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Ethnic Purification and Its Three Types of Refugees

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

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

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

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

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

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