Catherine II. In the nineteenth century, the German colonists 'became a well-organized, privileged class, distinct from the Russian peasantry, with an internal self-government patterned on the institutions of their country of origin' (Fleischhauer and Pinkus 1986: 19), and the number of colonies and their population grew rapidly. However, the Germans were not completely separated from Russian society. Step by step, they became involved in the processes of general economic and social transformation. 'Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the former colonists were about to relinquish their ethnic-cultural and social-class isolation and become an active, dynamic component in general Russian economic and social life.' (Fleischhauer and Pinkus 1986: 24)

After the Civil War, at the beginning of the 1920s, not all territories of the former Russian empire became part of the USSR. As a consequence, after 1918, two-fifths of Russia's ethnic Germans became citizens of other countries. In 1897, those parts of Tsarist Russia which later became part of the USSR had an ethnic German population of 1,030,000 (*Vsesojuznaja* 1928: Table 1). The Soviet Census of 1926 registered 1,193,000 Germans, using the criterion of mother tongue (as in 1897) and 1,238,000 Germans by ethnic identification. The majority of Soviet Germans lived in the European part of the Russian Federation, with a particular regional concentration in the German Autonomous Volga Republic and in Ukraine (see Table 9.9).

Table 9.9
Distribution of ethnic Germans throughout the USSR, 1926 and 1939

Regions of the USSR	Thousands		%	
	1926	1939	1926	1939
USSR	1,239	1,4273	100.0	100.0
Russian Federation	806	863	65.1	60.4
German Autonomous Volga Republic	380	367	30.6	25.7
Ukraine	394	393	31.8	27.5
Other republics	38	172	3.1	12.1

Source: *Vsesojuznaja perepis' naselenia* 1926 g. vol. 9, p. 8, 70; vol. 11, p. 8, vol. 17, p. 8; *Vsesojuznaja perepis' naselenia* 1939 g., 1992, Table 16.

The shift of Soviet frontiers to the West in 1939 and again in 1945 did not lead to an increase in the ethnic German population, as most ethnic Germans living in these newly annexed territories had been forced to emigrate and resettled between 1939 and 1944 in Germany (see Chapter 15). In accordance with the Soviet–German agreements of 1939–40, about 450,000 ethnic Germans from the Baltic states, Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, all annexed by the USSR, and Southern Dobrudja, taken by Bulgaria, were transferred to Nazi Germany within its new frontiers (Fleischhauer and Pinkus 1986: 64). Others were resettled from the Crimean peninsula and the nothern Caucasus. Similarly, at the end of the Second World War, almost one million former citizens either fled from the Soviet administered part of East Prussia or were expelled in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement (Reichling 1986, 1989). The destiny of the remaining 'Soviet' Germans was even more tragic. They were deported from the European part of the USSR to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia after the German invasion in 1941. Most of them remained there until the late 1980s, initially because they were deprived of their right to return to the places where they had lived before deportation, and thereafter because they had no real possibility of returning to their historical areas of settlement. A growing number of ethnic Germans

perceived emigration to Germany as the only way to overcome the situation. However, in the 1950s, few Soviet Germans managed to emigrate (8,000 from 1950 to 1958, 13,000 from 1958 to 1960). Some 62,000 emigrated from 1972 to 1980 (see chapter 15).

Table 9.10
Distribution of ethnic Germans in the USSR, 1989

Regions of the USSR	Thousands	%
USSR total	2,039	100.0
Russian Federation	842	41.3
Western and Eastern Siberia	483	23.7
Ukraine	38	1.9
Kazakhstan	958	47.0
Central Asia	178	8.7
Other republics	23	1.1
European part of the USSR	420	20.6
Asian part of the USSR	1,619	79.4

Source: Nacional'ny sostav 1991: 5–19.

Although the desire to emigrate already existed during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, it was not yet common among Soviet Germans. Many of them were isolated from German culture, had become linguistically assimilated and were losing their ethnic identity. In the 1926 census, some 95 per cent of all ethnic Germans claimed German as their mother tongue, but in the 1989 census, 51 per cent of all ethnic Germans declared that their mother tongue was Russian. According to the 1994 Russian microcensus, 87 per cent of ethnic Germans said that they used the Russian language at home, 99 per cent in their institution of education and 97 per cent at work (*Rossijskij* 1997: Table 2.9).

For a long time, the majority of Soviet Germans still hoped to restore their settlement areas in the RSFSR and in Ukraine, to reconstitute the German Autonomous Republic in the Volga region and thus to return to the places where they had previously lived. None of these projects was realized and towards the late 1980s, repatriation to Germany became the only way to leave Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

It was at this time that repatriation of ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union became important. Only 95,000 ethnic Germans left the USSR between 1950 and 1986 whereas from 1987 to 1990, the number of emigrants reached 308,000. According to German immigration data, some 1.8 million ethnic Germans emigrated from the USSR and its successor states to Germany during the period from the end of the 1940s to 1999 (see Chapter 15 and *Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler*, 1999). It is probable that the German diaspora in this part of the world will disappear in the near future.

TATAR DIASPORA

The idea of national-territorial autonomy, officially declared as a founding principle of the Soviet Union, required the creation of autonomous territorial units for each and every minority of the USSR. For most groups, union republics or territorial units of lower rank – autonomous republics, autonomous *oblasts*, and so on – were created. These territorial units were seen as official homelands, but (as shown in Table 9.1) many ethnic groups remained dispersed outside these homelands. The Tatars of the Volga region, the second largest ethnic group of the Russian Federation, represent a typical example for such a diaspora.

In the sixteenth century, after the military victories of Ivan the Terrible, the Volga Tatars lost their independent state and became Russian subjects. Over the next four centuries they maintained their language, culture and religion but continued interaction with ethnically Russian environments, and Russian authorities destroyed the isolation of the Tatar communities step by step. In the twentieth century, the processes of modernization involved Tatars as well as Russians, Ukrainians and members of most other ethnic groups of the Soviet Union, thus leading to major migration flows. In the late 1980s, almost three out of four Volga Tatars lived beyond the boundaries of Tatarstan and almost a quarter very far from their homeland – in Siberia, the Far East, Kazakhstan, Central Asia and so on. About 17 per cent of the Volga Tatars (1.1 million persons) lived beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation.

Table 9.11
Tatars in the USSR, 1989

	Thousands	%	Tatars claiming Russian as mother tongue (%)
USSR total	6,649	100.0	16
Tatarstan	1,765	26.5	3
Bashkortostan	1,121	16.9	7
Other parts of European Russia	2,157	23.4	25
Asian parts of Russia	479	7.2	23
Other republics	1,127	16.9	25

In 1989, only about 3 per cent of Tatars living in Tatarstan and about 7 per cent of those living in Bashkortostan claimed Russian as their mother tongue. Among the Tatars living beyond the boundaries of these two autonomous republics, however, the share of Russian-speaking Tatars had risen to 25 per cent. The actual degree of Russification is even higher. In the course of the 1994 microcensus, 38 per cent of the

Tatars living in the Russian Federation declared that they use the Russian language at home, 86 per cent used Russian as their main language of education, and 79 per cent used Russian at work (*Rossijskij* 1997: Table 2.9).

The dispersion of Volga Tatars throughout the Soviet Union grew until the late 1970s, hut has since diminished through return migration. Between 1959 and 1979, the share of Tatars living outside Russia increased from 17.2 to 19.1 per cent, but fell to 16.9 per cent hetween 1979 and 1989. The migration flows of the 1990s show an accelerated repatriation of Tatars to Russia: between 1989 and 1999 a positive net migration of Volga Tatars to Russia added 211,000 persons to the number of Volga Tatars already living in the Russian Federation.

CONCLUSION

The impact of the dissolution of the USSR upon the dynamics of diasporas was not the same for all groups. The migrations caused by the new political situation have, in some cases, led to the reduction of diasporas while the creation of new ethnically defined nation states has led to the emergence of new minority populations. A central question is whether we should apply the term 'diaspora' to all of these situations.

One of the first objectives for voluntary as well as for involuntary migrants is to adapt and to root themselves in the alien, unfamiliar surroundings of the host societies. Adaptation is not a straightforward process and may often be very painful. Living in a diaspora is just an institutionalized form which helps migrants to live simultaneously in two milieus and thus facilitates the process of adapration. In the past, such a dual existence could be long-lasting, and appeared to be permanent for the specific ethnic or confessional communities settled within a host society. Nowadays modern diasporas are much more numerous than the diasporas of the past, and in many cases the members of these diasporas face the choice of either rerurning to their homeland or assimilating in the host society.

There are, on the one hand, universal and egalitarian ideas of the Enlightenment and French Revolution as well as the practice of the nation-states based on the civil criteria of territorial and political membership. On the other hand, opposing ideas have emerged in Central and Eastern Europe, such as notions of impermeable borders between cultures, the primordial and unchangeable belonging of individuals to everlasting communities, ethnically based nations, not to mention the resulting idea and practice of ethnically 'pure' states, marginalized ethnic minorities, and, in extreme cases, ethnic cleansing.

The idea of 'classical' diaspora conforms more with the latter

conceptions because it presumes that religious and cultural distinctions will be preserved and existing ethno-cultural cleavages will persist. But now, members of diasporas may see the chance to transcend ethnic borders within multiethnic societies, to assimilate and become part of the ethno-cultural majority or to find an alternative basis for social integration and self-identification. These processes can, in different societies, go a variety of ways. In the former Soviet Union, these processes were complicated by the contradictory attitude of the state, which tried to combine the policies of 'melting-pot', of assimilation and of diasporization. In the USSR, the ethnic affiliation of every citizen was not a question of personal self-identification but was a matter of descent. Soviet citizens 'inherited' their ethnicity from their parents. In Soviet documents, such as internal passports, ethnic affiliation was a criterion defining personal identity. Thus, everybody living outside the historical homeland was, by definition, a member of a diaspora. In the Soviet period, the preservation of ethnic boundaries played a double role.

On the one hand, it allowed the retention or development of multiple identities for those who did not want to or could not become part of the Russian majority. In such a manner it served the interests, even if only temporarily, of many ethnic minorities. One could simultaneously perceive oneself as Tatar, as a citizen of the Russian Fedetation and as a Soviet citizen.

On the other hand, ethnic boundaries protected the status of the ethnic majority, for whom the real 'melting-pot' ideology and practice was undesirable because it tended to undermine older political and social privileges based on ethnic origins. Russians were first among equals in Tatarstan, in Uzbekistan, in Kazakhstan and everywhere else in the Soviet Union. The preservation of ethnic harriers by official policy promoted diasporization which sometimes also meant 'ghettoization' and, in any case, diminished the effect of the melting pot.

The idea of ethnically based nations is one of the most important elements of the total ideological heritage of the Soviet Union. The universal conceptions of republican membership or the idea of the 'melting-pot' are not popular in any of the Soviet successor states. A revival of ethnic feelings is evident. All kinds of economic or political demands are, whenever possible, accompanied by ethnic references, or are camouflaged by them.