

Hist100 *History of Kazakhstan*



The Politics of Resettlement

With thanks to Professors Alexander Morrison and Beatrice Penati

Key questions

- Why did 'settler colonialism' take root in the territories of modern day Kazakhstan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?
- How and why did settler colonialism divide society in the steppe in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries?

Factors contributing to the rise of settler colonialism

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PART I

What is 'settler colonialism'?



- The population of England (w/o Scotland and Ireland) doubled from 8.3 million in 1801 to 16.8 million in 1851. By 1901 it had nearly doubled again to 30.5 million
- An estimated 141,000 people emigrated from England each year between 1870 and 1913
- Push factors and pull factors



Images of 19th century Irkutsk

‘The resettlement [*pereselenie*] of state peasants has twin purposes: a) so that agricultural communities [*sel'skie obshchestva*] which stand in need of land can be granted a sufficient amount for the remaining souls once the settlers have left, and b) so that spare hands in one place can be transferred to others, for the cultivation of areas lying empty.’

Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Sob.2 Tom XVIII Otd.1 No.16718 21st May 1843 ‘O dopolnitel'nykh pravilakh pereseleniya malozemel'nykh gosudarstvennykh poselyan v mnogozemel'nyya mesta’ p.236

What role did the Tsarist state play in encouraging migration across Urals?

- July 1889: statute authorising peasant settlement behind the Urals, special status for peasants settling in the 'Asiatic provinces'
- 1896: the establishment of 'Resettlement Administration' within the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Stolypin reforms after 1905



What was the importance of non-state actors in encouraging migration?



Attempts to control migration by the Tsarist state

- Khodoki
- Numbers of unofficial migrants difficult to establish
- In the words of one settlement official in Semirech'e, local authorities were "completely unprepared to accommodate from one year to the next the swelling wave of unexpected guests." (cited in Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers', *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 44:1)
- 'This is the Tsar's land, and we are the Tsar's people'

Figure 1 Registered Migration to the Steppe Governor-Generalship 1896-1909

Province	Turgai	Ural'sk	Akmolinsk	Semipalatinsk	Total
Arrivals	177,305	18,165	486,077	73,206	754,753
Returnees	43,351	1,246	64,570	5,106	114,273
% Returnees	24%	7%	13%	7%	(Avg.) 13%
Total remaining	133,954	16,919	421,507	68,100	640,480

Figure 2 Registered Migration to Turkestan and Semirechie 1896-1909

Province	Semirechie	Syr-Darya	Ferghana	Other	Total
Arrivals	17,911	9,824	1,203	243	29,181
Returnees	2,284	1,859	226	43	4,412
% Returnees	13%	19%	19%	18%	(Avg) 17%
Total remaining	15,627	7,965	977	200	24,769

N. Turchaninov (ed.) *Itogi Pereselencheskago dvizheniya za vremya s 1896 po 1909 gg. (vkluchitel'no)* (St Pb., 1910) pp.48-53

What made mass migration possible?



Bridge over the river Irtysh,
Trans-Siberian railway

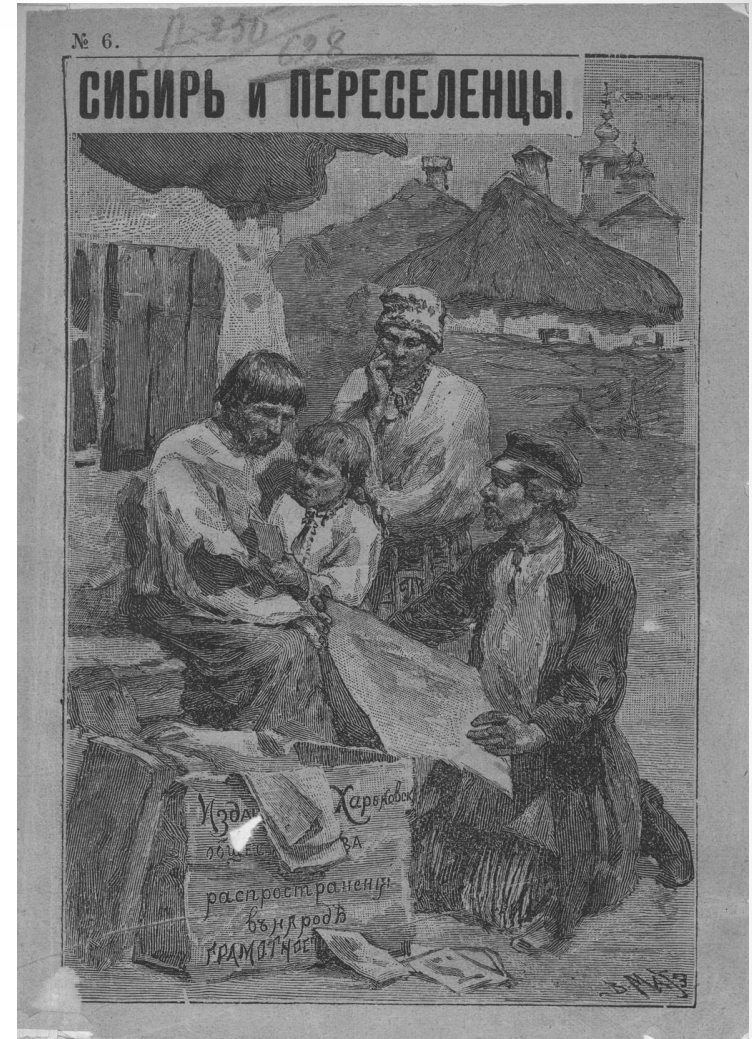
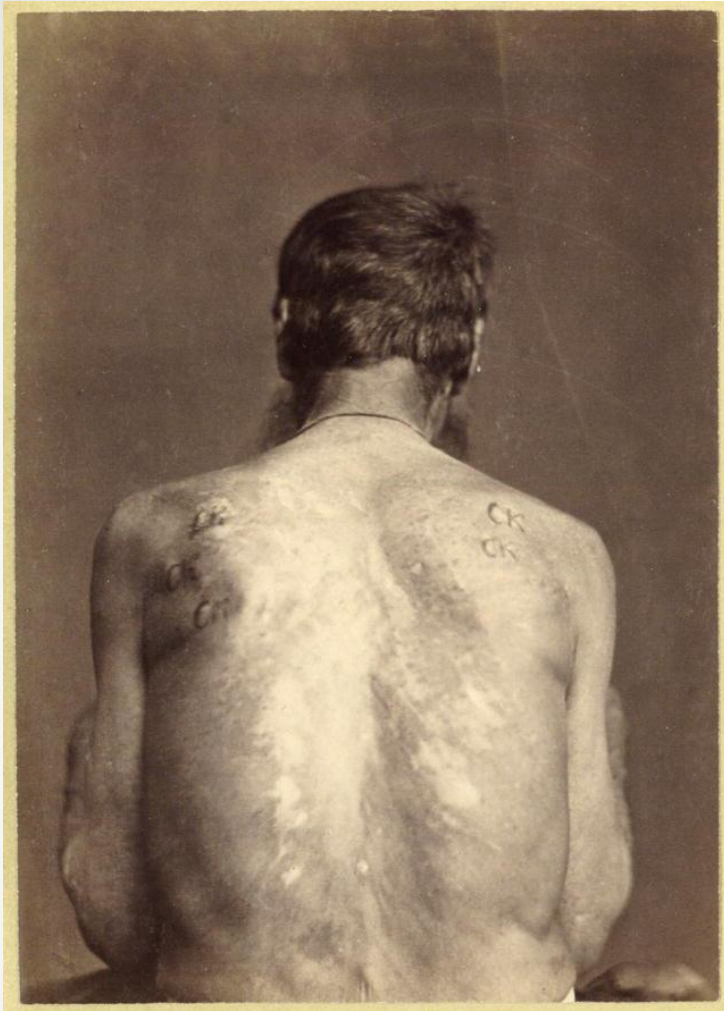
- Official figures show over 4 million peasants migrating across the Urals between 1896 and 1914
- Pace of migration increases
- Western Siberia (Tomsk, Tobolsk)
- Akmolinsk, Turghai, Semipalatinsk, Semirechie, Syr-Darya

Settler colonialism in Russia: peculiar?

‘In the course of all Russian history, from the very beginning of the Russian land right down to the present time, in the government life of the country a phenomenon was constantly observed, distinctively peculiar to us and idiosyncratically ideological – *the movement of the mass of the people to the east*. Now, when the formation of the state territory of our fatherland has been completed, and its external frontiers are finally defined with real boundaries, this popular movement is now confined in the course of that movement which is technically known as *pereselenie* [resettlement] on free Government land and has as its direct consequence the gradual incorporation of previously deserted tracts and the final peaceful conquest of the borderlands – their settled *colonisation*.’

‘Krestyanskoe Pereselenie i Russkaya Kolonizatsiya za Uralom’ in G. V. Glinka (ed.) *Aziyatskaya Rossiya Vol.I Lyudi i Poryadki za Uralom* (St Pb., 1914) pp.440-499 here p.440





(L) The old Siberia – a branded convict who had received 13 lashes. (R) the new Siberia – Peasant colonists



Деревянный кафедральный соборъ въ Вѣрномъ.

The wooden cathedral in Vernyi (*Aziatskaya Rossiya* Vol.I facing p.381)

New divisions in the steppe

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PART II

How divided was the Russian administration over the question of resettlement?

‘resettlement will crowd them [the Kazaks], but will not deprive them. Losing millions of desiatines, they will be reimbursed by the fact that their remaining land for the first time will acquire a market value; in the steppe, prices will be put on hay, plowland, wheat, and livestock’ [Prime Minister Stolypin and A. V. Krivoshein, the head of the Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture, 1910)]

‘Their [resettlement officials] effect upon the local population was so disturbing that the friendly relations that had hitherto existed between the Russians and the natives were brought to an end.’
[Pahlen’s report on resettlement, 1909]

Tensions between the Russian state and nomads



Опросъ киргизъ Казалинскаго уѣзда статистиками переселенческой
организациі.

'These magic formulae were to be derived from statistical research which would show the exact number of acres needed by a 'toiler' in any given district [...] in order to be able to follow the latest scientific methods of husbandry with the means at his disposal. So far as I remember the figures produced by a learned statistician with a long record of work for the Government of Orenburg were thirty hectares or thereabouts per nomad, old and young inclusive, and six hectares per farmer. The following reasoning was then applied. Here is a district belonging to the Tsar: it contains X number of hectares and is inhabited by Y number of nomads. As each nomad is entitled to thirty hectares, the total amount of land due to them is Y multiplied by thirty. Deduct that figure from the total acreage of the area and you have a balance N which should be handed over to the settlers. Q. E. D.' K. K. Pahlen *Mission to Turkestan* (Oxford, 1964) p.191

Russian administration vs nomads (continued)

- The so-called *izlishki* in the steppe are declared state property
- The area of *izlishki* frequently revised upwards
- Shcherbina Commission (1896) developing *normy* for nomadic and settled households
- Are the findings reasonable? (Bukeikhanov)
- Quality of the land?
- Technocracy

‘... strips of plowland, corn fields, and large areas sown to grain already form inviolable borders on the Steppe before which the nomad stock-breeder must halt with his herds, a boundary not to be crossed, a historically necessary symbol of change from one form of economy to another. ... Replacing the nomad with his eternally wandering herds there has arisen here a half-settled form of life, and occupation with the land. And where the plow has cut into the bosom of the earth pastoralism has already started to break up’ (Siberian Railroad Commission Report, 1895)

Settler-nomad divide among Kazakhs



What socioeconomic divisions emerged in the steppe?

‘Reduction in pasture led to an increasing death of livestock in winter... and this caused weaker and poorer tribes to reconsider their future: given that the previous form of the economy could not provide their subsistence, they had to look for another one that better corresponds to the situation. And now these tribes are settling in the north to live there for the entire year, close to Russian villages’

[(Timofei Sedel'nikov, *Bor'ba za zemliu v kazakhskoi stepi*, (St. Petersburg ,1907)]

‘Теряя миллионы десятин, они (киргизы) вознаграждаются тем, что остающаяся у них земля впервые получает рыночную ценность; в степи являются цены на покосы, на пашни, на хлеб, на скот’ (Krivoshein and Stolypin, *Zapiska on the steppe*)

Needs of an industrializing empire vs local environmental and economic concerns



Ethnic tensions



Count Pahlen, c. 1920

Ренатовъ Трагъ Трагъ

'The goal of Russifying the region [*tsel' obruseniya kraya*] by means of forcibly disseminating Russian nationality is also unattainable, at least through resettlement. All those attracted to resettle in the borderlands by the free distribution of land and Government loans turn out to be, as experience shows, the weakest elements of the Russian peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie, and also the sweepings of Siberian colonisation.... Finally, possessing considerable privileges, when compared with the natives, in their relations with the administration, they provoke the native population, which considers itself aggrieved through the forcible requisition of land and water, and sow the seeds of national discord and enmity, which could soon have consequences.

Palen *Pereselencheskoe Delo* p.418

Nations as 'imagined communities' (Benedict Anderson)

- Nations are creations because somebody has to tell us that we belong to them
- Distinct from regional, ethnic, or other forms of identity
- Nations are political communities, whose members believe that they have the right to political representation and sovereign rule
- In national communities, power is legitimised with reference to the national idea (i.e. the ruling elite is considered legitimate if it is seen to represent the interests of the nation, not with reference to dynastic descent, the divine right to rule, or any other political principle)
- Scholars commonly claim that nations did not emerge before the 19th century: before, power was conceived in dynastic and religious terms

Resettlement and the articulation of Kazakh national identity

‘Last summer they appeared, surveyed the land, dug furrows, and completely prepared the land for resettlement. These 5000 desiatins included a thirteen home winter camp as well as Kazak summer pastures. Did this work benefit the Kazaks? Of course not! This land was stolen for the muzhiks. The Kazak land was stolen and we believe stolen improperly’ [Baitursynov, *Qazaq*, 1913]

‘We are convinced that the building of settlements and cities, accompanied by a transition to agriculture based on the acceptance of land by Kazakhs according to the norms of Russian muzhiks, will be more useful than the opposite solution. The consolidation of the Kazakh people on a unified territory will help preserve them as a nation. Otherwise the nomadic auls will be scattered and before long lose their fertile land’. [Mukhamedzhan Seralin, editor of *Aiqap*]

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A group of settlers on a smallholding in the settlement of Nadezhdinskaia on the Hungry Steppe. (Prokudin-Gorskii Collection) ca. 1915