

**Introduction:**

This new quarterly aims to monitor events producing refugees from the republics and emerging states of the Soviet Union.

# Announcing Soviet Refugee Monitor

territories result. A backlash against Russian people could result from a history of reverse discrimination. Thousands of Russians have already been returning to

**Format:** *Soviet Refugee Monitor* will include translations of documentary materials from the USSR, and analytical papers by Western and Soviet authors. As well as monitoring ethnic repression, and external and internal migration flows, this journal will provide early warning information, so that Western countries can better plan, coordinate and respond to migratory movements.

**Audience:** We hope to attract various categories of readers: Western European states, which may be inundated with USSR refugees in the near future; governments of countries resettling refugees (such as the U.S. and Canada); agencies responsible for refugee status determination; organizations providing aid to refugees (including United Nations High Commission for Refugees and numerous non-governmental organizations); academic researchers; and people generally concerned about refugee issues and specifically concerned about Soviet refugees.

**Volume 1, Number 1:** The first issue, to be published this Fall 1991, looks at the antisemitism that has surfaced under Gorbachev. Other forthcoming issues will focus on specific regions and ethnic conflicts arising in the USSR, and the problems of Jews under new conditions of emerging independent states.

**Context:** As the Soviet empire unravels, ethnic conflicts escalate. Decolonization entails redefinition of territorial boundaries. Historically, boundaries between republics were drawn arbitrarily, separating existing ethnic populations and their territories. Today, the formation of sovereign states in the Baltic, Central Asia, Caucasus, Ukraine and other parts of what has been the Soviet Union, will likely be accompanied by border disputes. Autonomous regions within the republics will likely demand their independence also, and it is unlikely the emerging states will be willing to cede it.

Another consequence of decolonization is the resurgence of ethnic identities, often carrying nationalist overtones. New democratic forces coming to power are not devoid of nationalist sentiments. As these republics gain independence, nationalism could escalate and repression of ethnic minorities living in the

their ancestral lands, and this movement is likely to increase as more republics gain independence.

The arrival of masses of Russians to their federation, forced to flee because of ethnic discrimination against them, will probably reinforce Russian nationalism, which is already strong in the Russian Federation. Under conditions of the growing nationalism, antisemitism and repression of other ethnic minorities are likely to gain strength.

Jews are widely dispersed throughout the USSR. Except for the Jewish Autonomous Republic, they constitute an ethnic minority in every region. They may experience more discrimination as nationalists gain control.

Ethnic clashes within newly established states and territorial disputes between them, may in some cases escalate into full-blown civil war. These conflicts will produce victims. Masses of people will become refugees. Some of them will repatriate to their titular states, but others will move westward. This move will challenge Western countries to prepare for mass movements of people from these territories. In addition to ethnic conflicts, political confrontations between various parties and movements may add to the total number of refugees. These people are the focus of this publication.

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