



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Journal of Eurasian Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/euras



Socio-economic and political motivations of Russian out-migration from Central Asia

Aijaz A. Bandey, Farooq Ahmad Rather*

Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 December 2012

Accepted 19 March 2013

Keywords:

Soviet Union

Central Asia

Migration

Reasons

Russians

ABSTRACT

The unexpected fall of Soviet Union left ethnic Russians, outside Russia with many questions and concerns. Many of them emigrated to Russia from the erstwhile Soviet Union, for better conditions there. The disintegration of Soviet Union – a state created on the ideology of Communism was one of the reasons, apart from economic, political, socio-cultural, reasons besides the failure of Communism to keep the Soviet Union together were the main causes of Russian out-migration from Central Asia. The out-migration of Russians from Central Asia to Russia began in the 1970s as internal labour migration shifted in the wake of better job opportunities. It accelerated tremendously after 1991, and touched its highest mark in 1994, as a response to the relative economic prosperity of Russia at that time. Thus the improved standard of living in Russia and the desire to return to their cultural homeland were some major issues that concerned people to shift to Russia.

Copyright © 2013, Asia-Pacific Research Center, Hanyang University. Production and hosting by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Between 1990 and 2003, Russia received more than 10 million people,¹ of which more than half were ethnic

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: farooqarather@yahoo.com (F.A. Rather).

¹ In the first decade after independence Central Asian republics lost more than 2.3 million Russian and Russian speaking people, mostly in the direction of Russia; Charles King and Neil J. Melvin, *International Security*, Vol. XXIV, No. III, p. 123.

² Marlène Laruelle, "Central Asian Labor Migrants in Russia: The "Diasporization" of the Central Asian States?", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. III, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Programme, 2007, p. 102.

Peer-review under responsibility of Asia-Pacific Research Center, Hanyang University



Production and hosting by Elsevier

Russians (60%) or belonged to peoples with national autonomous status in Russia (Tatars, Bashkirs, etc.).² Among Central Asian republics Tajikistan became the first to emigrate the ethnic Russians because of the difficult conditions caused by the Civil War there; followed by Kyrgyzstan where the transition to a market economy initiated by Bishkek impoverished rural areas resulted in a considerable loss of the ethnic Russians.³ Disintegration of the Union was the major reason itself for migration of people from one area to other.⁴

³ Marlène Laruelle, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. III, p. 104.

⁴ Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya and Galina Vitkovskaya, "Migration in the countries of the former Soviet Union", A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, September 2005, p. 1, available online at http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/main/site/policy_and_research/gcim/rs/RS3.pdf.

1. Magnitude of migration

Alone in 1990s more than half of the Russians out migrated from Central Asia to Russia⁵ and by now more than 4.5 million people have out migrated from Central Asia⁶ and most of them were Russians (70%).⁷ From 1989 to 2002 the number of those Central Asian nationals who settled down in Russia legally and permanently rose from 882,000 to 963,000.⁸

Numerically Kazakhstan ranks highest in emigration of non-natives in the entire Commonwealth of Independent States.⁹ From Kazakhstan 728,000 Slavs left between 1989 and 1996¹⁰ and by 2006 there were less than 4 million Russians living there¹¹ and many more, about 47.4%, were willing to leave Kazakhstan.¹² This out migration in Uzbekistan was mostly of Slavs rather than of Russians as 300,000 Germans, left Kazakhstan in 1993.¹³

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan experienced large scale out-migration of Russians as compared to the remaining states of Central Asia.¹⁴ From Tajikistan almost 100,000 Russians left soon after February 1990¹⁵ when in Dushanbe violent confrontations occurred.¹⁶ By the end of 1992 some 150,000 Russian and other Russian speaking people (Ukrainian, Korean, German) left Tajikistan.¹⁷ Before the eruption of Civil War in Tajikistan, there were about half a million Russian and Russian speakers in Tajikistan, but by 1996 only half of them remained.¹⁸ Tajik Civil War compelled many Russians and other Europeans to emigrate

⁵ The emigration of Russians was particularly high in the first half of the 1990s. And the émigrés were not only Russians but also other non-indigenous minority groups of Central Asia. More than three-fifths of the German population, nearly two-fifths of the Ukrainian and almost a quarter of Poles also left Central Asia for their respective cultural nations; Sebastien Peyrouse, "The Russian Minority in Central Asia: Migration, Politics and Language", *Occasional Papers*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., 2008, pp. 3–6.

⁶ Gulnara Mendikulova, "Problems and Perspectives of Migration during the 20 years of Independent Central Asia", Paper Presented in Four Day International Conference, "Globalisation and Eurasia: Changes and Challenges", from October 18–21, 2011, Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar p. 3. (Unpublished).

⁷ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 95.

⁸ This number among Kazakhs (settled in Russia) increased from 636,000 to 654,000; among Uzbeks, from 97,000 to 123,000, and among Tajiks from 38,000 to 120,000 people. Tajikistan had experienced the highest proportional increase particularly due to the Tajik Civil War, which lasted from 1992 until 1996; Marlène Laruelle, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. III, pp. 103–104.

⁹ The emigration in Kazakhstan reached highest in 1994 with nearly 500,000 people leaving the country including 300,000 Russians; Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 3–6.

¹⁰ Between 1989 and 1996 the Russian population in Kazakhstan declined by 9.8%, that is, 678,000 heads; Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

¹¹ Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 3.

¹² Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

¹³ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

¹⁴ Recording of United States Information Agency (USIA) Office of Research in Kazakhstan, alarming number of those who are in jobs are reported non-payment of wages or joblessness; Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 101.

¹⁵ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 5.

¹⁷ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

¹⁸ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 94.

out of its fear and as a result Russians who contributed 7.6% (388,000) in 1989 in Tajikistan were mere 1.1% (68,200) by 2000.¹⁹

The number of Russians in Kyrgyzstan fell from 916,500 in 1989 to 720,000 in 1995.²⁰ This number further decreased to 603,000 in 1999 and to approximately 500,000 in 2006.²¹ Between 1990 and 1994, 200,000 Russians out-migrated from Kyrgyzstan.²² Here the primary reason for the out-migration was economic because a significant number of Russians worked there in agriculture.²³ Following table expresses the situation that arose in Central Asia from 1990 onwards.

Population change among Slavs in Central Asia, 1989–1996.

	Population by nationality				Change from 1989 to 1996			
	%		Thousands		%	Total	Of which	
	1989	1996	1989	1996			Net increase	Net migration
Uzbekistan	100.0	100.0	19,905	23,007	15.6	1102	3823	-721
Russians	8.3	5.6	1653	1280	-22.6	-374	-11	-363
Ukrainians	0.8	0.6	153	134	-12.6	-19	-2	-17
Belarusians	0.1	0.1	29	22	-24.8	-7	0	-8
Turkmenistan	100.0	100.0	3523	4198	19.2	675	687	-12
Russians	9.5	6.6	334	278	16.8	-56	-1	-55
Tajikistan	100.0	100.0	5109	5884	15.2	775	1040	-266
Russians	7.6	3.4	388	199	-48.9	-190	-2	-188
Kyrgyzstan	100.0	100.0	4290	4545	5.9	255	626	-371
Russians	21.4	15.6	917	707	-22.8	-209	-10	-41
Ukrainians	2.5	1.6	108	73	-32.4	-35	-3	-5
Belarusians	0.2	0.1	9	7	-26.0	-2	0	0
Kazakhstan	100.0	100.0	16,536	16,544	0.0	8	1321	-1313
Russians	37.7	33.9	6228	5615	-9.8	-613	62	-678
Ukrainians	5.4	4.8	896	797	-11.0	-99	7	-100
Belarusians	1.1	1.0	183	167	8.6	16	4	-12

Source: Tim Heleniak, "The Changing Nationality Composition of the Central Asia and Transcaucasian states", *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. VI, 1997, pp. 369–375.

Uzbekistan alone lost 170,000 Russians in 1992–1993 and 200,000 in 1993–1994.²⁴ Between 1992 and 1996, Central Asia accounted 59% of its net migrations to Russia, of which 25% was from Uzbekistan alone.²⁵

Turkmenistan in 1989 contained 9.5% Russians (334,000) which in 1995 had shrank to 6.7% and in 2006 it had further decreased to just 2% of the total population.²⁶

¹⁹ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 95; Sebastien Peyrouse has put their number in 2000 as 68,000 (1%); Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 5.

²⁰ In Kyrgyzstan almost 100,000 Russians left in 1993 alone; Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 6.

²¹ From 1991 to 2006 Kyrgyzstan alone lost 600,000 inhabitants of which more than half were the ethnic Russians; Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 4.

²² Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 98; Between 1989 and 1991 150,000 Russians left the republic; Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 4.

²³ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, p. 99.

²⁴ Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 6.

²⁵ Ajay Patnaik, *Nations, Minorities and States in Central Asia*, pp. 94–95.

²⁶ Sebastien Peyrouse, *Occasional Papers*, p. 5.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1127259>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1127259>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)