

Tolerance label — justified or not?

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Abstract

The population of Kazakhstan today has cardinally changed the attitude towards migrants. In the late 1930s Kazakhstan (at that time one of the Soviet Union republics) was a monoethnic nation. Changes in the population composition has occurred as a result of one of the most violent phenomena of Stalin's epoch when millions of so called "unreliable" nations – Koreans in the Far East, the peoples of the Caucasus and the Crimea, Greeks, Poles and Germans, – were forcibly deported to Kazakhstan. At the end of the violent transfer those people were disembarked from the train cars and left in the desert without roof over their heads, with no provision supplies or whatsoever personal belongings. On a large scale the local population had helped the deported people to survive sheltering and supporting them, despite of the Soviet's authorities' punitive measures against such activity. The attitude has continued when the deported peoples were rehabilitated. In fact, many ethnic groups were able to integrate into Kazakh society, to occupy certain niches of the economy and have become fully responsible citizens. Every nation has its cultural centers, and all nations has formed the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. But even in spite the fact that Kazakhs consider themselves as a tolerant ethnic group, the problem of youth's views on immigration rates in Kazakhstan nowadays remains daunting. A sociological survey was conducted in two major universities in Almaty. The response poll showed that today youth does not always act sympathetically towards the migrants, and students do not consider it necessary to show positive attitudes to people not in distress. An accepting and hospitable community, which Kazakhstani society has always been for the migrants, happens not to be as tolerant as before. So is the label of tolerance justified today?

Key words: tolerance, forced migration, deported nations, migrants, receiving community.

Forced migration to Kazakhstan in 1930's.

According to the Kazakhstan population census of 1926 (at that time Kazakh Republic within the Soviet Union), the indigenous population — Kazakhs, traditionally engaged in stock farming - constituted the majority of the nation. [1] It is known that Stalinist politics was targeted at the construction of a classless society, a society of equals; however, the method of terror and intimidation was chosen as one of the options for such organization of the community. The first political immigrants appeared in Kazakhstan in 1920's. They were mostly representatives of the clergy, opposition leaders, people of intelligentsia, former tsarist government officials. Those members of the society, who were successful in farming and thus reached prosperity, were subjected

to "de-kulakization" and forced migration to other regions of the Soviet Union since mid-1920's. The trains were going all over the country, from Kazakhstan to the Kola peninsula, to Ural and to Siberia, bringing Kazakhs for work in adits, mines and lumbermills — i.e. to the terrains of inconvenient landscape and rigorous climate. In turn the de-kulakized farmers from the European part of the Soviet Union, Transcaucasia and Central Asia were all forcefully moved to Kazakhstan. As the result of these migrations in 1930-1931 Kazakhstan has experienced the immigration of 6765 (according to one source) or more than a thousand (according to another) people [2]; moreover, in the following years the deportation continued, and about one thousand people have been forced to move within Kazakhstan itself. At the same time the "kollektivizatsiya" (collectivization) campaign was introduced, and Kazakhs were forced to give away their cattle in order to "collectivize" the property. This campaign resulted in a catastrophic state of the traditional stock farming system: cf. in 1928 there were 6509 thousands heads of cattle and 18 566 thousands heads of small cattle, and in 1932 the total number of livestock was 965 and 1386 thousands correspondingly, together with the reduction from 3516 thousands of horses to 885 thousands and from 1042 thousands of camels to 63 thousands [3]. These losses ultimately brought not only the loss of livestock for farming, but also resulted in famine and mass death in the nation. These circumstances affected greatly the migration of Kazakhs to the bordering countries.

A Kazakhstani historian Zhanguitin, who worked with the declassified funds of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (which were only opened for access after the collapse of the communism regime), has analyzed the data from the materials of the Joint State Political Directorate under the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. From these data it is known that the forced migration of 1930's was planned in detail: documents have the number of people to be moved from each region (e.g., in only 1931 it was necessary to move 56,000 families [4]). In the post-soviet period an established Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Supreme Council's Presidium has ascertained the real number of families moved to Kazakhstan from the archive documentation: that number constituted 46,091 families, or more than 180,000 people [5]. A comparative analysis of that migration wave with those of the following period, namely the pre-WWII and WWII years, showed that in the 1930's the attitude towards the migrants preserved the minimum arrangements of provision with food, clothes, footwear, and housing [6].

The researcher of the Kazakh diasporas abroad Mendikulova in the course of her archive work and analysis of the USSR Population Census of 1926 and 1939, as well as the works of other famous investigators [7], came to conclusion that the Kazakh population decreased by the number of 1,793,000 people [8]. It is also necessary to mention that it is impossible to veridically determine the percentage of emigrants versus the percentage of tragic losses due to the dramatic events of collectivization, repressions, famine. In this aspect of the problem our goal is to veridically

reconstruct the scene and atmosphere of life of the receiving community, when the Stalinist mass deportation of the "unreliable" nations to Kazakhstan began.

The tragedy of migrants in the prewar and war years

The involvement of the republic in the process of Stalinist political repressions, which gained momentum in an especially acute fashion after 1934, becomes another tragic page in the history of Kazakhstan as the part of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan, as well as the Northern parts of the USSR, Ural and Siberia, was chosen as the place of exile for millions of Soviet people. The notoriously known GULAG's part Karlag was placed in Kazakhstan in Karaganda. It was a huge concentration camp, where the ideological oppositioners of Bolshevism were sent to exile from all over the Union. ALZHIR (Aqmola Camp for Wives of Homeland Traitors), a similar camp for the wives of political and military activists of the USSR, was also situated in the Kazakhstan steppes. Among those accused of being enemies of the State were also Kazakhstani people of various ethnic affiliations, who were repressed as well — some of them shot, others sent to exile. During the period of Stalinist "witch hunt" there were 183 foreign intelligence stations and counter-revolutionary organizations "disclosed" in Kazakhstan, with the total number of 3720 of arrested and convicted individuals. According to some not well documented and yet incomplete data, the total number of repressed people constituted 110,000 individuals [9]. All over the territory of the USSR the regime of terror was established in order to keep the nation in awe in front of the punitive system.

Beginning in 1936, the migrations became mass and most often were kept divided by ethnic criteria: 14,048 households with 63,976 people were moved to Northern Kazakhstan and Karaganda regions from Ukraine, 1000 more households were moved to Kazakhstan and Central Asia from Dagestan and Chechen-Ingush Region. In order to "clean up the frontier" in 1937 1121 Kurdish, Armenian and Turkish household together with 1642 Iranian families were moved to Southern Kazakhstan and Almaty regions from the borderline territories of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenia [10]. In the same 1937 98,454 Koreans were forcefully deported from the Far East regions of Russia [11]. On the eve of the Great Patriotic War some of the distinct contingents — 35,000 Poles and 10,000 Germans of Ukraine, 172,000 Koreans, 6,000 Iranians, Kurds, - totalling to more than 200,000 people were deported to the Eastern regions of Russia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia [12].

In his novel "The Wedding Ring" Ugai De-Guk writes about the forced migration of Koreans of the Far East of Russia to Kazakhstan as follows: "All the echelons with Koreans consisted of only the freight-cars. One echelon was constructed of about 50-60 cars, both freight and peoples. Only the attending workers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and militiamen were travelling in better wagons. In the freight-cars there were no windows, only a door. Once it was

closed, the wagon was completely dark. No one outside knew what or who was being carried in the wagons, cattle or exiles. That's why they called the echelon "The Black Box" [13].

The beginning of the Great Patriotic War became the start of the new wave of repressions. First of all it involved the Soviet Germans. According to the statistical data, by the beginning of 1939 there were 1,427,22 citizens of German ethnic affiliation in the USSR [14]. On August 28, 1941, the decree of the Soviet Union's Supreme Council's Presidium demolished the Autonomous Republic of the Germans in the Volga Region. In the first days of the war these actions were still precautionary and preventive. Hundreds of thousands of Germans were deported to the Republic of Komi, to Ural, Kazakhstan, Siberia [15]. In the course of three weeks about half a million (438,400) Germans arrived at Kazakhstan from the Republic of Germans in the Volga Region, Saratov and Stalingrad regions. Later the Germans dismissed from the military as well as the local Germans were added to that number. E.Daines memoirs go as follows: "We were brought to Volga, there were already many Germans from the Autonomous Republic. Then we were loaded onto a ferry, which carried us all the way to Guryev... later we were loaded to the freight-cars, and we went to the railway station Aus. Later we were set in the kolkhoz "Rostarbaiter" in the village Peremenovka of the Borodulikhinsky district of the Semipalatinsk region" [16]. A German retiree A.Airikh wrote to the most popular USSR magazine "Ogonyok": "The working conditions remained hard, we felt the acute lack of food and clothes, not to mention the absolutely uninhabitable rooms, which were represented by usually nonheated barracks. We weren't guilty of something specific, except for our ethnic affiliation, but most of us were still sent to the so-called "work armies" — behind the barbed wire — by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs" [17].

It would be unjust to define the actions of the Soviet Government as those not based on whatsoever real steps taken by Germany. The German headquarters was actually actively planning to fortify their position in Caucasus, and thus was going after the goal of implanting their agents into the local population for conduction of diversions. One of the German documents goes as follows: "In Caucasus, as nowhere else in Russia, the adats and Muslim laws of sharia still have the most power among the mountaineers. The highlanders are gullible in nature, and it is easier to work with them than with other ethnicities... We need to arm the local bandits, to handle them the important objects before the German army comes, for they will save them for us. When Grozny, Malgobek, and other districts are in our hands, we will be able to conquer Baku and set the occupation regime in Caucasus, incorporate our garrisons in the mountain, and then, after the Highlands are calm, we will be able to destroy all the highlanders" [18]. However, even these data cannot be a vindication for the actions taken towards the whole nations.

During World War II there were also deportations of such ethnic groups as Chechens, Ingushs, Balkars, Greeks, Bulgars, Crimean Tartars, Kurds, Meskhetian Turks etc. to Kazakhstan, all

totalling to 507,500 people [19].

A well-known Russian political scientist Alexey Vlasov cites the following data about forced migration to Kazakhstan: "The chronicles of deportations demonstrates the exceptional tragedy of those days. Thus, October 12 and 14, 1943 were the days when a decree and a disposition were published about general deportation of Karachais, liquidation of the Karachai Autonomous Region, and the administrative setup of its territory. The major part of Karachais was deported to Kazakhstan (more than 45,000 people), mostly to the Southern Kazakhstan and Jambyl regions. According to the official data of the Soviets, more than 496,000 people of Vainakh ethnicity were forcefully moved from the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic to other lands, including Kazakhstan (411,000 people of 85,000 households). 4,660 households of Balkars were moved to Kazakh Republic (16,684 people)" [20].

Generally all the migration campaigns had legal grounds: dispositions of the State Defense Committee or the Presidium of the Supreme Council, the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the decrees of the Soviet People's Commissariat or other state authority — all that cast the so-called legal character to the actions. The attitude of the state authorities to the special migrants was especially cruel: all the personal documents (passports, birth or death certificates, marriage licenses) were held in the commandant's office. The migrants themselves were obliged to check in in the office twice a month. An independent departure beyond the borders of the region of residence was equated to flight and was punished by 20 years of hard labour. The list of problem zones for those special migrants was standard: lack of food provision, work places, fuel, clothes, and possibilities for children's education, as well as the strict confinements of travel and job placement.

By the moment of the arrival of first mass migration waves it was already 20 years since Kazakhs started to consider themselves as citizens of the USSR empire. Somehow the atmosphere of the fear did not become a restraining factor for the sympathy and help of Kazakhstani people to the deportees.

When people arriving to Kazakhstan were disembarked from the train in the steppes without provision of shelter, food and vital belongings, Kazakhs, who were living nearby, were bringing them water, food, clothes, and taking over those who were weak or sick and families with infants despite the punitive measures that were promised for such support. There is a plethora of evidence on how Kazakh families living in yurts (mobile house made of wooden construction and thick-felt), moved to the half of the yurt leaving the second half for families of deportees. They would also share all their possessions with migrants.

Majority of the Kazakhstani population were very comprehensive of needs of forced migrants. Locals have helped migrants despite their own difficult or disastrous situation.

As the deputy of Mazhilis (Top Chamber of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan) Lyudmila Hotchiyeva puts it, "Exactly this moment blissful land of Kazakhstan became a homeland for plenty of hapless; Kazakhs, while enduring the asterixes of Totalitarianism, undergoing the bitterness of the loss and humiliation, were the support for anyone who was destined to find oneself here. Kazakh women would give warmth of their bodies to orphaned children of deportees. Ask any Caucasian of deportees, he will tell you about hospitality, tolerance and sympathy of Kazakhs". What is the reason for the locals and migrants to find mutual agreement and understanding in their interactions, to adapt to the new conditions and construct the mechanisms of new relationships in all aspects of life?

To some extent, this was the result of age-old traditions of Kazakh people, of their immanent tolerance and the lack of alienation from other nations. This special mentality attribute is based on the specifications of Nomadic lifestyle. Even though minor domestic conflicts are mostly unavoidable, they had to be avoided in the stressful environment. Another focus was placed on the assemblage of the new interaction grounds.

There was no assimilation, no absorption, it was a coexistence in the common geographic scale. In terms of the independent Kazakhstan this coexistence turned out to be a part of the government policy and a part of pivotal ideological aim, to wit the process shaping of new political nation, Kazakhstani people nation [21].

Social-Politic Research Institute, Institute TSESSI-Kazakhstan and Moscow Center of Migration Studies (Zayonchkovskaya Center) have filmed the movie on interviews with the deportation victims taken in various countries (in the frameworks of the international project "Memory for the Future" with the support of International Fund of Humanitarian Collaboration of the CIS Participant Countries as the "Deportation of Nations to the Kazakhstan in 1930-1950 years: the generality of the history" project outcome). This movie highlights hard destinies of deported Poles, Germans, Koreans, Chechens, Ingushs, Akhiska et al. [22]

The help of the local population was vital for the survival of the deported. The positive attitude towards deported have continued until the rehabilitation of the "disloyal nations". The deported managed to integrate into the Kazakhstani society, took significant economic niches, have become full citizens of the country. Each nation has it's culture center, the Assembly of Kazakhstani Nations is formed and is functioning.

The preamble of the United Nations Charter reads as follows: the peoples of the United Nations are determined to "manifest tolerance and live together in peace like good neighbours" [23]. Described evidence displays that Kazakh people dealt with forced migrants with attitude that exceeds tolerance. This attitude included mercy, sympathy, compassion and selflessness.

Does tolerance exist in Kazakhstan today?

In the contemporary Kazakhstan social attitude towards migrants went through significant changes. First of all we have to define who is migrating to Kazakhstan nowadays. Repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs from foreign countries used to be one of the priorities of the government policies right after the independence establishment. This migration program was focused on increasing of the percentage of the native people. About 60% of the whole figure of 183.652 people have arrived from the CIS countries. Kazakhs have returned from far abroad as follow: Mongolia: 65 202 people, Iran: 5 030 pers., Turkey: 3780 pers., Afganistan: 1719 pers., China: 2 214 pers. et al.[24]

The repatriates were returning by charter routes, they were granted by the allowance and accommodation. However, despite the efforts, the government failed to accomplish the program of repatriates integration into Kazakhstan society.

In the first place the difficulties were based on the differences in education level, mentality, professional competence, knowledge of the Russian language among ethnic Kazakhs, returning to the historic motherland. After summing up the totals of the repatriation program, the government decided to shift the focus from the quantity of the repatriates to the advancement of the quality of life of those who returned [25].

Besides the repatriates, Kazakhstan is a popular destination for labor migrants of the near abroad countries: Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Russia. Big Tajik communities (members of which have Kazakh citizenship) reside in the biggest cities of Kazakhstan. Kyrgyz and Uzbek labor migrants are mostly occupied in the construction business, taking positions that do not require qualification. These countries are also a source of big numbers of migrants residing in Kazakhstan illegally: 50 thousands from Kyrgyzstan, 100 thousands from Uzbekistan, 50 thousands from Tajikistan and 100 thousands from Russia. [26]

Despite the Kazakh's self-positioning as a tolerant nation, contemporary Kazakhstan society experiences hostility or even fear towards the migrants. Historical fear of the "Chinese invasion" transformed into the apprehension of big illegal migration of Chinese people to Kazakhstan.

Being determined to define the exact attitude of young Kazakhs towards migrants, we have conducted the survey among students of the two biggest Almaty universities. As there was no such research before, there is no possibility to track the dynamics of the attitude toward migrants and conduct the comparative analysis.

The survey was targeted on highlighting the state of public opinion on migrants. The informative outcome on the moods of contemporary youth of this social stratum could be useful for the corrections of the government programs of youth affair. As we believe it is necessary to monitor the interactions in various social strata as a preventive measure, hereby we define the immediate perspective of the research vector. The pilot survey was conducted by the method of the simple random sampling (SRS) without forming the sample representativeness.

The survey shows that 540 student participants divide as follows: 56% are indifferent toward migrants; 19% believe that labor migrants are often responsible for the criminal situations; 25% are sympathetic and explain their attitude as belief that nobody comes to work in a foreign country if there is a possibility to work in the home country. Over 87% responds negative to the question whether they will help out forced migrants or repatriates as their ancestors did in the years of Deportation. About a half (54%) believes the main problem of repatriates a social integration due to the differences of mentality among Kazakhs living in foreign countries. Other 46% are distributed in the following way: 29% think that repatriates count on the unmerited help and support as their grandfathers have left the country instead of staying and undergo the trials with the rest of the nation; 17% answered they do not see the repatriate-specific difficulties.

On the question "If you do not believe repatriates deserve sympathy, then why?" 92% answer that these people have made their conscious choice, 8% believe repatriates had worse quality of life in foreign countries than the one they have a claim on in Kazakhstan.

Considering the labor migrants there is 47% negative responses, 12% sympathetic responses, 37% believe that if there is a demand for a labor, then this type of migrants may enter legally, 6% are indifferent and 3% believe labor migrants take places of Kazakhstani people.

All surveyed students show negative attitude towards illegal migrants. 73% explain their attitude by "They (illegal migrants) are violating the laws of our country", 25% chose the "Their goals are unclear and it is alarming", and 2% believe "They are worsening the criminal situation".

Several depth interviews of the ethnic community (diaspora founded in the repression years) representatives display that diasporas do not contain people dissatisfied with the attitude towards them, people express they do not experience discrimination. Each interviewed participant made an accent on the gratitude to Kazakhstani nation and expressed belief there is no better place to live than Kazakhstan. Migrants from late migration waves (Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, Tajik refugees of the civil war of 1992-93 years and others) also believe that the favorable Kazakhstani atmosphere, calm and friendly attitude from the local society are based on the age-old tradition of Kazakh people, the tradition of hospitality and help to the sufferer.

By totaling the outcome of our survey, we can see that Kazakhstani youth does not always react positively to the people arriving to Kazakhstan, and their reasons are differentiated by the migration motifs. Some radicalism of the moods could be explained by the young age and the corresponding categoricity of respondents.

In tote, the survey has shown that not all students feel the necessity to be friendly with people who do not suffer misery. We believe that certain corrections of the upbringing methods will eliminate interaction frictions between the migrants and local people. The recipient society that is Kazakhstan for migrants, has changed. The migrants and their motifs have changed, too.

Do we or do we not have to be tolerant to everyone?

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