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**FORMATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE ESTONIAN DIASPORA
IN KAZAKHSTAN AT THE END OF THE 20th –
BEGINNING OF THE 21st CENTURY**

Abstract. *The article covers the stages of resettlement and adaptation of the Estonians in Kazakhstan at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. The relevance of the study is determined by the formation of the Estonian diaspora of Kazakhstan, which has become a stable component of the demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural life of the Republic and has been as an example*

of successful readaptation of an ethnic group in a foreign cultural environment. **The purpose of the study** is to reveal the contribution of the Estonians to the development of Kazakhstan, to consider in detail the stages of resettlement, the number and features of adaptation of the Estonians in Kazakhstan. **Scientific novelty:** For the first time, the article examines the stages of resettlement and adaptation of the Estonians in Kazakhstan in the pre-revolutionary era, in the era of deportation during World War II and in the post-war years, in the period since the establishment of independent Kazakhstan. Along with the stages of resettlement and the number of migrants, the types of adaptation are described in detail: economic, social, cultural. The process of creating settlements is discussed as a necessary condition for collective adaptation to the natural and climatic conditions of Kazakhstan. Household adaptation, which included the construction of dwellings adapted to the natural and climatic conditions of Kazakhstan, is described in detail. The process of adaptation of farming to local climatic conditions using three-field and fallow systems and the gradual dominance of cattle breeding, which for centuries was the guarantor of the survival of the local Kazakh population, has been analyzed. The socio-cultural relationships of immigrants with representatives of other ethnic groups have been highlighted. **Research Methodology.** General scientific and historical methods have been used in the preparation of this publication. The study is based on a micro-historical approach, which makes it possible to study in more detail the types of adaptation (climatic, economic, social, cultural) of the Estonians in Kazakhstan by reducing the scale of analysis. An interdisciplinary approach has been applied, borrowing methods from sociology and political science. In particular, content analysis has been applied to periodicals as the main group of sources. The research is also based on the paradigm of ethno-symbolism, which makes it possible to identify the features of the Kazakh-Estonian relations. The development of the topic has been carried out using the general scientific principles of historicism and objectivity, which made it possible to consider the phenomena under study on the basis of objective patterns, in their internal interrelation and interaction with specific historical conditions. The methodological tools are the biographical method, through the use of which the facts of the biographies of famous Estonians of Kazakhstan have been studied, the activity approach made it possible to trace the life positions of the studied figures. At the same time, the following methods have been used: comparative historical, axiological, chronological, analysis and synthesis, etc., which made it possible to generalize, take into account the historical context of events, and avoid political stereotypes and prejudices. **Conclusions.** The Estonian diaspora in Kazakhstan in the process of its formation in the late 19th – early 21st centuries turned into a stable component of the demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural life of the Republic, showing an example of successful adaptation of an ethnic group in a foreign cultural environment. The materials are of practical value, since the application of this experience will undoubtedly become the basis for practical application in the field of creating an atmosphere of interethnic harmony.

Key words: Estonians, adaptation, Kazakhstan, Steppe region, migration, deportation.

ФОРМУВАННЯ ТА АДАПТАЦІЯ ЕСТОНСЬКОЇ ДІАСПОРИ В КАЗАХСТАНІ НАПРИКІНЦІ ХІХ – ПОЧАТКУ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ

Анотація. У статті розглядаються етапи переселення і адаптації естонців у Казахстані наприкінці ХІХ – на початку ХХІ століття. Актуальність дослідження визначається формуванням естонської діаспори Казахстану, яка стала стабільним компонентом демографічного, соціально-економічного, політичного та культурного життя республіки та слугувала прикладом успішної реадaptaції етнічної групи в чужому культурному середовищі. **Мета дослідження** – розкрити внесок естонців у розвиток Казахстану, детально проаналізувати етапи переселення, чисельність та особливості адаптації естонців у цій країні. **Наукова новизна:** у статті вперше розглядаються етапи розселення та адаптації естонців у Казахстані в дореволюційну епоху, в епоху депортації під час Другої світової війни та в повоєнні роки, в період з моменту створення незалежного Казахстану. Поряд з етапами розселення і кількістю мігрантів детально описані види адаптації: економічна, соціальна, культурна. Розглядається процес створення поселень як необхідна умова колективної адаптації до природно-кліматичних умов Казахстану. Висвітлено адаптацію домогосподарств, яка включала будівництво жител, пристосованих до природно-кліматичних умов Казахстану.

Проаналізовано процес адаптації сільського господарства до місцевих кліматичних умов з використанням трипільної та перелогової систем і поступове домінування скотарства, яке століттями було гарантом виживання місцевого казахського населення. Виділено соціально-культурні зв'язки іммігрантів з представниками інших етнічних груп. **Методологія дослідження.** При підготовці цієї публікації використані загальнонаукові й історичні методи. Стаття базується на мікроісторичному підході, який дає змогу детальніше вивчити типи адаптації (кліматичної, економічної, соціальної, культурної) естонців у Казахстані за рахунок зменшення масштабу аналізу. Застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід із запозиченням методів із соціології та політології. Зокрема, контент-аналіз використано до періодичних видань як основної групи джерел. Дослідження також базується на парадигмі етносимволіки, що сприяє виявленню особливостей казахстансько-естонських відносин. Розробка теми здійснювалася із використанням загальнонаукових принципів історизму й об'єктивності, що уможливило розглянути досліджувані явища на основі об'єктивних закономірностей, у їхньому внутрішньому взаємозв'язку та взаємодії з конкретними історичними умовами. Методологічними інструментами є біографічний метод, за допомогою якого вивчено факти біографій відомих естонців Казахстану, діяльнісний підхід створив можливості простежити життєві позиції досліджуваних постатей. Водночас було використано такі методи: порівняльно-історичний, аксіологічний, хронологічний, аналізу та синтезу тощо, що дало можливість узагальнити, врахувати історичний контекст подій, уникнути політичних стереотипів та упереджень. **Висновки.** Естонська діаспора в Казахстані в процесі свого формування наприкінці XIX – на початку XXI століття перетворилася на стабільний компонент демографічного, соціально-економічного, політичного та культурного життя республіки, демонструючи приклад успішної адаптації етнічної групи в чужому культурному середовищі. Матеріали мають практичну цінність, оскільки використання такого досвіду, безсумнівно, стане основою для практичного застосування у сфері створення атмосфери міжетнічної злагоди.

Ключові слова: естонці, адаптація, Казахстан, Степовий регіон, міграція, депортація.

Problem Statement. Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has been faced with the task of building a stable, multi-ethnic society. The young Republic faced many problems, including the preservation of interethnic harmony in the republic. Although over 30 years of independence it has been possible to maintain stability in relations between ethnic groups, this area will always be one of the important strategic directions in the country's internal policy. In our opinion, an important role in its solution will be played by the use of the unique experience of adaptation of the Estonians of Kazakhstan, which occurred from the moment the region joined the Russian Empire, as a result of the active resettlement policy of tsarism, the period of Stalin's deportation during World War II, and the era of building independent Kazakhstan.

Despite numerous studies on the history of the formation of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan, researchers have not sufficiently highlighted the problem of adaptation of the Estonians, although this aspect is an important part of this problem. The Estonians have demonstrated the most successful experience of economic, social and cultural adaptation in a foreign ethnic environment. Undoubtedly, this process played a big role in the process of sustainable development of Kazakhstan, in the field of interethnic relations in subsequent periods of development. The study of this experience will undoubtedly influence government policy in the field of interethnic relations.

In the course of studying the presented problem, researches and documents were used, having studied which we were able to trace the processes of resettlement, deportation and adaptation of the Estonians on the territory of Kazakhstan. Important sources for us were archival materials published in various collections of documents, as well as Internet resources, where there is a large amount of information about this problem.

Review of Sources and Recent Researches. Sources on the history of adaptation of the Estonians in Kazakhstan are presented by several groups. One group consists of sources relating to issues of resettlement and adaptation in the pre-revolutionary period.

These include materials of the Resettlement Administration – plans and reports, reviews and reference publications (“books”), journals of meetings and commissions, audit materials. For the most part, they are involved in scientific circulation by domestic and foreign scholars, becoming the subject of a special or general research.

This includes numerous statistical materials. Among this group, we can highlight the materials of the First General Census of the Russian Empire in 1897, which contains the first official information on the number of main ethnic groups living on the territory of Kazakhstan, including the Estonians.

Numerous studies contain reviews of the life activities of the Estonians in Kazakhstan, provide numerical data, and analyze their socio-economic situation.

Academician V. A. Maamägi made a great contribution to the study of the history of the formation of the Estonian diaspora in Kazakhstan. Despite the fact that his monograph “Estonian Settlers in the USSR (1917 – 1940)” was written within the framework of the Soviet communist ideology, it is the first serious study of the history of the Estonian national minority in the USSR, including in Kazakhstan in the pre-war years; before it, at different times, only a census of Estonian settlements was carried out, or certain aspects of the topic were covered (mainly in the historical and local history plan). V. A. Maamägi highlights such important features of the ethnic development of the Estonian population living outside Estonia as widespread bilingualism, familiarization with the lifestyle, customs and progressive traditions of the surrounding population, rapprochement and partial merging with a foreign environment (Maamägi 1976).

H. Kulu, D.M. Skerrett, R.R. Hanks, E. Schatz devoted their studies to migration and adaptation of the Estonians (Kulu, 2000, Skerrett, 2008, Hanks, 1998, Schatz, 2000).

A large number of works on the history of resettlement policy and adaptation of peoples, including Estonians in Kazakhstan, were written during the Soviet period. At this time, migration processes in the 19th and early 20th centuries continued to be actively studied. As before, they were considered from the point of view of the course and nature of the movement of foreign ethnic groups within Kazakhstan. The works of A. Tursunbaev, B. Suleimenov and other authors are devoted to characterizing socio-economic type of migrants and determining the consequences of resettlement movement (Tursunbaev, 1950, Suleimenov 1963).

At this time, a significant number of works were published on the demographic situation in Kazakhstan at that time. In 1981, a monograph by N. V. Alekseenko was published: “Population of pre-revolutionary Kazakhstan”, based on the results of the First General Population Census of 1897 and sample censuses (Alekseenko, 1981).

At the same time, the first special studies appeared on the formation of the multiethnic composition of the population of Kazakhstan. Among them, first of all, the articles and monographs of N. E. Bekmakhanova should be mentioned (Bekmakhanova, 1980).

The researcher focuses on the history of the resettlement of the Estonians to Kazakhstan, their social status and contribution to the development of the Republic’s economy. Based on materials from numerous sources, the author reveals the main trends in the development of the population of the Kazakh region and adjacent regions of Northern Kyrgyzstan in the pre-revolutionary period.

The issues of the formation of the multinational population of Kazakhstan in close connection with the general processes of urbanization of the northeastern and eastern regions of the country were considered in numerous works by Zh. K. Kasymbaev (Kasymbaev, 1975).

A separate area continues to be the study of migration processes as a decisive factor in the formation of the ethno-demographic structure of the population of Kazakhstan in the pre-revolutionary and Soviet periods. These aspects are quite fully reflected in the works of A.B. Galiev (Galiev, 1979), G. Krongardt (Krongardt, 1980).

In their monographs they touched upon issues of socio-political, economic situation, national identity, demographic development, and migration behavior of the Estonian population in Kazakhstan.

A large number of both general and special studies are devoted to the history of the deportation of the Estonians to Kazakhstan in Soviet times. The works of M. K. Kozybaeva, K. S. Aldazhumanova, E. K. Aldazhumanova, V. G. Chebotareva, for the first time in the historiography of Kazakhstan, assessed the deportation of peoples, including the Estonians, as the gravest crime of the totalitarian regime (Kozybaev, 1997; Kozybaev, 1998; Aldazhumanov, 1997; Chebotareva, 2004).

The monographs of Z. E. Kabuldinov, E. Yu. Sadovskaya, B. Khasanov and A. N. Alekseenko discuss the history of the Estonians of Kazakhstan, including their numbers and places of settlement in Kazakhstan (Kabuldinov, 2007; Sadovskaya, 2001; Khasanov, 1976; Alekseenko, 1993).

In the study of this topic, statistical data from the all-Union population censuses of 1926, 1939, 1959, censuses in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1999, 2009 and 2021, demographic collections, the Archives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan were also used.

Research Results. The formation of the Estonian ethnic group in Kazakhstan is rooted in the history of the 19th century, when the growing processes of land confiscation from Estonian peasants forced them to move to the outskirts of the Russian Empire. The resettlement process intensified in the second half of the 19th century, when Estonian Christians were already free people and could change their place of residence according to the passport regime of 1863. Agriculture, the desire of peasants to acquire land in private ownership and manage a farm, the beginning of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1892, the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and the Stolypin agrarian reform influenced the intensity of peasant migration from the western and central regions of the empire.

According to the 1897 Census, there were 440 Estonians in Central Asia, of whom 375 lived in Kazakhstan (Troinitsky, 1905).

Migration from Estonia continued at the beginning of the 20th century and especially after the revolution of 1905 – 1907 due to land management work, the establishment of the farm system and the ongoing agrarian famine. The punitive expeditions of the tsarist troops against the participants of the national liberation movement of the Estonian people, which followed the revolutionary events of 1905, also had some influence on the growth of the migration movement from Estonia. Farm labourers, land-poor peasants and artisans predominated among the immigrants at that time.

Settlers from Estonia created Estonian national enclaves in various parts of the country. The majority of them were peasants. Geographically, the national minority was separated from its nation, but it retained its national identity, language, culture and customs. The foreign environment influenced their economic and cultural development (Maamägi, 1976).

The Estonian emigrants entered Kazakhstan both from Western Siberia, where they had already moved somewhat earlier, and directly from Estonia and the Livonia province. The Estonian settlements appeared in the Steppe region. Thus, in 1893, in the current Astrakhan district of the Akmola region, Estonian settlers founded the village of Petrovskoye at the foot of a hill near Ishima, named after the island from which they came, Yuksari (literally “village and river”) (Bekmakhanova, 1980).

In 2018, this village, now home to 1,200 people of 20 nationalities, was visited as part of a business visit by a delegation of 30 businessmen from the Republic of Estonia, led by Prime Minister Jüri Ratas and the country's ambassador to the Republic of Estonia Heiti Mäemets.

In Central Kazakhstan, near the city of Karaganda in the Akmola region, the Estonian village of Lifyandskoye arose in 1906, later renamed into the Pokornoe district (now the village of Baymyrza, Bukhar-Zhyrau district, Karaganda region), one of the first residents of which was the correspondent of Akmola newspapers of the 1920s, Jan Samoilovich Kanter (1903 – 1990).

The Estonian historian V. Maamägi later published his memoirs, according to which “the Estonians brought only their own flavour to the appearance of the Prinipur steppe. Almost every house had a loom. Women sewed woolen blankets, knitted sweaters, socks, stockings, and scarves. The men were engaged in shoemaking. The village grew to two hundred households, three streets and several public wells appeared. Livlyandskoe became the center of the Livlyandskaya volost, uniting thirteen villages.” Regarding local historian Y. Popov, Yan Samoilovich drew a map of the village of Pokornoe, pointed out the houses of old-timers on it, listing their families, among whom there were many Estonians – Oscar Sari, Vladimir Tate (agronomist), Ya. D. Teder, P. P. Rebane and the others. In addition, he drew up a diagram of the location of outbuildings on the territory of the Estonian estate (Maamägi, 1976).

During World War I, the tsarist authorities forced the residents of Lifyandka to change their “German” name. The peasants proposed new names: Tsarskoe, then Stolypinskoe, but the authorities refused them and gave the village the name Pokornoe (submissive), emphasizing that its inhabitants should be submissive to the Russian Tsar. The new settlers of Pokornoe received 7 dessiatines of land (land was not added to the newly born male children). The settlers sometimes arbitrarily seized state land or rented it from the Kazakhs living nearby (Tursunbaev, 1950).

The Estonian settlements also appeared in Altai, part of which belongs to modern Eastern Kazakhstan. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Estonians founded the village of Verkhnyaya Elovka in the Markakol Lake District, as evidenced by the Estonian old-timer G. A. Poussepa, their compact settlements were also located on Kolyvany, near Zmeinogorsk, Russian Altai (Bekmakhanova, 1986).

It should be noted that the natural and climatic conditions of the Altai Mountains, rich in forests and animals, were similar to those of Estonia. Immigrants could easily adapt here using their skills as hunters and farmers. As an example, we can cite a quote from P. M. Janson about the Estonians who once moved to the vicinity of St. Petersburg, which illustrates their national character and economic characteristics: “The first period of the settlers’ life was quite difficult, as they settled in remote forest areas, receiving the land in its primitive state. But owing to the agricultural experience they brought from the Baltic states, the Estonian peasants developed their farms better than the surrounding local population. The Estonian peasant farms always have multi-field crop rotations with grass sowing, and dairy farming is also quite developed”.

In addition, the same author testifies that in the 1930s, Literacy among the Estonians was 75.2%, and among wealthy peasants it was significantly higher (12%) than among Russians (Galiev, 1979).

Under favourable settlement conditions, settlers were often pioneers of agricultural innovations in the use of original economic techniques, new agricultural tools, sowing new varieties of seeds, and the introduction of a new approach to business. The Estonians began to grow potatoes for sale. Moving to new places, the Estonian peasants, to the extent possible, used the knowledge that they acquired in their homeland, working on the land of the landowners, where capitalist relations in agriculture were more developed than in the places where they settled.

In a number of cases, settlers introduced multi-field crop rotations (crop rotations with seven to eight or more fields). This was facilitated by the fact that under the farm and cut-off system their lands were not subject to redistribution. They sowed clover and timothy. In Estonian villages, commodity production was dominant from the very beginning. By demonstrating the advantages of multiple fields, planting an agricultural culture, and introducing new labor skills, the settlers played a progressive role in the economic and cultural development of agriculture in the areas of their settlement. In the steppe regions, they purchased agricultural machines, organized agricultural associations, most often dairy partnerships and credit societies. These associations were at the service of the rich peasantry. Poor peasant farm laborers had access only to the fire society. In the forest-steppe village of Akmola district (since 1906, 49 families), Estonians purchased 38 reapers, 23 mowers, 4 threshers, 12 seeders. Only a plow was used for plowing (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (APRC), f.140, d.1, c. 55, p. 98).

L. B. Malinovsky noted that most families of the Estonians, the Germans, and the Latvians appeared in Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1907 – 1909. “By the beginning of World War I”, he wrote, “the settlers had not yet had time to sufficiently gain a foothold in their new place. Back in 1912 – 1913, Some of the settlers were busy building housing, the poor and even the middle peasants, who went bankrupt during the resettlement, worked as labourers for the old-timers, including Russian kulaks, accumulating funds for economic establishment in a new place” (Bekmakhanova, 1980).

The Estonian settlers preserved their way of life that had developed in peasant Estonia, their way of life, their customs and traditions. This most noticeably affected the appearance of the Estonian settlements, which were distinguished by the large scattering of individual farms and the arrangement of gardens and vegetable gardens. However, from the very beginning, Estonian settlers began to borrow elements of culture, primarily material, and way of life from the local population. In the first years, this most noticeably affected the architecture of buildings, since the climate, terrain, and availability of building materials forced the settlers to take into account the experience of the old residents (Bekmakhanova, 1986).

To adapt to the local climate, Estonians had to use local building materials to build houses. The first (temporary) homes of Estonian settlers were dugouts. They dug a hole in the ground, laid out a wall 2-3 feet (60-90 cm) high from turf layers, left an opening for a window in front, a door behind, covered with mown grass (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 369, d. 1, c. 4614, pp. 3–8).

In Kazakhstan, the Estonians used adobe as a building material – unfired clay bricks mixed with straw. Logs were laid as the basis of the roof, covered with long straw or reeds and covered with earth. Over time, more spacious brick houses with iron roofs appeared. In areas

where the climate was similar to Estonian, settlers built residential buildings separately from outbuildings – barns, barns, sheds, bathhouses. In Kazakhstan, residential and farm buildings were often built under one roof, which allowed the peasant family to care for livestock during severe frosts and multi-day snowstorms. Riga and a threshing floor were usually absent from the outbuildings in Kazakhstan in private households.

In houses, under the kitchen floor, there was a basement for storing potatoes. The Estonians borrowed the construction of furnaces and cellars from the Russian population (APRC, f. 140, d. 1, c. 55, p. 98).

Visitors to the Estonian settlements noted their cleanliness and neatness in their household and everyday life. The Estonian settlers had widely developed household crafts and handicrafts. Almost every house had a workbench, a spinning wheel, and a loom. The first generation of settlers often furnished their homes with homemade furniture. With their own hands they also made carts, sleighs, arcs, barrels, kneading bowls, spinning wheels, looms, clothes, bed linen and underwear from homespun wool and flax. The tailor usually went from house to house and made weekend clothes for the family. Housewives made blankets, bedspreads, rugs, stockings, socks, mittens, and gloves themselves. Separate blacksmith rooms and new tools appeared. Iron parts of carts, sleighs, harrows, sickles, scythes, traps, locks, hinges, hooks, bolts, and dishes began to be manufactured. There have been changes in the saddlery and leather crafts. Methods of processing leather and hides changed (Kozina, 2007).

Villages and colonies were the cornerstone of “Estonianness”, and became centres where tradition and language from Estonia were maintained and passed on to younger generations. As a rule, a village consisted only of the Estonians, and if there were representatives of other ethnic groups in the village, then each group usually had its own territory and living space. As the core of the village was usually people from the same county or even rural municipality, this facilitated adaptation and increased the feeling of belonging together. Also, by the second decade of this century, most of the inhabitants of the Estonian villages in West Siberia had managed to build decent houses for their families and slowly but surely produce enough food to feed the village (Kulu, 2000).

Many of the first generation immigrants did not speak Russian; the urban population spoke it better. In some Estonian settlements there were schools where the native language was taught. Where there were no schools, children were taught in reading circles. In some Estonian settlements, buildings for clubs were also built, in which brass bands, amateur and handicraft clubs, and singing choirs were created.

Estonians left their indelible mark on the life of the Zhetysu region in southeastern Kazakhstan, which was a very attractive region for immigrants due to its favorable climate. Many Almaty residents know or have been to Baum's grove, but few know that the main initiator of its creation, Eduard Baum, was the son of an Estonian nobleman born in the city. In Derpe, Estland Governorate, the botanist and gardener from Penza, Otto Matveevich Baum (1813 – 1876), acting as assistant inspector of the Society of Agriculture of South-East Russia. His eldest son Otto Baum (1842 – 1892) graduated from the University of Dorpat in November 1873. in the city of Verny, he took the position of gardener and manager of the State Garden (now the Park of Culture and Recreation), fulfilling it until his untimely death at the age of 50, with the exception of seven years (1876 – 1883) of service in Gulja. Office. On a voluntary basis, he also carried out meteorological observations, installing measuring instruments in the courtyard of his house at the intersection of Torgovaya and Poberezhnaya streets (currently ZhibekZholy – Begalina) (Abdullina, 2020).

Eduard Baum (1850 – 1921) was also a botanist-enthusiast, ecologist, interested in landscaping the city of Verny, where he became a resident in 1875. E. Baum received permission from the governor of the Zhetysu region and decided to oblige every homeowner in the city to plant at least 20 ornamental and fruit-bearing trees. He took an active part in this process, and many seedlings of apple trees, shrubs and wild trees were received from his father from Penza. On his initiative, residents began to celebrate tree planting days every year; a grove appeared in Verny, which was later named after its creator – Bauma.

According to documents of the Central State Archive, Almaty, 1912. An Estonian Johann Eduard Anlentzen Reinwald, a farmer of the Livonia province, Yuryevsky district, Kudinsky volost, became the first driver in Verny to travel by car Bishkek – Tokmak – Arasan – Merke – Verny. This luxury car of the French brand “Berliet C2 Double “Phaeton” (“Berlier”) with a phaeton-type folding top was purchased by buyer Babakhan Nurmukhamedbaev, and then sold to an Estonian, who used it to transport passengers (Abdullina, 2020).

There are records of Estonians who opened farms and soap factories in Eastern Kazakhstan.

World War I, the Russian Revolution (1917) and civil war, however, delivered a severe blow to the Estonian settlement. Many men from the villages were mobilized; some did not return. The colonies were ravaged by red and white terror; emigrants' horses and provisions were requisitioned and whatever was left was eaten up by the policy of War Communism (1918 – 1921). Years of hard labour in the new homeland were reduced to nothing. After Estonia became independent (1918), emigrants were given the opportunity to take Estonian citizenship and repatriate. Under these conditions, many applied for repatriation, but only a few of the Kazakh Estonians returned to independent Estonia in 1920 – 1923 (Kulu, 1993).

As a result of World War I, the Russian Civil War and the repatriation to Estonia, the number of Estonians in Kazakhstan decreased. However, the 1920s can be considered the heyday of the Estonian villages in Kazakhstan.

By the mid-twenties, most emigrants had recovered from the wartime difficulties, and the development of villages was enhanced by the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1921 – 1927), initiated in Soviet Russia in 1921 and which, as opposed to previous War Communism, provided emigrants with relative economic freedom. The requirement that surplus agricultural products be given away was replaced by relatively low taxes which encouraged small-scale production (Nove, 1992).

Pre-war educational and cultural life was also restored; Estonian schools which were closed during the war reopened, and many new ones were founded. By the end of the 1920s it was possible to receive an Estonian primary education in all the larger villages. Generally, the educational and cultural situation in the Soviet Union in the 1920s was good for ethnic minorities. Religion was prohibited but the government supported primary education in the mother tongue of minorities and the elimination of illiteracy (Kurs, 1994).

The Soviet Union's steps towards collectivization at the end of the 1920s brought about a number of changes (Viola, 1990).

The form of ownership changed: individual peasant farms were replaced by collective farms. Joint undertakings were already widespread among emigrants. Cooperatives, founded on a voluntary basis, had been created to help emigrants overcome problems such as marketing agricultural products and served individual farms as the primary unit of production. Collectivization, which aimed to create collective farms where property was owned jointly, was both a psychological and an economic blow to emigrants. They had to give up the land and household for which they had come to Kazakhstan. Moreover, this occurred at a time

when the emigrants had already witnessed the decline of communes (the first collective farms).

The status of emigrants also changed. They were classified into three groups: kulaks (better-off peasants), sredniaks (mid-level peasants) and *bedniaks* (poor peasants). Collective farms were intended for *bedniaks* and *sredniaks*. The kulaks as a class had to be liquidated, their property confiscated and families deported (Maamägi, 1980; Hosking, 1985; Nove, 1992).

In 1929 – 1930, a wave of purges and deportations swept through Kazakhstan and the Soviet Union as a whole (Viola, 1990). Some Estonians from Kazakhstan were classified as Kulaks and deported to Siberia.

The situation of Estonians in Kazakhstan has changed as a result of collectivization. Small Estonian villages have disappeared, as well as the unique form of settlement characteristic of Estonians.

In 1937 – 1938, Kazakhstan and the Soviet Union as a whole underwent a new wave of purges (Nowe, 1992). If a few years ago only well-off rural residents were imprisoned and deported, now residents of the middle and poor strata of the population have become victims of violence. Many Estonians were deported from Kazakh Estonian villages on charges of counter-revolution and anti-Soviet propaganda. The local leaders were imprisoned, and the rest had nowhere to run. The purges dealt a serious blow to the educational and cultural life of the Estonian colonies (many villages had schoolteachers among them). In 1937, the Soviet Union discontinued native language instruction for ethnic minorities, and school instruction was switched to Russian. In addition, newspapers, collections, and gazettes in ethnic minority languages were closed (Lallukka, 1990; Maamyagi, 1990; Kurs, 1994). The displacement of the Estonian language from educational and cultural life at the local level marked the beginning of its displacement from the daily life of Estonians and created the basis for the linguistic assimilation of the younger generation and the gradual disappearance of Estonian traditions in Kazakhstan.

The generation born before 1930 is the last generation of Kazakhstani Estonians who actively carry and broadcast “Estonianism”. Those who were born in the 1930s and 1940s are already different. This generation is still a native speaker of the Estonian traditions and language, but it has not passed them on. Therefore, ethnically, Estonians are more passive than active. The generation born in the 1950s and later was even more passive. Representatives of this generation carry only what was passed down to them in childhood from their grandparents. One of the important reasons for such sharp differences between generations is the lack of education in Estonian at schools for these younger generations. This made the generations born in the 1930s and later passive in terms of the ethnic identity of Estonians and limited their desire and opportunities to return to Estonia. Russian education, in turn, brought them closer to non-Estonians of the same generation. These generational differences have affected both migration behavior, marital behavior, and language use by Estonians (Kulu, 2000).

The next major wave of Estonian immigration to Kazakhstan occurred during the Soviet period, in the 1940s, but, unlike previous migrations, these were forced deportations after the absorption of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union in 1940 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In this way, the state got rid of “unreliable” peoples, carrying out repression, which was characteristic of the Stalinist totalitarian regime (Mazhitova et al., 2024).

In Estonia, the Soviet government began to carry out mass purges in the ranks of the so-called “bourgeois nationalists”, “enemies of the people”, kulaks, who were exiled to

settlements and correctional camps. According to the International Historical and Educational Society “Memorial”, about 10,016 people were sent on trains outside the republic on the night of June 14–15, 1941 (mostly to Siberia), among them many women, children and old people. Many Estonians were imprisoned in the Karaganda and Steppe forced labor camps, and also worked in special settlements. In 2015, a memorial sign was unveiled at the Spassky Memorial Complex, where more than 5 thousand prisoners of war and internees from 50 nationalities were buried, to Estonians who suffered from political repression.

During the summer months of 1941, 656 repressed people from the Baltic States arrived in the territory of the Kazakh SSR, a significant part of whom were resettled as exiled settlers for a period of 20 years in South Kazakhstan, Aktobe, Kyzylorda, Karaganda, Guryev and Akmola regions. New waves of resettlement of the “punished” titular peoples of the Baltic States led to a significant increase in this number in the following months of 1941. According to the historian V. N. Zemskov, as a result of forced deportations during the war, 14301 special settlers from the Baltic countries were placed on the territory of Kazakhstan (Zemskov, 1993).

Elena Koemets talked about the fate of her ancestors deported to Kazakhstan: “My grandmother was repressed to Kazakhstan and spent from 1940 to 1950 in camps in Karaganda. Then I spent five years living in Balkhash. In 1958 she settled in Alma-Ata, then finally went to live in Estonia. But my father stayed there – he really liked grapes, but they don’t grow in the north. The father specially went to Ust-Kamenogorsk to pick up his wife – they told him that many Estonian girls lived there. Their fates are similar: my mother’s father was shot as a spy in 1938. Over the years of research, I have heard many similar stories. At the International Gathering of Estonians, which took place in Sweden, I spoke about the fate of my relatives and friends, and those gathered did not hide their tears. So, my dad, Valery Koemets, came to build the Medeo skating rink in the early 1970s. Once I met an Estonian from the city of Issyk, Almaty region, Asta Pyarlitz. She is fluent in Estonian, English, German, and at the time of our meeting she was also mastering the Kazakh language. But my grandmother is over 80 years old! When she arrived from Estonia to Kazakhstan, she thought it was like in her homeland – you couldn’t tell summer from winter, but it didn’t turn out that way. Since we’re talking about languages: a year ago an unusual performance took place in Almaty – the Estonian Puppet Theater presented the play “Johnny’s Seven Friends” in... the Kazakh language. Was it easy for northerners to learn a foreign language? I think so, since the languages have a lot in common: they have no prepositions, and words are connected using suffixes and endings. Alphabets also have specific letters; they give languages a special sound” (Koemets, 2013).

The adaptation process of deported the Estonians in Kazakhstan was difficult. Scattered over a vast territory and limited in contact with their compatriots, the special settlers were in danger of ethnocultural assimilation with the local population. In the new settlement areas the housing problem was very acute. It is worth noting that during the period under review, not only special settlers, but also the local population experienced an acute need for food and goods. Due to a weak financial situation, an extreme lack of food supplies, warm clothes, and shoes, the process of adaptation to living conditions in a special settlement and to work was difficult.

Regional and district organizations were looking for opportunities to provide the necessary housing and food for the newly arriving exiled settlers. For this, there were instructions and an action plan for the transfer, resettlement and employment of special contingents expelled

from the Baltic States, approved by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) dated June 14, 1941. The plan approved the mode of operation, accounting and labour and household arrangements for exiled settlers. The archives are replete with materials from the reports of the NKVD officers, testifying to the difficult living conditions in which the "fluid national groups" were found. Thus, it was noted in the memorandum of the head of the Gulag V. G. Nasedkin to the Deputy People's Commissar of the NKVD V. V. Chernyshev about the placement of exiles: "According to the signals coming from the places, these exiles are in very difficult living conditions. There are facts of swelling from hunger, begging, and 'unemployment'" (Baikash et al., 2019).

The same difficult situation of the exiled settlers was noted in the report on "Sanitary and preventive work in the Osakarovsky district of the Karaganda Oblast" dated March 3, 1942: "The state farm pays ... great attention to animals, at least we saw a beautifully built calf barn, but people on the state farm live in very difficult conditions. In the dormitories (...) incredible dirt was found, a lot of lice. We were surprised that in the room where the young workers live, 5 Latvian women are settled" (Vvedenskaya, 2015).

Judging by numerous documents, no effective measures were taken by the Soviet authorities to build residential premises, prepare housing for winter in the places of resettlement of newcomers. The Baltic peoples, who arrived in Kazakhstan at that time, worked diligently on the construction sites of the republic. Here is what I. K. Pukenis, who was repressed in 1938 and sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment by extrajudicial repressive bodies ("troika"), wrote in his appeal to the department of rehabilitation of people of Stalin repressions of the Department of Internal Affairs in Pavlodar: "I was 19 years old. I was arrested right in the workplace. (...) they took me to the district centre (...). The investigator Lobziy summoned me. His first question was about you being from a family of kulaks, I answered that you were a family of 9 people, there was only one cow and a bull calf. He answered that we did not break such people. If you deny it, we will do without your confession" (SAPR, f. 719, d. 1, c. 405, p. 1).

I. K. Pukenis, on the basis of the sentence, went a long way: from worker in a prison workshop in Pavlodar, handyman in timber mines in Sverdlovsk Oblast to turner on the railway in Moscow Oblast. Exactly 8 years later he was released with a 2nd group of disability.

During World War II, Kazakhstan not only provided the front with manpower, but was also a major arsenal for the front. At that time, the country's subsoil was undergoing rapid development. It was not by chance that the deported from the Baltic peoples were placed in strategically important regions of the Republic: Karaganda, Akmolinsk, Dzhezkazgan, Semipalatinsk, and other industrial centres. One of those who worked in these years in the mines for mining was A. K. Malleus. In his autobiography he wrote: "I was born on January 7, 1932 in the Republic of Estonia, in a peasant family. I was arrested. I served time in Dzhezkazgan. I was released in 1956. I worked in (...) ROGR (Open Pit Mine) as an electric fitter. On April, 28th, 1989 he was rehabilitated" (SANKR, f. 2084, d. 1, c. 118, p. 3).

Despite all the difficulties, the deported Estonians demonstrated a high level of adaptability to new conditions. They earned the respect of the local population for their hard work, lack of conflict and respect for the traditions and customs of the Kazakhs.

In 1954, about 650,000 migrants arrived in Northern Kazakhstan as part of the campaign to develop virgin lands and deposits, of which about 20,000 arrived in Akmola Oblast alone (SAAR, f. 1, d. 1, c. 1982).

Estonians were also among the migrants. They were represented in all regions of the republic, but most of all in Karaganda, Tselinograd and Eastern Kazakhstan.

As a narrative of those years, filled with propaganda and publicity, we use an extract from letters and newspaper articles by Estonian virgin land workers who returned to their homeland from Kazakhstan in 1957: “Komsomol banners were carried with honour through all difficulties. 6,200 thousand poods of first class grain were handed over to the state. 209 boys and girls of Tallinn were awarded the badge for the development of new lands” (SAA, f. 136, d. 7, f. 110, p. 6). The virgin lands people of the Baltic republics mastered the widest range of professions: from turners, millers to designers, miners, milkmaids. The names of the best have been preserved in archives, among which it is worth mentioning “Annok, Vetka, Saviots, Cabral, Puusepp, Ikvils, Kask and Telliskivi from the Central district, ... Veske, Aun, Liiv, ... Sokkmann, Jalak...” and many others who left their mark on the virgin land epic.

Estonians, like other small nations, were subjected to a Russification policy that even affected their names.

According to informants, the situation was the same with Estonians: “There was a choice between assimilation or camps. Estonians tried to survive, ... went through the camps. Some assimilated, adapted to Soviet life..., changed their names. The Estonian names and surnames were changed and recorded in the passports as Russian.” Over time, the “game” of changing names and surnames led to disastrous results not only in relation to the Baltic diasporas, but also to representatives of the titular nation.

The native language of Estonians became a victim of Soviet policy. People were so intimidated by the repression that ... The majority of the population was still going underground. The fear persisted for a very long time. But Estonians tried to preserve their language in the face of repression. They were talking in whispers. The holidays were held in secret. His whole life was spent underground. In Soviet times, people spoke Estonian at home, and Russian in public places (Mazhitova et al., 2024).

All-Union population censuses of the USSR make it possible to trace the dynamics of the number of Estonians in Kazakhstan. Already in 1970 there were 3,683 Estonians. By the mid-80s of the last century, the number of the Estonian diaspora reached 4083 people, reaching a peak for our republic, and then the process of systematic decrease in their number began from decade to decade, especially during the period of sovereignty, when many ethnic groups sought to return to their historical homeland. Thus, in 1979 there were 3,505 Estonians, in 1989 their number decreased to 3,329.

The history of Estonians' formation and adaptation in Kazakhstan during the period of the Russian Empire and Soviet totalitarianism confirms T. Demir's theory about the connection between colonialism, the indigenous population and a strong desire to embody an ethno-political identity (Demir, 2022, p. 176).

After Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, the decline in the number of the Estonian diaspora continued. This is due to the economic crisis, fear for the future, and fear of socio-political instability that has engulfed many republics of the former Soviet Union.

Over the years, their number has actually decreased by half, most of them have left Kazakhstan forever. In 1999, there were 1,819 Estonians living in the republic (Samailov, 2001), in 2009 – 986 Estonians (Samailova, 2011).

Despite the difficulties and hardships of the Soviet period, the Baltic diasporas were able to promote a high level of adaptability to the harsh conditions of the Kazakh steppes, non-conflict and respect for the culture of the peoples living in Kazakhstan. “Estonians felt at home in Kazakhstan. Lama lomattne ningye nyaftez kazakhskyay kals. Sin sodasaz Kazakhstanan folk tradition, history and culture.

The main reasons for the decline in the number of the Estonian diaspora were the economic crisis and the unstable social situation in the republic (Sadovskaya, 2001).

According to the 1999 census, 1,819 Estonians lived in Kazakhstan: in the Akmola region – 179, Aktobe – 50, Almaty – 125, Atyrau – 7, East Kazakhstan – 319, Zhambyl – 55, West Kazakhstan – 26, Karaganda – 427, Kostanay – 93, Kyzylorda – 2, Mangistau – 12, Pavlodar – 98, North Kazakhstan – 112, South Kazakhstan – 54, Astana – 116, Almaty – 144 (Aleksenko et al. 2001).

Representatives of the Kazakh diaspora who remained in Kazakhstan made a great contribution to the development of the Republic (Bokaeva, Umirzakova 2010).

But owing to the policy of tolerance in the field of interethnic relations, especially in the field of languages, Kazakhstan managed to avoid cataclysms (Lee. 2004; Hanks, 1998; Schatz, 2000; von Gumpfenberg, 2007).

The Estonians who remain in Kazakhstan have the opportunity to develop their language, culture, and actively participate in the socio-political life of the country. In the mid-1990s, Jan Lodi, an Estonian from Almaty, now deceased, initiated the creation of the Estonian Cultural Center in Kazakhstan. At the same time, his son Andrey joined the society of Kazakh-Estonians who went to live in their historical homeland in Tallinn. Then, a year later, the Estonian Cultural Center opened in Almaty – a representative of what had already been created in Estonia. The headquarters of the current cultural center is also located in Almaty. E. Koemets spoke about the role of the center in the everyday life and holidays of Estonians in Almaty: “Estonians living in Almaty and the region try to get together on Christmas, January and other holidays. For several years in a row, they have been hosted at their home by Estonian Galina Avgustovna and her husband, a famous Kazakh photographer Valery Korenchuk. Not a single feast is complete without herring – a traditional Estonian delicacy, mushrooms, potatoes, and pies. Those gathered recall stories from the lives of their ancestors and share their impressions of trips to the Baltic states. And they dream that someday the entire Estonian diaspora will gather on Jan’s Day – on the night of June 24–25. With dancing, singing, jumping over the fire ...” (Koemets, 2013).

In September 2006, the public association “Estonian Cultural Centre of Kazakhstan” was founded, headed by Nina Alfredovna Dosayeva.

Conclusions. As we see, the Estonians, whose migration began to occur mainly from the end of the 19th century, formed a compact ethnic group in Kazakhstan, which has an ethnocultural center in Almaty. As a European population, they mainly live in cities, many Estonians immigrated from rural areas to their historical homeland after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of the independent Estonian state. In Kazakhstan, the younger generation of Estonians is losing knowledge of their native language, but Estonian families preserve traditions and customs and celebrate national holidays.

The periods of formation of the Estonian diaspora in Kazakhstan can be divided into two stages:

1. The end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. The voluntary resettlement of peasants after the abolition of serfdom in Russia and the organized appearance of the first Estonian settlements on the territory of the Steppe Region during the Stolypin agrarian reform,
2. The 1940s – early 50s of the 20th century. Deportation of Estonians to the territory of Kazakhstan.
3. The 1950s – 80s, the 20th century. Participation of the Estonians in the development of virgin lands and the construction of industrial enterprises.

4. The end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century. The activities of Estonian cultural centers in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The revival of culture and language.

The Estonians have made a significant contribution to the development of independent Kazakhstan, especially in the development of agriculture and industry.

The Estonian diaspora of Kazakhstan in the process of its development and formation at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century has become a stable component of the demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural life of the republic, setting an example of the successful adaptation of an ethnic group in a foreign cultural environment.

Kazakhstani Estonians showed an example of active adaptation of ethnic groups (community) to a changed natural and socio-cultural environment, which is expressed in the adoption of norms and values of the new socio-ethnic environment (cultural-linguistic, economic-cultural, political, moral, everyday, etc.), the forms of interethnic interaction that have developed here (formal and informal connections, style of behaviour, family and neighbourhood relations, etc.).

In addition to adaptation, the Kazakh Estonians also went through the process of accommodation, that is, they were able to self-organize economically and in everyday life in a foreign cultural environment, and adapt to the dominant patterns of behaviour that already exist in society. They did not lose their faith, way of life, preserving their national traits and language.

Using the experience of adaptation and accommodation of the Estonians in Kazakhstan will undoubtedly become the basis for practical application in the sphere of creating an atmosphere of interethnic harmony.

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