

ACADEMIC LIFE

Congresses and Conferences

The "National Question" in the Soviet Union

University of Waterloo, Canada, May 2-5, 1990

The purpose of the organizer (the Waterloo-Laurier Centre for Soviet Studies, director Prof. John Jaworsky) was to provide an assessment of the most important recent developments concerning the "national question" in the Soviet Union, to place them in their historical, socio-economic and comparative context. Some participants, including scholars from Canada, the United States, USSR and Europe, approached the topics from a theoretical and global point of view, discussing the relation between Communism and nationalism (Prof. Roman Szporluk, Dr. P. I. Puchkov, Prof. Orest Subtelny, Prof. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, Prof. Igor Grazin), between religion and nationalism in the Soviet Union (Prof. Loren Colder, Prof. Bohdan Bociurkiw, Prof. William Fierman, Dr. Gerhard Simon).

A panel dedicated to the "non-territorial minorities" in the USSR (moderator: Judy Young) included a discussion on the Polish community in Lithuania (Prof. Magdalena Opalski) and the situation of the Jews. Prof. Eugene Orenstein presented a comprehensive survey of the history of Jewish national movements in the Soviet Union, in the condition of a continuous confrontation with the changing and increasingly oppressive Stalinist national policy. He expressed his belief in the possibility, in the circumstances created by the policy of *glasnost'*, of a Soviet Jewish community with a dual identity, following a Jewish-American model. The commentator of the panel (Dr. Leon Volovici) and participants at the discussion did not share this optimistic view, since the structure of Soviet society, its ideology, even liberalized, and the level of antisemitism do not augur such a happy evolution in the future.

The Recovery of Memory:

Eastern Europe and the Question of Nationalism

Bard College, May 11-13, 1990

The conference, at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.), focused on political, cultural, and social topics linked both to the consequences of *perestroika* in the USSR and the radical political changes in Eastern and Central Europe. Among the participants were specialists from the USA, Canada, and

Israel, as well as writers and former dissidents from the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and East Germany. The keynote speaker was the Russian writer and dissident Andrei Siniavskii, who lectured on "Problems of Russian Nationalism Today." Paying special attention to the current emergence of antisemitic manifestations and writings in Soviet society, Siniavskii emphasized the ideological and intellectual aspects of the problem, in particular the xenophobic and antisemitic campaign against the "Russophobes." He considered this phenomenon a new form of the myth of the "enemy," created by Soviet propaganda in the Stalinist period. The former class-enemy, Siniavskii observed, has been replaced in ultra-nationalist, chauvinist writings by the "Russophobes," i.e., the "pluralists," the Russian liberal intellectuals, supporters of a democratic, western-type society and first of all, the Jews. The anti-"Russophobic" campaign has been given a strong ideological basis in Igor Shafarevich's essay "Russophobia." Siniavskii made special comment on Shafarevich's tendency to present the Jews as waging a mortal struggle against the Russian people and Russia's Christianity. Behind Shafarevich's ideas, claimed Siniavskii, there is the personality of Solzhenitsyn, giving them the weight of his great authority. Siniavskii related Shafarevich's views to a previous article written by Solzhenitsyn ("Our Pluralists") sharing the same aversion for the democratic-oriented Russian intellectuals, accused of "hatred for Russia" and the Russian soul. The myth of the demonic role of the Jews in the October Revolution, presented in Shafarevich's essay, can also be found earlier, according to Sinyavsky, in Solzhenitsyn's *Lenin in Zurich*. In the last part of his talk, Siniavskii analyzed two blatantly antisemitic pictures reproduced by the right-wing magazine *Molodaia gvardiia*. One presented the biblical Esther as an embodiment of evil and the supreme Jewish threat to the Russians, while the other portrayed the symbolic image of an umbrella, representing the Jewish world plot against Russia, supported by other hostile forces, such as the journals *Ogonek*, *Moskovskie novosti*, the BBC, Radio Liberty, the Voice of America, etc.

A panel moderated by Prof. Leo Botstein (the president of Bard College) was dedicated to the "Jewish question" and its new implications in Eastern Europe. The discussion on antisemitism in the USSR was here resumed by Prof. Abraham Brumberg, from a different point of view. He considered that the proportions of the antisemitic manifestations in the Soviet Union had been much exaggerated and distorted by the American mass media. The results of the last elections for the Soviet parliament, claimed Prof. Brumberg, demonstrated that the candidates representing xenophobic and antisemitic views had not gained a large support. The recent great scale of Jewish emigration, he added, is not a direct effect of the antisemitic atmosphere. It is rather a result of the "privileged" emigration opportunities granted to the Jews.

The new aspects of the nationalistic and antisemitic tendencies in Romania were discussed by Dr. Leon Volovici in relation to the singular nature of

Ceausescu's regime, the character and standing of the Jewish community and the forms of nationalist ideology traditional in Romania. Ceausescu's *pragmatic* antisemitism avoided the major elements of Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda. His policy meant the gradual yet systematic elimination of the Jews from every important aspect of political, social, and economic life. In its cultural milieu, Ceausescu's xenophobia gained support from a new and nationalistic "right wing" which became prominent in the early eighties due to a noisy antisemitic campaign. The widespread hatred for Ceausescu and the violent overthrow of his dictatorship discredited this "new right."

Two papers were dedicated to the present situation of the Jews in Poland. Konstanty Gebert (who often writes under the pen name David Warszawski) analyzed the recent developments in Polish-Jewish affairs in the historical framework of the evolution of antisemitism in post-war Poland. The quantity of antisemitic literature now circulating in Poland, in contrast with the insignificant number of Jews, is explained by the fact that after the war, antisemitism was never really challenged in Communist Poland. In recent years, however, he asserted, there has been increasing opposition to antisemitism among intellectual and Catholic circles. Prof. Iwona Yrwin-Zarecka focused on the moral and psychological impact of the Holocaust, as exemplified by the polemics aroused in the Polish press after Jan Blonski's article "Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto" and Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*.

The new intellectual implications of the problem of nationalism were also mentioned in a special session on "The Role of Culture in Post-Dissident Society" (moderator: Prof. Karen J. Greenberg, the main organizer of the conference). The speakers were writers and former dissidents from Eastern Europe: Norman Manea ("The Nature of Romanian Dissidence"), Milan Simecka ("Culture and Politics in Czechoslovakia") and Helena Luczywo ("Poland, Solidarity and the Press").

compiled by Leon Volovici

Shlomo Mikhoels, the Yiddish Theater, and Soviet Jewry Jerusalem, May 16-17, 1990

A conference sponsored by the Centre on Shlomo Mikhoels, *Goset*, the Jewish State Theater in Moscow, and Soviet Jewry, was held in Jerusalem on May 16-17, 1990. Participating lecturers came from all the universities in Israel and from Moscow and Leningrad. The conference dealt with the various aspects of *Goset*, the uniqueness of Shlomo Mikhoels as actor, director, and Jewish public figure, and the place of the Yiddish theater in general in the cultural life of Soviet Jewry. The destruction of *Goset* was discussed in the perspective of the total liquidation of Jewish cultural life under Stalin.

The conference closed with a festive evening dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Mikhoels. His daughter, Natal'ia Vovsi Mikhoels, spoke about her

father; Ella Zuskin Perlman, daughter of actor Viniamin Zuskin, spoke about *Goset*. The program included musical selections sung in Yiddish by Ethel Kubinska and selections read by Shmuel Atsmon, director of the Yiddish theater in Israel.

Scenes from the film *The King and the Fool*, which featured footage of Mikhoels himself, were shown.

The conference and memorial evening attracted considerable interest among the general public and in the Israeli media.

compiled by Michal Unger

Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Israeli Association of Slavic and East European Studies The Hebrew University of Jerusalem May 20, 1990

As usual this annual conference was both interdisciplinary and international. In regard to its participants, the session devoted to the History of Slavic Languages and Literatures featured presentations by Nikita Tolstoy, of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and Efim Etkind, of the Université de Paris X. In a reference to the location of the conference and the cultural ties between Russia and Israel, Prof. Etkind closed his presentation on "The Literary Process in Russia in the 20th Century" by citing a Russian poem about the small country of Israel.

The lecture which most related to the topic of our journal was "Relations between Poles and Jews during World War II," by David Engel of Tel Aviv University. This presentation stirred up controversy among the audience as it challenged conventional views and stressed relations between the Poles and the major powers. The lecturer attributed Polish lack of interest in saving Jews to their perceived interest and their views of Jewish influence or lack of influence with the United States rather than mainly to antisemitism.

Seminar on Jewish Civilization in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union Jerusalem, July 3-20

The special seminar on Jewish Civilization in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was sponsored by the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, which was established by Prof. Moshe Davis and is conducted under the auspices of the President of Israel.

This seminar had three components: tutorials (individual work of an Israeli scholar with each participant, based on his individual needs); integration (participation in one of the continuing workshops, according to field of academic specialization); and research-oriented visits to Israeli educational institutions, libraries, archives and collections. The director of the seminar was Prof. Mordechai Altshuler of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and head of the Centre for Research and Documentation of East European Jewry of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and coordinator was Mikhail Beizer of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry.

The participants from Eastern Europe and the USSR heard lecturers on current trends in research in several areas: Israeli society (Zeev Katz), Jewish demography (Uziel Schmelz), the Holocaust (Yehuda Bauer), Jewish studies (Joseph Dan), and were acquainted with the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library and Jewish archives and collections in Israel.

As their part of the two-way exchange, the visiting scholars gave presentations based on their research. Among the topics addressed and the lecturers were: "The Problem of Teaching Hebrew in the USSR" (Anatolii Yurkov), "Palestine and Israeli Studies in the USSR" (Andrei Fedorchenko), "The Social Structure of the Major *Aliyot* and its Impact on the Economic Development of the *Yishuv* and Israel" (Valerii Afingenov), "Soviet 'Thick Magazines' of the Jewish Emigration from the USSR in the 1980s" (Sergei Glukhov), and "Anti-semitism in the Soviet Union: Some Recent Developments and Trends" (Nikolai Rudenskii).

In connection with the tenth anniversary of the International Center, participants in the workshops, including those in this seminar, attended a reception held at the residence of President Herzog and at the neighboring Israel Academy of Sciences.

The Fourth World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies Harrowgate, U.K., July 21-26, 1990

Three sessions at the Fourth World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies were devoted to topics related to Soviet Jewry:

- ◇ "Jews in Soviet Culture": Chair—Efraim Sicher (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheva, Israel);
Presentations—"Russianness' and the Changing Nature of Jewish Identity," Alice Nakhimovsky (Colgate University, USA); "Khaim Lenskii," Hamutal Bar-Yosef ((Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheva, Israel).
- ◇ "Isaac Babel's *Kon armia*": Chair—Arnold B. McMillin (London University);

Papers: "The Cemetery at Kozin," Joost van Baak (U. of Groningen, The Netherlands); "The Jewish Jesus in *Kon armia*," Efraim Sicher (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheva, Israel); "The *Kon armia* that was not Written," Agnes Gereben (U. of Budapest);

Discussant: Maurice Friedberg (U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA).

- ◇ "World War Two in Soviet Memory":

Papers: "Vasilii Grossman," Frank Ellis (U. of Bristol, UK); "Bitter Victory: The Corrective Lens of Vasilii Grossman," John Garrard (U. of Arizona).

compiled by Efraim Sicher

At the Centre

On May 10, 1990, the director of the Institute of History of the USSR of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, corresponding member of the Academy **Anatolii Novosel'tsev**, and the head of the department of the History of the Second World War, Prof. **Georgii Kumanev**, were interviewed at the Centre by L. Dymerskaia-Tsigelman and D. Prital.

The purpose of the visit of the two Soviet historians to Israel was to establish cooperation with their Israeli counterparts. Academician Novosel'tsev reported that talks with the scientific directorship of Yad Vashem Memorial and Martyrs Authority had led to an agreement on annual colloquia on the genocide of the Jewish people; on the participation of Jews in the war against Hitler, in the partisan movement, and in the underground movements; and on the relation of the populations of occupied territories to the Jews. A total of six colloquia have been planned, to be held alternately in Moscow and Jerusalem with their materials to be published. In addition the publication of documentary sources is foreseen as another outcome of Soviet-Israel academic cooperation.

Prof. Kumanev spoke about the huge masses of documents which have not yet been examined by historians. In the archives of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR alone there are preserved five million files which have to be examined and analyzed. Vast work remains to be done in connection with arriving at an accurate number of the Jews who perished in territories occupied by the Nazis. At present corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR Iu. Poliakov is in charge of the preparation for publication of the results of the 1937 All-Union Census of the Population. The materials from this census were secret since the real figure of 162,000,000 people did not correspond to the population claimed by Stalin of 193,000,000. Prof. Kumanev stated that there had been a conscious lowering of the number of total losses during the war and the number of Jews who perished in the occupied territories. No fewer than 2,000,000 Jews were killed there, not 1,700,000, as was stated at the Nuremburg Trials. The lower figure did not include Jewish prisoners of

war whom the Nazis executed as soon as they discovered them, or Jews from Western countries who were killed on Soviet territory. The extent to which the figures were understated can be seen from the example of Lithuania. It has been claimed that 135,000 Jews were killed there; however, according to Soviet documents, between October 1941 and January 1942 one single *Einsatz* group killed 136,000 Jews in Lithuania.

The two Soviet historians consider the possibilities of joint work with Dr. Arad and other specialists at Yad Vashem to be very promising. The Soviet guests also expressed their appreciation of the exhibits at Yad Vashem, which they found unique in concept and execution and of both patriotic and humanistic significance.

Academician Novosel'tsev noted that his institute is planning research on the history of Jews in pre-revolutionary Russia, as well as in the USSR. A preliminary agreement has already been reached in regard to cooperation in this field with Prof. Mordechai Altshuler, scientific director of The Centre for Documentation and Research on East European Jewry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The question was posed to the visitors whether it is true, as some Soviet Jewish activists including Mikhail Chlenov have alleged, that the history of Soviet Jewry is now coming to an end? Academician Novosel'tsev and Prof. Kumaev did not accept this view. They admitted that the present emigration of Soviet Jews had assumed a mass character, but stated that there were still many Jews for whom their homeland is the USSR and who would remain there if it were not for increasing antisemitism. He stressed that the success of *perestroika* and stabilization in the country was a factor that would decrease antisemitism and could slow down Jewish emigration.

The Soviet historians asserted that the Jewish question in the Soviet Union does not exist in isolation. They noted that nationality conflicts have become aggravated in many areas of their country and that it is difficult for everyone in a transitional period. However, they admitted that Soviet Jews have their own particular difficulties which can largely be explained by the fact that over many years anti-Zionist propaganda cultivated a negative attitude toward Jews, as well as Israel. Still Academician Novosel'tsev and Prof. Kumaev expressed their view that one should not expect pogroms. They added that the attitude in Soviet society toward emigrants has changed: that there was at least a desire to understand the reasons for emigration and, on the part of many Soviet citizens, sorrow at the departure of Jewish friends, co-workers and neighbors.

Returning to the subject of scientific cooperation, the Soviet historians spoke about the difficulties presented by the lack of trained specialists and lack of language skills, especially Hebrew, in terms of having access to scholarship in the field. Hence, they concluded that priority should be given to active cooperation in training specialists capable of researching Jewish history in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet poet and chairman of the Union of Writers of the RSFSR, **Sergei Mikhalkov**, visited the Centre in June. He spoke on the role of Soviet writers in a society that is suffering from a lack of stability and direction.

Mikhalkov expressed his hope that his resignation would be accepted at the upcoming congress of writers. He announced his desire to resign as chairman of the Union of Writer of the USSR in November, at the sixth plenum of the board of Russian writers. However, he was unwilling to predict who his successor might be. He opined that anyone who was really fit for the post would not accept it, while those who sought the post were not fit for it. In response to a question about what occurred at the 6th plenum of the Union of Writers of the RSFSR, Mikhalkov (who had chaired the plenum) replied that extremely antisemitic speeches had been delivered there. One was by Tat'iana Glushkova, whom he characterized as mentally unbalanced. He also singled out the writer Sergei Voronin for, together with his cronies, attempting to calculate the number of Jews, half-Jews, quarter-Jews, etc. in the writers' organization of Leningrad. They finally arrived at the conclusion that this group had only twenty "pure Russians."

According to Mikhalkov, such speeches set the tone for the whole plenum. These speakers were associated with the journal *Molodaia gvardiia*, which Mikhalkov characterized as extremely antisemitic. Mikhalkov totally rejected this tendency, noting that the journal was affiliated with the Komsomol and not with his Union of Writers.

Mikhalkov associated his own attitudes toward Jews and antisemitism with that of the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev [1874-1948, in exile from 1922], whose article "Christianity and Antisemitism" was recently reprinted in the journal *Druzhba narodov*. Mikhalkov recommended reproducing Berdiaev's essay in many copies for mass distribution just as Russian chauvinists had been doing with their own leaflets and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The poet repudiated the antisemitic letter of writers of Russia published in the spring of 1990 in many nationalistically oriented publications (first in the newspaper *Moskovskii literator*, on Mar. 2, 1990), which he informed the audience was authored by Glushkova. He expressed the opinion that some writers, like Leonid Leonov and Valentin Rasputin, had agreed to put their names to it without even seeing the text. In regard to those who caused a scandal in the Writers' House in Moscow in January and those who drew stars of David on the portrait of candidates for peoples' deputies in an effort to brand all liberals as Jews, Mikhalkov recommended that the perpetrators spend some time in jail, as existing laws could be applied to their activities.

In response to a question as to the source of financing of expensive public activities, e.g., the demonstration with participants dressed in uniforms of soldiers of Tsar Nicholas II, publication of materials, renting of halls, etc., the writer expressed his view that the subsidies could have come from cooperatives which had succeeded in enriching themselves.

Mikhalkov, co-author of the Soviet Union national anthem, said:

During the war when I wrote "The friendship of the nations is a trusty support" [a line from the anthem], I believed that this friendship existed. Today the words of the hymn do not correspond to reality. Enmity to the Jews is part of the general hatred of all for all. Especially dangerous are the national-religious conflicts and the merciless fanatics. I was asked to head a commission to write a new state hymn. I refused, but I could not refrain from giving this bit of advice: "Take the old tsarist hymn [God save the tsar] and write "God save the Central Committee."

On October 7, 1990 the demographer **Mark Kupovetskii**, chief scientific consultant of the Jewish Historical Society (Moscow), lectured on features of the ethnic and historical development of Jews in the Soviet Union.

Characterizing the state of research in the field of the ethno-demography of Soviet Jewry, the lecturer stressed that even at present in works on Soviet Jews there still prevailed the tradition that can be traced back to the historian Iulii Gessen.

In this approach the history of the Jews is viewed externally, in the context of the Jews and their relation to the state, to the surrounding society, while ethnic and demographic processes taking place within the Jewish milieu receive considerably less attention. A happy exception noted by Kupovetskii to this type of research is represented by the works of Mordechai Altshuler, Zvi Gitelman, and some other researchers.

To questions about who is a Jew, what criteria he would use to define a Jew, and according to what sources is the Jewish population of the USSR calculated, the lecturer responded as follows:

A Jew can be considered someone who:

1. Referred to himself as such during a census;
2. Is indicated as a Jew under "nationality" in his internal Soviet passport (this would be "legal nationality");
3. A person who is considered Jewish by *halakhah* (Jewish religious law);
4. A person who referred to himself as a Jew in some situation, e.g., that of mass repatriation to Israel."

The last type of self-identification Kupovetskii referred to as "situational self-identification"

Kupovetskii stressed that in the census of 1989 Jews for the first time appeared as five separate nationalities (Jews, Central Asian Jews, Mountain Jews, Georgian Jews, and Krymchaks), while in previous censuses from 1939, the Jews appeared as a single ethnic unity. According to the census of 1989 the total number of Soviet Jews was 1,450,000. However, this figure is approximate, as he proceeded to explain. As shown by experience in conducting censuses, the total population is not taken into account. The specific

features of various regions also affect results. Thus, it is well known that in Dagestan and the Northern Caucasus some Mountain Jews prefer to identify as Tats and Muslim groups in Azerbaidjan identify as Azerbaijanis. One also needs to take into consideration how nationality is defined in mixed families. Statistically, in the majority of such families, it is the husband who is Jewish. Census-takers visit homes during working hours and often find at home pensioner parents. The non-Jewish mother-in-laws, even if they identify their sons-in-laws as Jews, do not thus identify their grandchildren and, most often identify the whole family according to their own (non-Jewish) nationality.

This and similar circumstances lead to the outcome that census figures for Jews are lower than the actual number of Jews. This becomes obvious, noted Kupovetskii, when one compares them with data on current statistics of demographic processes, such as births, marriages, and deaths, recorded by nationality on Soviet internal passports. Estimates of the difference between the census data and data of such statistics ranges from 10%–20%.

The number of Jews according to *halakhah* basically equals the number of those born in mono-ethnic Jewish families. The children in mixed families are almost all—both according to census data and to current statistical data—reported as non-Jews. If one turns from consideration of these factors to figures, they are as follows: according to the 1989 census the Jews number 1,450,000; according to data of current demographic statistics (or "legal nationality") the Jews number 1,600,000–1,700,000; according to *halakhah* (including people of ethnically mixed origin in the first generation) 1,800,000–2,000,000; to this one can add those who define themselves as Jews in the present situation ("situational self-identification"). These are people were born of ethnically mixed marriages in which the husbands were Jews. Situational self-identification results in the number of Jews and those identifying themselves as Jews as between 2,000,000 and 2,300,000. This latter group comprises the potential for emigration. If one includes non-Jews who are members of ethnically mixed families, the potential increases to 3,000,000.

The lecturer then proceeded to analyze the dynamics of the size of the Jewish population of the USSR from 1939 to 1989. According to the last pre-war census of 1939, there were 3,028,000 Jews in the USSR. After the annexation of territories in which there lived approximately 1,800,000 Jews, the size of the Jewish population (excluding the refugees from countries occupied by Germany, primarily from western Poland) reached 4,820,000. If one includes the refugees, then before the outbreak of the war with Germany there were more than five million Jews in the Soviet Union. According to the census of 1959 the number of Jews living in the USSR was 2,268,000. In 1970 the number was 2,151,000, in 1979—1,811,000, in 1989—1,450,000. Thus in the twenty-year period from 1939 to 1959 the Jewish population decreased by 53%, while in the thirty years from 1959 to 1989 it decreased by 36%. Overall

in the last fifty years the Jewish population in the USSR declined by two thirds (from 4,820,000 to 1,450,000).

From an analysis of the size of the Jewish population, Kupovetskii moved to an analysis of the ethnic structure of the Jewish population of the USSR. He stated that over 90% of Soviet Jews were Ashkenazi. The number of other Jewish sub-ethnic groups indicated in the census, he noted, was lower than their real number, since some of the Jews identified themselves simply as Jews rather than as one of the ethnic sub-groups (e.g. "Bokharan Jew" or "Mountain Jew") or identified themselves as belonging to a totally different nationality (as in the case of Mountain Jews who identified themselves as Tats).

Kupovetskii provided the following estimation of the real number of Eastern or non-Ashkenazi Jews: Bukharan Jews: 60,000–70,000 (in contrast to the figure of 30,000–40,000 which has appeared in some Western publications); Mountain Jews: 50,000–60,000; Georgian Jews: 18,000–20,000; Krymchaki: 1,500; Lakhlukhi: approximately 1,000; Persian (Iranian) Jews: approximately 800. He expressed the view that one can not presently consider the Karaites a Jewish sub-*ethnos*. Both because of their self-identification and because of the way that they are considered by their non-Karaite ethnic milieu Kupovetskii defines the Karaites as a distinct *ethnos*. Their number (2,600, according to the latest census) is declining even more rapidly than that of the Jews. The primary factor is active assimilation.

The following table summarizes Kupovetskii's conclusions about the distribution and dynamics of Jewish population according to region:

	1939	1959	1989
Ukraine	2,530,000	840,000	488,000
Belorussia	700,000	155,000	112,000
Moldavia	200,000	95,000	66,000
Baltic region	350,000	65,000	40,000
RSFSR	840,000	875,000	551,000
Central Asia	80,000	145,000	138,000
Caucasus	84,000	94,000	57,000

As the table indicates, before the war over half of the Jews in the USSR lived in the territory of the Ukraine. Kupovetskii expressed the view that approximately one million Jews from the Ukraine survived, but that approximately 100,000 of them did not return to the Ukraine from evacuation, settling rather in the RSFSR and Soviet Central Asia. He outlined the same picture in regard to the Jews of Belorussia, part of whom (approximately 30,000) settled after the war in the Baltic republics or remained in their localities of evacuation. The dynamics of Jewish population over the past decade were summarized by Kupovetskii as basically resulting from depopulation and emigration and, to a much lesser degree, from assimilation.

Kupovetskii stated that 99% of the Jews in the USSR are city-dwellers. Their social composition was defined by the fact that in the age group 24–49 approximately 65%–80% of them had higher education.

The lecturer focused on the ethnic processes which affected the dynamics of the size of the Soviet Jewish population. He noted that the majority of writings on this topic stress the factor of ethnocide—the intentional destruction of national culture and pay much less attention to objective conditions, such as acculturation and mass secularization which had internal causes and developed spontaneously. Among these objective conditions Kupovetskii included the increased dispersion of Jewish settlement and the accompanying acceleration of adaptation to a non-Jewish environment.

Kupovetskii noted that the danger of ethnocide, as a consequence of mass assimilation, ultimately engendered counterforces. It was precisely among the assimilated strata of the population that there began the growth of ethnicity, the scale of which Kupovetskii stated would have been considerably less without that reaction to this danger.

The lecturer asserted that the significance of assimilation as a factor affecting the decline of the Jewish population in the USSR has been exaggerated. In terms of the 1970s and 1980s when the number of Jews declined by 700,000, Kupovetskii attributed this decline as follows: 285,000 to emigration, 280,000 to depopulation, and the remaining 120,000 (or 17% of the decrease of the Jewish population in the USSR) to assimilation.

In terms of mixed marriage as a basic indicator of assimilation, Kupovetskii noted that the number of such marriages among Jews sharply increased in the 1930s and 1960s, while in other periods this indicator revealed a tendency to slower growth. The highest level of mixed marriage was observed in the RSFSR and in Estonia. In contrast, in the Ukraine there is greater stability in regard to endogenous marriages. The processes of ethnic integration have increased, with the younger generations of eastern Jews increasingly entering marriages with Ashkenazi Jews. This is especially characteristic for residents of large cities like Tashkent and Baku.

With regard to emigration,¹ Kupovetskii stated that 285,000 Jews left the USSR between 1970 and 1988. He pointed out that while 60% of the Jewish population of Georgia and 62% of the Jewish population of Lithuania emigration, only 6.2% of the Jews of the RSFSR did so. He concluded that emigration, which affected primarily the younger and middle generations, was one of the major factors in the creation of an inverted age pyramid among the remaining Jewish population in the Soviet Union.

1. Cf. the article in this issue by Yoel Florsheim, "Emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union in 1989" (p. 22).