

Language policy

Language policy is the most important component of state policy. The destruction of the Soviet Union began with the "linguistic revolutions" of 1988 and 1989, which took a juridical form as the adoption of laws on languages. In each republic, the history of language policy developed differently. Beginning in 1989, a host of measures was taken at raising the status and role of the Kazakh language in civic life. Priority was given to administrative measures, rather than work expanding the use of the language among all inhabitants.

The Law on Languages of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was adopted in Kazakhstan in September 1989. As was typically the practice, before adoption of the law, in February 1989, conditions for drafting such a law were put into place at the February 1989 plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the republic. In this draft, two state languages were confirmed: Kazakh and Russian. Many specialists believed that this decision took account of the republic's actual language and demographic situation as well as the danger of societal split along national lines if only the language of the titular nation received state recognition. The orientation of the draft, however, changed, and in August a law was proposed for nationwide discussion in which Kazakh was declared the state language. Russian's status was now to function as a language of interethnic communication.

Let us note here some of its points. Firstly, the 1989 Law on Languages foresees a significant penetration by the Kazakh language into areas where it previously played no role or played a very limited role: in party work, in office communications, in services, and trade, among others. This measure ought to have strengthened the functioning of Kazakh in all important areas. Secondly, the law foresees the introduction of Kazakh into administration and the raising of its prestige. In addition, a knowledge of Kazakh became a requirement for the position of director. The law on languages established that graduates of special high schools or institutions of higher learning would need a knowledge and command of Kazakh of a sufficient level for service and professional responsibilities.

A number of concrete steps were envisioned for making the law a reality. For example, transforming the practice of instruction in Kazakh on television and radio; training of qualified teachers of Kazakh for a Russian audience (over a period of two to three years); and so on.

As the past several years have shown, most of these ideas have remained on paper. On the whole, however, the 1989 Law on Languages of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic met the real need to change the language situation as it stood at that time. The further development of the language situation, therefore, naturally brought with it certain revisions and changes in conceptualization. In general, before the

collapse of the Soviet Union, language policy in Kazakhstan developed in the course of the general psychological domination of the native [Kazakh] over nonnative languages.

The status of Kazakh as a state language and Russian as an interethnic language was codified in the 1993 Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In this manner, there occurred a codification of the unequal position in Kazakhstan of Kazakh and Russian. This definition subsequently was transferred to the current constitution of August 30, 1995. The 1995 constitution, however, established a new situation. It was decided that in state organizations and self-governing local bodies, Russian enjoys equal status to Kazakh (Article 7).

In 1992, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a resolution according to which Kazakh would become the state language and, in 1995, a complete switchover to office communications in Kazakh would take place. As a result, in many ministries and institutions, there were literally no more Russian and Russian-speaking workers. Access by Russians to leadership work in the republic became closed. If in 1985 Kazakhs held 50 percent of leadership positions, in 1994, that figure was already 75 percent, and in 1997 — 83 percent. Today, Kazakhs make up two-thirds of the cabinet and four-fifths of the president's administration.

It is sufficient to note the reduction in the number of Russian publications. In particular, since 1994, distribution has been cut back on Russian newspapers with a publishing base in Kazakhstan: *Izvestiia*, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, *Trud*, and *Argumenty i fakty*.

Obviously, a reaction followed the implementation of this nationalities policy: a flow of migrants. As the following data indicate, the number of refugees and forced resettlers from Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation has constantly grown: in 1993, 283; in 1994, 7,948; in 1995, 71,481; in 1996, 160,170; and in 1997, 222,006. More than two thirds of them constituted ethnic Russians.¹⁸ In particular, since 1992, 1,340,000 Russians have left Kazakhstan. The peak of migration was 1993 and 1994, when in two years more than 800,000 persons left the country, most of them Russian-speaking inhabitants.

One reason for migration from Kazakhstan was precisely the language problem. Data from sociological surveys of the republic's population attest to this. Such surveys have been conducted by independent agencies in various oblasts of Kazakhstan.

For example, according to the Brif agency, the majority of respondents believe that people leave the country for economic reasons: unemployment (64.1 percent); low standard of living (61.9 percent); nonpayment of wages (42.6 percent); and reasons of a social character: uncertainty and lack of future prospects (36.9 percent); desire to live in

¹⁸ *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Tsentra demografii i ekologii cheloveka Instituta narodnokhoziaistvennogo prognozirovaniia RAN* [Information Bulletin of the Center for Demography and Human Ecology, Institute of National Prognosis, Russian Academy of Sciences], no. 18, 1997.

one's historical homeland (32.6%); desire to live with relatives (30.9 percent); lack of future for one's children (27.4 percent); difficulties in obtaining an education (18.5 percent); and language problems (16 percent). As can be seen, practically every sixth respondent named the language problem as a reason why people have been leaving the country.¹⁹

At the same time, the language problem became a clear motivating factor in the migration process. Language policy has developed in Kazakhstan in the following manner. In 1993, Kazakhstan followed the route of creating a state of a "self-determined Kazakh nation." We note that, in the next ten years — according to the assertion of Kazakhstan's official representatives — Kazakhs ought to comprise two-thirds of the republic's population. This is supposed to occur, moreover, not as a result of a demographic explosion.

As a result of the worsening migration situation, however, the president declared in June 1994 a "new course in the field of interethnic relations," stating that false expectations in the state language policy should be eliminated by passage of a new language law... The president subjected the old language law to certain criticism. In particular, according to the head of state, "the strict requirement to learn the language by 1996 has put even many Kazakhs in a difficult position." Nazarbaev offered assurances that "adoption of a new program will mean the disappearance of discrimination on the basis of language and full equality of both languages; in questions of employment, there should be two criteria for any position: competence and loyalty to the homeland."²⁰ On this occasion, a required knowledge of the state language was not mentioned.

After strong criticism regarding the Russian question in 1994, no substantive organizational changes followed. In later years, officials from the Committee for Languages at the Cabinet of Ministers took no action to correct language legislation. Later, by presidential decree in November 1996, yet another Conception of Language Policy was approved. The goal of this conception was "working out a strategy in state policy to preserve and develop the language in the transition period, defining the tasks for creating conditions for developing Kazakh as the state language."

This conceptualization includes a proposal to strengthen legislatively the requirement of citizens to master the Kazakh language. In addition, the state, with the aim of realizing the language policy by legal means, planned to approve a list of positions, specialties, and professions for occupants that would require a knowledge of the state language. In this way, there was a complete lack of correspondence between declared principles and actual policies. Consequently, in 1997, there followed yet

¹⁹ *Issledovanie mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii (iul'-avgust 1998 g.)* [Research into Interethnic Relations (July-August 1998)], Almaty: Brif Social and Marketing Agency.

²⁰ V. Khliupin, "Podlinnaia iazykovaia politika Nazarbaeva" [Nazarbaev's Real Language Policy], *Megapolis-Kontinent*, no. 23, June 2000.

another migration flow. That year, 237,000 persons emigrated to Russia.²¹ The Russian government explained this repeat migration flow as a result mainly of the squeeze put on Russians by an inadequate language policy.

In July 1997, a new Law on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted. It is notable that the new law continued the previous tendency of strengthening the status of only the state language as a language of government and political supremacy [gospodstva]. There is no provision in the new law to make this state language a functional requirement for the majority of the population. At its heart is all possible support for the state language. This is indicated by Article 4, which states: "It is the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan to master the state language."

It is also interesting that use of the state language in many spheres of public interaction is scrupulously enumerated in the law, while other languages are absent. Thus the law provides a detailed regulation for language use. In the new version of the law, Russian's status as a language of interethnic communication has been eliminated. According to the law that is now in effect, the Russian language is used on an equal basis with the state language in state organizations and organs of local self-government (Article 5, Use of Russian Language).

There has continued a gradual but definite implementation of Kazakh as obligatory for conducting business in all branches and regions of the republic. In particular, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Languages, all acts of state organs must be drafted and adopted in the Kazakh language, after which, depending on need, a version may be produced in Russian and a translation carried out in the language of ethnic minorities (Article 9, Languages for Acts of State Organs). Consider also that Article 23 of the new language law envisions a definite list of specialties and positions for which knowledge of Kazakh is required.

After the language law, a government resolution [postanovlenie] was made On Introduction of the State Language in State Institutions (1998). We note that at the time, the civic movement Azat came out in support of the development of the Kazakh language. Representatives of the movement prepared ten proposals, which were sent to the president and government. They included implementation of administrative measures directed toward citizens who violated the language law, including fine and dismissal. Members of Azat proposed that the labor agreement for employment at any enterprise include a condition according to which a person is hired for a probationary period, during which he must master the Kazakh language.²²

Such proposals did not pass unnoticed. First, the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Civic Accord received "additional powers" in implementing the

²¹ S. Smetanina, "Nazarbaevu zadali russkii vopros" [Nazarbaev is Asked the Russian Question], *Kommersant*, no. 120 [1523], July 7, 1998.

²² *Delovaia Nedelia*, September 25, 1998.

language policy. Among such powers is "inspecting the work of any state institutions with respect to their fulfillment of language legislation, including necessary elimination of violations and bringing those responsible for violations to account (disciplinary reprimands and even criminal charges)." Secondly, a special department was created in Kazakhstan's General Public Prosecutor's Office for the legal maintenance and introduction of the state language.

After adoption of the Law on Languages in Kazakhstan, the president issued a decree on October 5, 1998, On Adoption of a State Program for Implementation and Development of Languages. The full text of this document, however, was published in March 1999. Many experts described the program as an important document allowing for the realization of a unified state language policy. In their view, the program was a manifestation of state support in resolving language problems, which was reflected in planned activities, foremost among them improving the normative and legal basis for developing languages, and material and technical support for this process. In addition, the program focused on preparation of the manner of doing business in the state language, defining the direction of work on terminology and onomastics, and basic research in linguistics.

We note, however, that this program was a statement of what already had taken place. In other words, the program clarified the terms laid out in the language law, which, being a law having independent force, did not require any particular explication or normative documents. It is worth mentioning that the program's appearance serves as a particular form of accounting for bureaucrats, who are responsible for the realization of regulations that were mentioned in the program. Many experts believe that the program is unrealistic and that it therefore cannot be fulfilled.

In addition, it has been noted that the goals established in the program are not new and that measures are in conflict with existing practice. For example, one of the basic goals established in the program is improvement of the quality of instruction. Yet at the same time, a reduction is taking place in the number of schools, preschool institutions, and boarding schools. Most of the activities of these bodies have been conducted in Kazakh. An additional contradiction in the adopted program is that the budget does not contain an item for financing it, and the proposals in the budget concerning education and scholarship are being reduced.²³

It is worth noting that even the document pertaining to the country's strategic development to the year 2003 fails to devote special attention to the language problem and does not cite it as a priority.

²³ "Kommentarii k Programme funktsionirovaniia i razvitiia iazykov" [Commentary on the Program for Language Implementation and Development], *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Nezavisimogo Informatsionnogo Agentstva* [Information Bulletin of the Independent Information Agency], March 26, 1999.

Thus Kazakhstan's language policy basically amounts to the adoption of one new decree after another, one new law and program after another, without any mechanism for making them a reality.

What is the current situation with respect to realization of Kazakhstan's language policy? First, we note that officials in office, under the guise of implementing the law on languages and corresponding normative acts, frequently behave in a manner that violates social justice and oppresses the rights of ethnic minorities. Consequently, a knowledge of the state language becomes the principle that divides society into "us" and "them." One's own obtain advantages in employment, especially in administrative and scholarly/educational structures, in promotions, and in obtaining greater access to resources, since the official apparatus consists mainly of those belonging to the indigenous nationality.

The Law on Languages, in the view of some of the republic's Russian speakers, secures the ability to promote "their own [Kazakhs]." In other words, it is quite likely that there exists ethnic discrimination in employment. At present, competitions announced for open positions in the state service include as a requirement knowledge of the state language. Thus, candidates for positions in state bodies are placed in unequal conditions from the beginning, and priority is given in advance on the labor market to ethnicity. According to data that sociologists have analyzed on the basis of the statistical breakdown of labor, at present the share of Kazakhs in administration is 80 percent; in science, 80 percent, in healthcare; about 50 percent; in the arts, more than 50 percent; and in the service sector, about 50 percent.²⁴

Second, the status of Russian has declined, to which the following facts attest (it should be noted that these indeed are what have caused certain discontent among Russian population):

- a reduction in radio and television broadcasts in Russian;
- a reduction in the number of hours of instruction in Russian language and literature in schools, which limits the possibility of graduates to enter Russian institutions of higher education;
- widescale renaming of administrative units, population points, streets, and geographical designations;
- signs on many institutions, including state institutions, exclusively in Kazakh;
- raucous state-sponsored celebrations, primarily in honor of Kazakh heroes of the past;

²⁴ S. Zhusupov, *Istoricheskii ocherk mezhetnicheskikh otnoshenii v RK* [A Historical Survey of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Kazakhstan], Transactions of Kazakhstan Institute of Socioeconomic Information and Forecast.

— economizing on programs supporting the cultures of ethnic minorities, in contrast to increasing support for Kazakh culture, customs and traditions, which have acquired a nearly state status.

There are a variety of reactions to these events. They range from internal frustration, despair, psychological discomfort, uncertainty about the near future, and other forms of emotional upset, to forms of open protest, which in an organized manner are expressed in such societies as Russian Community, Lad [Harmony], etc. As a rule, these reactions stem from the blatant unpleasantness of the state's nationalities policy, including its policy on language. Thus, Iu. Bunakov, the leader of the Russian Community, declared that the status of languages burns ethnic passions and that certain forces sought to drive out the Russian language — the very means through which up until now knowledge of world culture has been transmitted.²⁵

During the election campaign, members of Lad promised their votes to presidential candidates in exchange for inclusion in their program called "Meeting Halfway: Ten Difficult Steps." This program includes the following points:

- the right to national-cultural autonomy for all the republics' nationalities;
- entry by Kazakhstan into the union with Belarus and Russia;
- Russian granted status as a second state language.

Participants in the June 13, 1999, conference of the Association of the Russian, Slavic and Cossack Civic Organizations (ARSK) adopted an appeal to Kazakhstan's president, parliament, and government that, in addition to nearly everything mentioned above, demanded the recognition of the Russian people as a state-building nation and maintenance of a just personnel policy. Moreover, the ARSK conference declaration regarding the State Program for Implementation and Development of Languages in Kazakhstan states that it contradicts Kazakhstan's constitution and that it provides for the sole development of the Kazakh language.

The implementation of the language policy in practice, frequently in the form of harsh administrative measures, is interpreted by a part of the Russian-speaking population, primarily Russians, as an effort by Kazakhs to encourage them to leave the country. Another group of Russian speakers views it as a political demarche, calling for conflict between ethnic groups.

There exist certain methods by which the state language is introduced into all spheres of society. Official proclamations have confirmed time lines and deadlines for introducing Kazakh. It is practically forbidden to manufacture rubber stamps and seals in anything other than the state language. The week of Languages of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, held in Symkent under the slogan of the study and spread of one state language, is another striking example of how the language policy is implemented.

²⁵ A. Eremin, "Nestandartnye suzhdeniia – tozhe suzhdeniia" [An Unusual Judgment is Still a Judgment], *Mysl'* no. 8, 1997, p. [page missing].

From their observations, many experts are concluding that the language barrier being erected by the state will lead in the near future to the alienation of ethnic groups. It is this shortsighted nationalities and interethnic policy by the state that is capable of worsening interethnic relations and accord in Kazakhstan. This is confirmed by results of a public opinion poll, conducted by the Association of Sociologists and Political Scientists (ASiP) in mid-June 2000 and entitled "Specific Characters of Interethnic Accord in Kazakhstan."

Among the main factors provoking tensions in the republic's interethnic relations were the total kazakhization in the government and administration, lack of commitment to the state policy of reform, growing economic inequality, the nationalities and language policy, political instability, and the crisis in governance [upravliaemost] in society. As the survey showed, representatives of other language groups have an impression that Kazakhstan is a state of Kazakhs.

It is worth noting that the survey revealed a difference of opinion among respondents of different nationalities regarding the country's state language. Thus, the majority of Kazakhs acknowledge as a natural state of affairs the fact that Kazakh is the state language, while Russian is the language of interethnic communication. Every fifth Kazakh surveyed believes that there should be two state languages in Kazakhstan: Kazakh and Russian. And every eighth respondent of Kazakh nationality is convinced that Kazakhstan's citizens should speak and communicate in a single language: Kazakh. At the same time, those respondents who are members of the Russian or other nationality believe that there should be two state languages.

In this way, it turns out that the introduction of Kazakh as the state language has not automatically resulted in its recognition as such by those in the republic whose native language is not Kazakh. The government, however, has not succeed in suggesting to the society civilized instruments for resolving problems regarding the language policy.

In practice, through enabling legislation, proclamations, and government programs, language continues to be used as an instrument for kazakhization of all aspects of life in the republic. In turn, this facilitates the unrelenting migration from Kazakhstan of the Russian and Russian-speaking population. Instead of analyzing and evaluating the real requirements of a language policy, the state persists with its monolithic model.

Thus, as the language problem has entered the political dimension, a careful approach is required for implementing language policy. Such approaches, as a matter of fact, already exist. There is, for example, the democratic community's formation of political culture through the search for long-term compromises.²⁶ Today, many analysts

²⁶ T. T. Ismagambetov, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Kazakhstane: problemy i perspektivy" [Civic Society in Kazakhstan: Problems and Perspectives], *Saiasat*, 1998, no. 9, pp. 37-41.

in Kazakhstan see the best solution to the language problem as being based on the principle by which all peoples living in the republic can freely develop their languages.

On these grounds, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The language situation in Kazakhstan has developed in such a way that in the settling of problems and interethnic tensions one frequently sees administrative means and ultimatums.

2. Enabling legislation and language laws, regardless of the sincere desires of those who draft them, frequently become the instruments of discrimination according to language. The expansion of the use of the state language by ultimatum is harmful to the communication function of both Kazakh and Russian.

3. Kazakhstan's language problem has become politicized. This is not easily resolved and serves to aggravate ethnic tensions in other areas of social life.

4. Language policy requires a fundamental correction with respect to its conceptual and theoretical bases and tactical priorities, deadlines, and stages.

5. In the current situation, the main efforts of government organizations, civic associations, scholars, and independent experts should be focused on critical and creative work in providing legal conditions — with respect to politics, finance, economics, communications, and institutions — for free development and functioning of languages of all nationalities, without exception, that reside in Kazakhstan.

6. Concepts and legislations with regard to language policy are elaborated without widespread public discussion. Language policy, therefore, inevitably creates mistrust and fear among those who are critically inclined. They see in such policy not the pursuit of common state and national interests but defense of corporative values.

7. Depoliticization of language problem is an urgent need for the state, which has chosen democracy and a commitment to the values and ideals of free civic development. In Kazakhstan's circumstances, the lack of state involvement in the language situation is impermissible, as is total state involvement in the language problem.

8. In order to work out compromise, flexible and realistic models for managing language processes in multiethnic Kazakhstan, the state structures, civic organizations, the scientific and creative intelligentsia, and independent experts should unite efforts. Such a program should be developed on a competitive basis, and its adoption and establishment in law should be legitimized by the will of the people.

9. An important problem is the absence in society of a real dialogue on the problems of the development of the Kazakh language and its coexistence with the languages of other peoples living in the republic.

10. The single mechanism capable of encouraging people to study and master a language is economic utility and necessity. The political mechanism introduced in the republic immediately after the declaration of independence led to nothing more than a rash of emigration from the county. The publication of normative acts regarding

language are mainly bureaucratic phenomena — means by the state for pressuring and compelling citizens. Studying a language should not occur through forceful measures. Resolving those problems connected with the development and study of a language should be settled on a voluntary basis. Such programs should, first and a foremost, be individual, meeting the needs of each region and considering various factors of the region's ethnic makeup.

Migration policy

There are a number of agencies today in Kazakhstan concerned with the nationalities question. In particular, there is the Agency for Migration and Demography. Its work focuses on preserving interethnic accord and stability in society, the elaboration of proposals for implementing state policy to facilitate friendly relationships among those nationalities living in Kazakhstan; and aiding in their spiritual and cultural revival on the principle of equality. Its work also addresses the formation of citizens' political culture based on civilized and democratic norms; aiding in the consideration of multifaceted national interests for the state's nationalities policy; and the search for compromises for resolving those social contradictions that may arise in society.

The World Association of Kazakhs is concerned with building and supporting cultural ties among Kazakhs living outside Kazakhstan's borders. In addition, the association's activities include spiritual support of the so-called *oralmans*, who have come to the historical homeland. It also lobbies in government for the interests of ethnic Kazakhs and, in particular, attempts to find job [for oralmans], and possibly offers financial assistance.

Each of these institutions strives to study the nationalities question, such as it is. Nevertheless, many experts, analysts, and political scientists are agreed about one thing: there are several factors that have a fundamental influence on the problems mentioned above. In particular, they are Kazakhstan's economic situation, social instability, and the low level of education. In addition, some researchers believe that the language law and the short-sighted immigration policy concerning *oralmans* also bear on the problem. It is necessary, in this connection, to examine the factors enumerated. One factor affecting the population's increase or decrease is economic indicators.

Fact: according to the World Bank, the average salary in Kazakhstan in 1994 was US\$24. In December 1996, it was 8,700.1 tenge, that is, US\$121, according to official data. Since the introduction of the national currency in 1993, prices have risen 35 times. Since price reforms in 1992, they have risen 18 thousand times.²⁷

²⁷ <http://www.freenet.kg/n4/JRNAL/412.htm>.

The situation is such today in Kazakhstan that many citizens have been compelled to leave the state in search of work and a more stable economy. After the sadly famous meeting in Belovezh forest [where presidents of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus decided to dissolve the Soviet Union and to found the Commonwealth of Independent States] at the beginning of the 1990s, a significant worsening occurred in the economic situation in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The growth of crisis phenomena, the slowing rate of output, the huge growth in inflation — all of these factors have led to a drop in the living standard indicator. Among the factors influencing the forced or planned emigration are, in order of importance, price growth (67 percent), threat of unemployment (50.4 percent), worsening of the ecological situation (49.6 percent), increased crime (49.3 percent), and delay in payment of wages (40.9 percent).²⁸

There is no doubt that the falling the minimum living standard indicator has definitely "drawn" the population from Kazakhstan. The current employment market, which is a consequence of the economic crisis, forces people to seek new possibilities outside Kazakhstan for self-realization. President Nursultan Nazarbaev has stated: "[A]bout 5 million people have been caught up in the migration process in Kazakhstan between 1993 and 1997: more than 3 million have departed (63.5 percent), and more than 1.5 million have entered the country. As a result of the migration flow, Kazakhstan has lost more than 1.5 million persons. They have, for the most part, departed for Russia and Germany. But the migration balance becomes smaller with each passing year. Moreover, the number of reimmigrants — those who left and, failing to fulfill their dreams abroad, returned to their old haunts — is continuously growing."²⁹

In the past five years, the number of people coming and going from Kazakhstan totals 1,997,500. Twenty-five thousand people have come from the "far abroad" [non CIS countries]. At the same time, 440,400 people have left for these and other [sic] countries. From the near abroad, 319,800 people have entered the country; from Kazakhstan to the near abroad, 1,212,300 people have departed. Each year [on average] three hundred thousand people left the country. In 1999 alone, 120,724 people emigrated. At the same time, 35,366 people immigrated to Kazakhstan. These are indicators for the Commonwealth of Independent States. For the same period, 447,333³⁰ people emigrated to the far abroad. The number of immigrants totaled 1,736. As can be seen, the situation is quite dispiriting. The outward flow of the able-bodied and economically active population outnumbers immigrants by ten times. The large-scale migration outflows of Kazakhstan's citizens are mainly from industrially developed

²⁸ *Izvestiia*, June 4, 1998.

²⁹ *Kovcheg*, September 10, 1998.

³⁰ This number seems to be too high. – N. O.

regions. From Northern Kazakhstan oblast, 51,300 persons; from Kostanai oblast, 39,500 persons; and from Akmola oblast, 34,400 persons.³¹

The countries of the far abroad to which the able-bodied population goes must be mentioned (data for 1999): Germany, 40,872 persons; Israel, 1,589; Mongolia, 161; and the United States, 612. The total results, for the overall number of emigrants to the CIS in 1997, were as follows: Russia, 72.4 percent; Uzbekistan and Ukraine, 2 percent each; and Belarus, 1.8 percent. Russian Experts see the following reasons behind the large number of Kazakhstan's citizens going to the Russian Federation:

First, there is a social crisis in Kazakhstan (in education and healthcare), and there is a lack of real opportunity to find well-paying jobs. Secondly, in the opinion of those surveyed, there is no future and, accordingly, no possibility for professional fulfillment. Third, there is the effort to obtain a better future for one's children. And, fourth, there are the current cultural and informational isolation from Russia and the need to study the state language. In addition, it is worth noting the social and professional makeup of the emigrants. For the most part, they are citizens of work age — 63.2 percent (1994) and 63 percent (1995). Approximately 25 percent of those leaving the country are younger than able-bodied.³²

It is possible, therefore, to state that from Kazakhstan an outflow of potential workforce is taking place. At the same time, the growth of the number of persons beyond employment age follows a regular pattern. Consequently, the trend of the so-called aging of the population is deepening. If among those leaving Kazakhstan, secondary and higher education is typical, among immigrants, the level of education is much lower. Naturally, there takes place a negative balance of migration of citizens with higher education.

In summarizing the above, we can cite the most recent data on the number of emigrants departing from the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1999: Kazakhs (8,046), Russians (144,369), Ukrainians (22,788), Belarusians (5,282), Germans (39,953), and Tatars (7,027). The total for the above-mentioned nationalities alone is 227,465. Thus, there was a negative balance for migration in Kazakhstan in 1999 of 42,997 persons.³³

We should also note here the issue of *oralmans*, those Kazakhs who, owing to certain circumstances, were forced to leave Kazakhstan. At present, according to various data, the number of repatriates in the Republic of Kazakhstan is between 170,000 and 184,000.³⁴ These are only those repatriates who are registered. This figure, however, is not precise, because many of those who arrive voluntarily [samostoiatel'no] are not registered anywhere and are in the country illegally. The corresponding decree of President N. A. Nazarbaev of June 17, 2000 (Decree of the President of the Republic

³¹ http://www.dn.kz/arch/1998/29_98/migr.htm.

³² <http://www.freenet.kg/n4/JRNAL/412.htm>.

³³ <http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/111/migr.htm>.

³⁴ http://www.dn.kz/arch/1998/29_98/migr.htm.

of Kazakhstan on the Immigration Quota for the Year 2000, No. 406) established the yearly quota for entry of repatriates into Kazakhstan as follows: “To set, as represented by the Government of Kazakhstan, an immigration quota for the year 2000 of 500 families, in accordance with the supplement.”

It should be noted that previously this figure was different. In 1993, the immigration quota was 10,000 families; in 1994, it was 7,000 families; in 1995, 5,000 families; and in 1996, 4,000 families. An analysis of immigration quota fulfillment shows that the percentage of fulfillment in 1993 was 94.4 percent; in 1994, 63.9 percent; in 1995, 72.6 percent; and in 1996, 88 percent. Despite the government’s auspicious plans, the situation evolved such that today, of more than 35,000 families that have returned to their historical homeland, 300 to 400 families have been compelled to emigrate.³⁵ This is due, in the first place, to the government’s failure to fulfill its obligations regarding the living situation of *oralmans* and a worsening of social and economic conditions in the country.

One can even say that despite the obligations that the government has taken upon itself, the situation of *oralmans* has not improved. In fact, in some ways, it has even deteriorated. In attracting repatriates, the state probably miscalculated its capabilities. There was a need to provide these people with housing, residency permits, permanent employment, and the basis for normal everyday life. Here, of course, the question of Kazakhstan citizenship must be mentioned. At present, some 90 percent of repatriates from Mongolia have not been able to gain citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan.³⁶ And yet, in accordance with Article 3 of the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan, repatriates are supposed to be provided with all of the conditions for obtaining citizenship. Nevertheless, the very process of obtaining Kazakhstan citizenship remains difficult. One of the difficulties is lack of fluency in Russian. There are also problems that arise in connection with repatriates from Mongolia. Having arrived in Kazakhstan in the period between 1991 and 1994, on the basis of a labor agreement for a five-year period, the majority gave up their Mongol citizenship but have been unable, in the course of many years, to become citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

At the same time, the problem concerning establishment of the quota and resettlement of repatriates remains acute. It is widely known that the state is obligated to provide employment and housing for the repatriates. Nevertheless, for many *oralmans*, state assistance is unnecessary, as they have certain professions and professional skills when they come to Kazakhstan. What is most essential to the *oralmans* is for the state to provide employment. Unfortunately, the state cannot provide this. If we evaluate the situation in realistic terms and without bias, then the state ought to find certain reserves

³⁵ <http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/111/migr.htm>.

³⁶ http://www.dn.kz/arch/1998/29_98/migr.htm.

for providing *oralmans* (and others) with living arrangements and employment — before conducting a policy of attracting repatriates to their historical homeland. Apparently the state did not think through the mechanism for directly carrying this out. We have a puzzling situation: for what purpose are ethnic Kazakhs encouraged to come to the republic if the state already has more than enough unemployed Kazakhstani citizens? In order to overfill the latter's ranks? Probably in order to try to correct the situation that has arisen with regard to emigration. Despite all the auspicious plans, the state migration policy for attracting repatriates to Kazakhstan can have no real results.

Hence, in recent years the intensity of the immigration of the Kazakh population has significantly declined, and there has been a noticeable tendency by some Kazakh repatriates to return to their previous place of residence. This in many ways reflects the difficult internal socio-economic situation in the republic.

It is also necessary to consider internal migration, which has roots in common with emigration. In Kazakhstan itself, there is a constant growth of migration processes. Data for 1998 show an increase in this phenomenon of 13.9 percent in comparison to 1997.³⁷

The main internal migrants are native inhabitants. Of course, one reason for this is the economic crisis. Those cities where large industrial enterprises used to operate have ceased to be attractive to the citizens who live there. Because the crisis has affected, first of all, these enterprises, there has been an increase in the departure of population to more prosperous cities and regions. In considering the nationality of the migrants, one can state that some 60 percent are Kazakhs and about 20 percent are Russian. Kazakhs occupy the biggest niche in the migration flows — some 101,200 persons. In other words, Kazakhs make up 71 percent of the total number of migrants. The migration of the able-bodied Russian population was 18.2 percent.³⁸

The main internal migrational flows are directed at Almaty, Almaty oblast, Zhambyl oblast, and Central and Northern Kazakhstan. A significant contribution to these processes was the transfer of the capital from Almaty to Astana. An important if not basic role can be attributed to the able-bodied population. For the most part, the internal migrational flows show that the most attractive city for migrants is Almaty, where 16,400 able-bodied citizens moved in 1997 alone. Other migrational currents were as follows: in 1997, about 2,400 people emigrated to Akmola oblast and about 1,000 emigrated to Mangistau oblast.

There are many reasons for relocation. It is, however, possible to mention the main reasons. Such relocation is most greatly influenced by the fact that the pay in Mangistau oblast is one of the highest in the republic. In addition, there is a geographical incentive [territorial'nye nadbavki]. There is also the low cost of housing.

³⁷ *Delovaia nedelia*, July 31, 1998.

³⁸ <http://www.eurasia/98/book.7.html>.

With respect to Astana and Akmola oblast, one can generally say that those relocating here are attracted to living in the capital and to finding permanent, well-paying jobs. Almaty and Almaty oblast provide a much greater opportunity to the unemployed, as the southern capital [i.e. Almaty] has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the republic. Typical of Almaty, however, are high prices, expensive housing, and a high level of crime. Nevertheless, these factors do not serve as an obstacle to immigrants. The greatest tendency of inter-oblast and oblast-level migration occurred in 1991, when the total number of migrants was 155,766,000 and 275,496, respectively. Data for 1999 indicate that interrepublic migration processes are declining. Today, the figures are 96,973,000 and 131,637,000, respectively.³⁹

There is no sense in eliminating from these calculations the so-called optimization of oblasts. This is certainly one of the factors influencing the internal migration in Kazakhstan. In 1996, the transfer of the most competitive and profitable enterprises from economically strong oblasts to weak oblasts was discussed. The goal of such a step was to attempt to raise the economic potential of these oblasts and to increase, accordingly, tax income. Nevertheless, there was lobbying for some changes to the territorial administrative structure of Kazakhstan through elimination of a number of oblasts. In this respect, the lobbying was successful. As a result, 1997 was commemorated as the year of "optimization." This process was undertaken in connection with the oblasts of Zhezkazgan, Taldykorgan, Turgai, Semipalatinsk, and Kokshetau. Annexation occurred in the following way: Taldykorgan oblast was attached to Almaty oblast; Kokshetau was attached to Akmola; Turgai was attached to Kostanai; Zhezkazagan was attached to Karaganda; and Semipalatinsk was attached to Eastern Kazakhstan. Optimization, however, was not very successful. For example, underdeveloped Taldykorgan oblast was united with the backward oblast of Almaty. As a result, a new oblast has appeared that requires substantial state investment.

It is very interesting that oblasts with a predominantly Kazakh population were merged with those oblasts where the Russian population predominated. First, the main goal of this effort was to create a particular balance among ethnic groups. Second, the state possibly sought to distribute the Kazakh population evenly within Kazakhstan, with the goal of its future domination over other ethnic groups. A similar situation might prevail as a result of the constant outflow of the Russian population (and other populations) from Kazakhstan. This may be a component of Kazakhstan's migration policy.

It is worth mentioning the consequences, in the sphere of migration problems, of similar mergers. Thanks to the process of unification, migration flows have increased. As a result, former oblast centers have automatically become peripheral areas, with all of the resulting consequences. Naturally, the residents of the backward oblasts tried to

³⁹ <http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/111/migr.htm>.

move to closer to the center. The similar striving of those who have been resettled is understandable: since the places where they had lived have become outlying areas, subsidies to such regions have been reduced. Salaries and social benefits have also declined to a corresponding degree.

The unstable economic situation, which has already become a chronic crisis; social issues, which are more than ever given short shrift; the elevation of one ethnic group above another; the preference of one language over another — all of these factors have led to a huge outflow of the population. This tendency is observed not only among the republic's nonnative population but also among the native population. The sharply rising emigration as well as internal migration processes, together with the great reduction in those entering the country, confirms the fact that Kazakhstan's migration policy is unsustainable. In principle, this is quite clear. The government makes decisions, frequently without examining a problem thoroughly or analyzing the likely consequences of its action. As a result, the rush to decide matters pertaining to vitally important matters leads to growing social and societal tension.

In the four years from 1993 to 1997, the permanent population has declined from 16,914,000 to 15,860,000. This has occurred against the background of a rather high natural growth in the population of native population and other ethnic groups. As a result of Kazakhstan's incorrect migration policy and a worsening social and economic situation, the natural increase in the rate of the population experienced a loss, in 1992, of 21.2 percent, and in 1993 of 89.3 percent. In 1993 and 1994, migration outflows exceeded natural population growth by 1.4 and 2.8 times, respectively. In 1994, 480,000 persons emigrated from the country, while only 70,000 immigrated. In 1995, the emigration of Kazakhstan's citizens exceeded immigration by 4.4 times.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ <http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/111/migr.htm>.