

ISS

**Instytut Studiów Społecznych
Uniwersytet Warszawski**

**Institute for Social Studies
University of Warsaw**

Seria: PRACE MIGRACYJNE, nr 13

**Are they
fellow-countrymen
or not?**

**The migration of Kazakhs of
Polish origin from Kazakhstan
to Poland**

Krystyna Iglicka

Wrzesień 1997

Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami
Instytut Studiów Społecznych UW
Stawki 5/7
00-183 Warszawa
Tel: 48+22+8315153
Fax: 48+22+8314933
Internet: ISSINFO@SAMBA.ISS.UW.EDU.PL

Seria: PRACE MIGRACYJNE, nr 13

Are they fellow-countrymen or not?

**THE MIGRATION OF KAZAKHS OF
POLISH ORIGIN FROM KAZAKHSTAN
TO POLAND**

Krystyna Iglicka

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
1. The history of Poles in Kazakhstan.....	5
2. Basic social and demographic characteristics and social conditions of Kazakhs of polish descent in Kazakhstan	7
3. Factors conducive and unpropitious to the integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Poland	11
Summary	17
References	18

From the author: The present paper was prepared during the tenure of a Polish Sociology Fellowship at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, during the academic year 1996/1997. I am highly indebted to the Foundation for Polish Science, the M. B. Grabowski Found, the University of London, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who jointly financed this Fellowship. I would also like to thank Dr. Keith Sword for his valuable remarks and assistance.

Introduction

The question of identity has long been a problem of unusual complexity for the various ethnic communities living in Kazakhstan. During the Tsarist regime Kazakhstan was used by the Russian authorities as a place to which recalcitrant and turbulent ethnic minorities were deported. There in the seemingly endless steppe which stretched for hundreds of miles, they 'learned' to lose their ethnic identity. The communist authorities continued this very specific population policy, treating Kazakhstan as a 'testing ground' for artificial ethnic processes. This process meant that well before the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the indigenous population of Kazakhstan had been reduced to a minority. By the modern (post-Soviet) era, Kazakhstan was populated by more than fifty ethnic groups. According to the December 1989 Soviet population census, Poles ranked in tenth place among the non-Kazakh ethnic groups.

The particular assimilation policy of the former USSR in the republic of Kazakhstan meant that people who originated from non-Russian ethnic groups were treated as inferior citizens without any perspectives and opportunities for social advancement. Russian was proclaimed the official language, and the teaching of ethnic minority languages was prohibited. In the case of certain ethnic groups (Polish and German minorities, in particular) the authorities were particularly repressive and even cases of family members speaking privately in their mother tongue could result in action.

The Polish minority in Kazakhstan, located thousands of kilometres from its ancestors' homeland and deprived of the slightest information, contact or assistance from Poland was undoubtedly fated to be assimilated. Additional factor conducive to losing by them their ethnic identity was the fact that Poles deported to Kazakhstan were mostly inhabitants of territories which no longer belonged to Poland (the biggest number of deportees – victims of the Stalinist terror-originated from the Western part of the Ukrainian republic of the USSR), neither were they citizens of Poland¹.

After the Second World War, during the period 1944–1948 the repatriation of Poles from different territories of the ex-Soviet Union took place. However, this process was entirely controlled by the Soviet authorities which did not allow the majority of Kazakhs of Polish descent from Kazakhstan to return to Poland.

At the present moment, owing to a resolution on repatriation approved by the Polish Government, these people have been allowed to settle in Poland with dignity. The repatriation of at least several tens of thousands of people, who were brought up in Central Asia within a communist system, who do not speak the Polish language, who (in the majority) do not know the history, culture and religion of their ancestors' homeland, is inevitably going to be complicated. On the other hand, one may argue that ethnic consciousness among these people endured. During the last population census of the former USSR, despite the possibility of repressive action from the authorities for such a declaration, almost 60,000 people in the Kazakh SSR claimed Polish ethnicity.

This paper will be looking at some problems we may expect related to the adaptation and integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Polish society; it will also try to anticipate problems related to the acceptance of their 'difference' by the society.

The other aim of this paper is to point out factors that may facilitate or else impede the integration of Kazakhstan's Poles in Poland. But before I consider this phenomenon I would like to address two basic questions which arise, namely: 1) where did Poles in Kazakhstan come from? and 2) what is their present social condition?

¹ As far as the terminology of the Polish minority in Kazakhstan is concerned one may often encounter in Polish scientific journals and in Polish mass media the term 'ethnic Poles from Kazakhstan'. However, in my opinion this name is not adequate in the case of this population which in a great majority have never lived in Poland neither their ancestors had since late 18th century. The more proper terms here are 'Kazakhs of Polish ancestry' or 'Kazakhs of Polish descent'.

1. The history of Poles in Kazakhstan

Until the 18th century Kazakhstan was inhabited mostly by tribes of nomads who were under the leadership of khans. However, from the middle of the 17th century this land suffered from repeated incursions by the Russian army. For a long time Tsarist Russia looked on these vast southern lands covetously, wanting to annex these territories to its Empire. Finally, in 1832, the Tsar abolished the khans' regime and proceeded methodically to colonize Kazakhstan (Budakowska, 1992).

It was at this time that the relationship between the Polish population and Kazakhstan began. From the very beginning it was an involuntary inflow. Although the first political deportees from Poland arrived in Kazakhstan as early as the late 18th century, they were not numerous. Larger numbers of Polish deportees arrived in Kazakhstan during the 19th century. The deportees consisted of members of Polish clandestine organizations fighting against a Russian Empire that had participated (along with Prussia and Austria) in the partitioning of Poland. Others were soldiers and civilian fighters - participants of 1830/1831 and 1863 uprisings, which were both aimed against Russian occupation. One also has to remember that some of the people deported to distant regions of Russia by the Tsarist government were criminal detainees, also from Poland.

According to the first Russian population census, carried out in 1897, there were as many as 11,579 Poles in Central Asia. A peculiar characteristic of this minority was that more than 90% of the Poles were males. This was a consequence of the nature of the population movement – forced deportation of political detainees.

The next mass deportation of Poles to Kazakhstan took place in the second half of the 1930s. The Polish population deported at this time originated mostly from the Western part of the Ukrainian Republic of the USSR – from the Marchlewski Polish National Region (called Marchlewszczyzna) and to a lesser degree from the Dzierzynski Polish National Region in the Belarussian SSR.

The Polish autonomous regions in the USSR were created in the early 1920s, initially in the hope of creating a model of (in the words of the Soviet authorities) 'socialist Polish society'. It was expected by the Soviets that inhabitants of these regions could help in the process of 'sovietisation' of Poland after the expected seizure of the country. In the Marchlewski and in the Dzierzynski regions the official language was Polish. Newspapers were printed in Polish and children attended Polish schools. There were also two Polish universities there, and a few Polish-language faculties at other universities in Ukraine and Belarus. However, these regions were under constant but inefficient communist ideological pressure aimed at turning the Poles into militant believers of communism. Finally, the failure of collectivisation in rural parts of these provinces caused enormous anger among the Soviet authorities and, as a consequence, liquidation of the autonomous regions and deportation of their population (Iwanow, 1991).

Deportation was irrevocable and this time embraced whole families (Budakowska, 1992). The number of Poles deported during the prewar years has never been satisfactorily established. Some writers point out, that during the second half of 1930, a minimum of 250,000 Poles were transported; among these more than 100,000 did not survive the first winter in Kazakhstan (Lizak, 1990). The deportation of Poles to Kazakhstan was intentionally combined with Soviet plans to bring the vast Kazakh steppe, located in the northern part of the republic, into cultivation. Deportees were divided into two groups. Members of the first group were luckier, they were dispersed in groups along the railway line. The others were settled down in the distant steppe, hundreds of kilometres away from the railway. Both categories of deportees were divided into smaller groups consisting of around a hundred persons, which were simply set down every 15 kilometres on an area of as many as a few thousand square kilometres (Budakowska, 1992).

From the day of their forced settlement these groups of deportees were isolated from each other. At first the colonies created in this way did not even have a name. The authorities simply referred to them as batches (first consignment, second consignment, etc.) or as points on the railway line. At first, the members of these colonies fought mostly for survival. The immense distances and communication difficulties precluded a revival of social ties among neighbours, friends or just acquaintances who had been, in the past, members of the same local communities.

'Settlers were under constant surveillance, they were obliged to register at police stations, and whenever someone wanted to leave (even for few hours) his/her colony he/she had to ask for permission. They could not create and decide about their life-careers. They were incorporated in the programme of kolkhoz-building and they were forced to participate in the organized 'division of labour' within the kolkhoz. All these factors meant that the former style or patterns of living which Poles had enjoyed were turned upside down and national institutions were ruined.' (Budakowska, 1992, p. 14).

The period of the Second World War was the next tragic period in the history of Polish settlement in Kazakhstan. After September 17, 1939, the day the Red Army invaded Poland, the Soviet authorities started to deport the population of the Eastern Polish territories they had occupied. This time deportation did not embrace whole families, indeed exile affected mostly women and children (Gross, 1988). They constituted 80% of the whole number of deportees. Many Polish men were either absent due to army service or they were murdered on the spot by the NKWD (Iwanow, 1991). According to Zaron, during the Second World War about 150,000 Poles were deported to Kazakhstan (Zaron, 1990).

After the Second World War, during the period 1944–1948, the repatriation of Poles from Western Belarus, Western Ukraine, Southern Lithuania and other territories of the ex-USSR took place. This process was entirely led by the Soviet authorities which allowed for repatriation only of those of ethnic Poles and Jews: 1) who were Polish citizens before September 1, 1939; 2) who found themselves in the USSR because of war; 3) who originated from Poland and during the war served in the Polish Army in the former USSR; 4) who escaped from Western and Central Poland out of fear of German reprisals; 5) temporary migrants, who worked in the Baltic states (Czerniakiewicz, 1987). This meant that among members of the Polish minority in Kazakhstan only those who had been deported during the Second World War could return to Poland. Those deported in earlier periods were arbitrarily excluded from the process of repatriation.

After the war the number of Poles moving to Kazakhstan in order to settle there significantly diminished. Settlement in Kazakhstan became voluntary and took place as a component of internal Soviet population movement. Poles who arrived in Kazakhstan during that period had previously been inhabitants of other republics of the USSR. They came simply in order to find better accommodation or a better job.

It seems impossible to determine the precise number of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry living at present in Kazakhstan. This is mostly due to the very effective assimilation and integration policies of the former Soviet Union. Fear of repression if one simply made a declaration of Polish nationality led to people trying to 'forget' their descent. Many of them declared in application forms of the Soviet Population Censuses a nationality other than Polish (mainly Russian or Ukrainian). Most of them resigned from speaking Polish and cultivating Polish traditions. For many Polish Catholics religion and faith remained the only link with the culture of their homeland. However, because all religions had been prohibited and their believers persecuted in the USSR, the younger generations of Poles (born in Kazakhstan) lacked any attachment to the Church and Catholicism. In this situation therefore religion cannot be used as an indicator of Polish nationality.

The process of deportation of Poles in 1930 had also a negative influence on the maintenance of ethnic identity. Polish families, which in Central Ukraine or Belarus had created stable and dense Polish communities, had been scattered in the Kazakh steppe and mixed with deportees of other nationality; mainly Ukrainians, Germans, and Belarussians.

Arbitrary decisions taken by Soviet authorities about who would be counted as a Pole and who would be denied this attribution, complicated statistics even further.

The 1989 Soviet population census revealed 59,956 Kazakhs of Polish descent in Kazakhstan. It is commonly acknowledged fact that one should analyse Soviet statistical data concerning the Polish minority with some caution. Researchers (following a practise that started in 1920) reckon the number of ethnic Poles should be calculated by multiplying official Soviet data by a coefficient as high as 2 – 2.5 (Gawecki, 1996: 25).

Therefore, if we follow this practice, the number of Poles in Kazakhstan should be estimated as between 120,000 and 150,000. In various recent publications however, estimates of the number of Kazakhstan Poles are put at between 100 thousand and 400 thousand. (Some have an upper estimate of as much as one million.) For example, Plater-Gajewski estimates the real number of Poles in Kazakhstan as being between 250–300 thousand (Szemplinska, 1989). As with the official statistics, though, these estimates should also be treated with caution. In my opinion, the only certainty in the discussion on numbers of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry in Kazakhstan, is that the actual number is higher than the census suggests.

2. Basic social and demographic characteristics and social conditions of Kazakhs of polish descent in Kazakhstan

In this following section I will try to answer the question of who the people of Polish ancestry in Kazakhstan are now, both in terms of basic social and demographic characteristics and of social status.

The problem of the identity of different ethnic communities living in Kazakhstan has always been one of unusual difficulty and is probably unique even in world terms. The population and economic policy of the former Soviet Union resulted on the one hand, in mass emigration of the native population from Kazakhstan, and on the other hand, in the mass deportation of other nations (mainly Slavic) into this republic. Paul Kolstoe describes this process succinctly;

‘The Kazakh nation was more thoroughly decimated than any other major Soviet nationality during collectivisation and the ensuing famine in the 1930s. Between 1926 and 1939 the ethnic Kazakh population in the republic decreased from 3.7 to 2.3 million – that is, by an astonishing 38%. This was the result partly of emigration (flight to China and Mongolia) but mostly of death by starvation and execution. In the wake of this, Kazakhstan became the only Union republic in which the titular nation was in a minority; 38% as against 40% Russians’ (Kolstoe, 1995, p.244).

Since 1989 the ethnic structure in Kazakhstan has been changing rapidly. As the result of a growing influx of ethnic Kazakhs from abroad, the 'host' ethnic group has gradually started to dominate in statistical terms and in 1992 constituted 43.2% of the whole population. By contrast, since 1989 a mass emigration of ethnic Germans and Russians from Kazakhstan has taken place. The size of the former ethnic group decreased by about 250,000 between 1989 and 1993, whereas of the latter declined by about 60,000 in the same period (see table 1). The aim of Kazakhstan state policy is to create a situation in which Kazakhs will constitute a clear majority of the population.

The changing of declared nationality in the Soviet population registers was always an easy step (Gawecki, 1996). For some members of the Polish minority 'to become a Russian' was the only chance for a professional career and to enhance their standard of living. However, from the moment the independent Kazakhstan state was established it has been widely felt that it is better to be a Pole, or a German or a Ukrainian there than to be a Russian. As the result of centuries of uninterrupted resentment towards, and animosity between, Kazakhs and Russians, Russian ethnicity per se no longer offers the prospect of social advancement it once did.

Table 1. The population of Kazakhstan in 1989 (absolute numbers and percentages)

Ethnicity	absolute number	%
Kazakh	6534616	40
Russian	6227549*	38
German	957518*	6
Ukrainian	896240	5
Uzbek	332017	2
Tatar	327982	2
Ujghurian	182601	1
Belarussian	182301	1
Korean	103315	0.7
Azerbaijani	90083	0.5
Poles	59956	0.3
others	567299	3.5
total	16464477	100.0

* There were 6,167,540 Russians and 696,000 Germans recorded in 1993, which indicates that between 1989 and 1993 more than 60,000 Russians and about 260,000 Germans emigrated from Kazakhstan.

Source: Gawecki R., 1996 pp. 15,16.

As I mentioned above, according to the population census of 1989, there were about 60,000 Kazakhs of Polish descent living in Kazakhstan (see table1). Of these 45% lived in urban surroundings, 55% in smaller, rural settlements. Only 12% of these 'Poles' claimed a knowledge of the Polish language and for this small group it is virtually impossible to determine what the level of this knowledge was. Facility in using the Kazakh language is extremely rare among Poles, since only some sixteen (16) Poles (among almost 60,000) claimed knowledge of this language (Vestnik Statistiki, 1990). Since Poles were originally deported mainly to northern districts of Kazakhstan and to the territories located near the capital² of the republic, the largest concentrations of the Polish minority are now in the following oblasts: Kokchetav (about 42%), Akmolinsk (about 17%), and Karagandyjsk (about 11%) (see map 1).

² Former Alma-Ata, at present Almaty.

MAP 1.

In these oblasts ethnic Kazakhs constitute an absolute minority. The villages and towns in which Poles live reflect the multiethnic structure of the population of Kazakhstan generally. In regions where the main concentrations of Poles are located, one finds also Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Germans, Tatars, Uzbeks, Mordvins, etc. 'The coexistence of so many ethnic groups caused reciprocal translocation resulting in mixed marriages' (Gawecki, 1996, p.21). One particularly significant social characteristic of the Polish minority is that Polish-Kazakh, or more generally Christian-Muslim marriages represent a very small percentage of the total. Even the atheisation of young generations did not change this. It was not religion that discouraged people from entering mixed religious marriages but a racial and cultural barrier. In studies of Polish minority conducted in Kazakhstan in 1993 one encounters generally positive opinions expressed by Poles about the Kazakh people, describing the latter as a lazy, but hospitable and friendly people³. Inter-ethnic relations were described as either 'fairly good' or 'tolerable'. However, we should note that every cultural peculiarity or distinctive feature of Kazakh life was viewed by Poles as a lack of culture. The Kazakhs were perceived as a primitive, sluggish, nomadic people. The return of diaspora Kazakhs (consisting mostly of people who had cultivated old Kazakh traditions and culture) from Mongolia and China was regarded by 'European' inhabitants of Kazakhstan – including the Poles – as a threat to civilization. (Gawecki, 1996)

On the other hand, mixed marriages between members of the various European minorities (Polish-Russian, Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-Belarussian or Polish-German) are a common phenomenon. After R. Gawecki (1996) one may assume that in the rural areas of Kazakhstan, more than 50% of 'Polish' couples were in fact mixed. As far as the urban regions are concerned, it is likely that this percentage is higher. The complexity of this ethnic mosaic is well illustrated by the following comment obtained from a respondent in the course of the study mentioned here on Kazakhs of Polish descent in Kazakhstan;

'My granddaughter has a serious problem. Her mother-in-law is a Russian, whereas her father-in-law is a Belarussian. I am a Pole, but my husband is a Russian. My daughter wants to leave for Poland; her husband would like to leave for Belarus; his mother encourages them to leave for Russia. As for me, I have already stopped thinking about leaving Kazakhstan; my home territory is now in Ukraine' (Gawecki, 1996, p.23).

Generally speaking, the economic situation of Poles in Kazakhstan is not greatly different from that of other ethnic groups (Ciesielski, S and A. Kuczynski, 1996). However, in some regions, one even notices that Polish houses, along with houses belonging to the ethnic Germans, are among the best maintained and well-off. Of course, speaking about the level of 'wealth' in Kazakhstan one has to forget European standards. We have to remember that what are for most people in the West common, everyday items, such as a bathroom or a toilet, are a rarity in Kazakhstan. Most of the households possess only outdoor lavatories. There are about 2–3 baths in every village; families use them once a week. Water is in short supply in Kazakhstan. Piped, running water and central heating are also a scarcity. Almost every household has an old, Soviet-made television set – most of them are colour sets. Due to the immense distance from broadcasting stations and the poor quality of the receivers the quality of reception is appalling. Radios are virtually non-existent. In Soviet times they were replaced by loudspeakers (kolkhoznics) connected to local wire broadcasting centres. Refrigerators are in common use, but there are no washing machines. The latter have never been on sale in Kazakhstan stores. Houses are built on plots which are leased from the state as the Kazakh Constitution does not allow for the sale of land (Gawecki, 1996).

³ This study was carried out by researchers of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Mickiewicz University in Poznan. The study was conducted on 7,896 Kazakhs of Polish ancestry which constituted 2,536 households. Respondents were inhabitants of Akmola, and Kokshetav regions. For more details see Gawecki, 1996.

Among the Polish element, at least 90% of those in smaller settlements had been (or still are) involved in kolkhoz work. The widespread collectivisation of agriculture meant that the kolkhoz became extremely important in the life of individuals and local communities. People described themselves in the first place as members of a given kolkhoz, then as inhabitants of a given settlement or a region.

Living conditions of the Polish minority in towns are more difficult than those of Poles in rural surroundings. This holds true also for other ethnic groups. Generally speaking, due to permanent shortages of food in Kazakhstan, town dwellers who do not possess a piece of land where they are able to grow fruit, vegetables, or keep animals, or those who do not have relatives in the countryside, are in a very difficult situation (Gawecki, 1996).

The role of Polish culture in the life of Kazakhs of Polish descent is marginal. One can hardly find a Polish book in bookstores in Kazakhstan. Due largely to financial reasons, the habit of reading Polish magazines or newspapers has almost disappeared. The Soviet system that lasted for several decades created a situation in which people's daily lives were almost totally absorbed by work and the problems of subsistence. Participation in cultural life was reduced to watching television.

Emigration trends among members of the Polish minority vary in their degree of intensity according to region. They are stronger in the southern part of Kazakhstan – in regions populated mostly by Kazakhs. This is partly due to the rise of national feeling among Kazakhs, but mostly to a mass emigration of ethnic Germans to Germany (see table 1). At this point let me make further quotation of opinions obtained during the survey of Kazakhstan Poles in Kazakhstan by researchers from the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Mickiewicz University in Poznan. 'During the time of the Soviet Union no one wanted to leave for Poland. We all felt secure here', and (now – K.I) 'All Poles would like to leave, as the Germans did. Even those who had forgotten that they are Poles would like to leave' (Gawecki, 1996, pp.49, 50).

3. Factors conducive and unpropitious to the integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Poland

Before I elaborate on the issues mentioned in the title of this section I think it is important to make the observation that the question of repatriation of Poles from Kazakhstan cannot be separated from the principles of official Polish immigration policy. In other words, any present or future influx of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry from Kazakhstan should be analysed in the general context of the overall inflow of foreigners to Poland.

The geographical location of Poland is a very important factor from the point of view of migratory movements. Poland is at the cross-roads between Eastern and Western Europe as well as between Southern and Northern Europe. While the emigration of Poles has decreased during the period 1990–1996, diverse and often complex patterns of migratory flows to and through Poland have emerged. A key role in this respect was played by the more liberal migration policy implemented after 1989, which has allowed foreigners relatively easy access to Poland. In 1995 alone over 82 million entries by foreigners into Poland were registered, which placed Poland in seventh place in the world, as far as entries of foreign visitors are concerned. The stabilisation of the political situation, the development of a market economy, the opening of state frontiers and the increasing difference in living standards compared to numerous countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia and Africa has had an affect on the growing interest of citizens of those countries in migrating to and eventually settling in Poland. Indirect evidence of this comes to us with the steady increase in the number of applications for permanent residence permits and residence visas.

In 1993, 2654 foreigners applied for permanent residence permits (PRP) in Poland. In the same year, 1964 persons were granted PRPs. In 1994 the number of PRP applications rose by 21% (to 3198) and in 1995 (by comparison with the previous year) by 10% (to 3793). In 1994, 2457 foreigners obtained PRPs, and in 1995 the number of those who had been granted PRPs increased by 24% (to 3051). In 1993 and in 1994, the largest group of foreigners who applied (or were granted) PRPs were of Ukrainian nationality, followed by those of Russian nationality, and Belarussian nationality (see table 2).

Table 2. Foreigners who obtained permanent residence permits in Poland, 1993–1995; largest national groups (%)

Nationality	1993	1994	1995
Ukrainian	15	21	19
Russian	11	12	11
Belarussian	7	6	7
German	5	5	6
Vietnamese	4	4	7
Kazakhs	1	2	8

Source: Data extracted from, Poland – statistical data on migration 1990–1996, Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Warsaw, 1996, pp.42–46.

Until June 1996 citizens of Kazakhstan who wanted to enter Poland were required to possess an invitation from a permanent resident of Poland. Upon arrival in Poland those who wanted to settle were supposed to apply for PRPs at local (voivode) levels of the state administration or at the Ministry of Interior. However, from the time that Kazakhstan gained independence until the end of 1994 only a few citizens of Kazakhstan applied for permanent residence permits in Poland. This situation changed markedly in 1995, from which point a rapid increase in the number of Kazakhstan citizens applying for PRPs in Poland has occurred. According to statistics compiled by the Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs, forty-six (46) Kazakhstan citizens were granted PRP in Poland in 1994 (out of the total number – (67) of those who applied for PRP in previous years). Among these forty-six persons, the largest number was granted PRP in the Olsztyn and Szczecin voivodeships. In 1995 out of a total number of 274 permanent residence permit requests lodged, positive decisions were taken in the case of 238 persons. This constituted 8% of the total number of foreigners who had been granted PRP in Poland in 1995. In 1995, among those who applied for (or were granted) permanent residence permits in Poland, Kazakhstan citizens ranked in third place after Ukrainians and Russians (see table 2).

In 1995 the largest numbers of Kazakhstan citizens settled in the Szczecin voivodeship (32 people), Katowice voivodeship (27), Zielonogora voivodeship (16), and Krakow voivodeship (15). At the time of writing data for 1996 provide information concerning the issuing of permanent residence permits only till June 24. However, during only the first six months of 1996, as many as 164 Kazakhstan citizens applied for PRPs. Positive decisions had been taken in the case of 109 persons. Most of them settled in the Lublin voivodeship (14 people), Pila voivodeship (13) and Szczecin voivodeship (12). The above statistics show that positive decisions concerning the settlement of Kazakhstan citizens in Poland are issued mostly

by local units of the state administration in the Western regions of Poland – *inter alia*, regions which under the Communist regime possessed the largest percentage of state-owned farms (in Polish, Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne – PGR). After the collapse of communism in Poland in 1989 most of these farms were liquidated and their land is still not being cultivated.

Until the middle of 1996 money raised to support the running of ‘repatriates’ households during the first half year of their stay in Poland came mainly from local charities and financial aid of the upper chamber (Senate) of the Polish Parliament. It should be noted that Polish society was for the most part very favourable towards any aid for ‘fellow-countrymen’ from Kazakhstan. Many social organisations and associations arranged visits to Poland of a few days for Poles from Kazakhstan during Christmas or Easter. These Kazakhstan Poles were then hosted by Polish families, and given a chance to become familiar with Polish traditions and religious ceremonies. During the last few years it has also become customary for Polish children from Kazakhstan to spend their holidays on various summer-camps in Poland. Thanks to the sending of humanitarian aid convoys to Kazakhstan (organized on a voluntary, charitable basis), Kazakhstan Poles were also provided with food, medicine, clothes, books, medical equipment, etc.

In June 1996 the Polish government adopted a resolution on repatriation⁴. It follows from this resolution that from 1997 ‘repatriates’ from Kazakhstan will receive money required for the first half of a year of their staying in Poland not only from charities but also from the state budget. Various ministries are supposed to assist ‘repatriates’; for example, the Ministry of Labour declared that in the case of ethnic Poles from Kazakhstan it would be able to include years of work abroad in the total credited number of work-years, which would simplify the procedure of obtaining a pension in Poland⁵. The Ministry of Environment offered in the current year (1996-K.I) apartments and jobs for dozen or so families. The Ministry of Transportation promised reduced or completely free transportation for ‘repatriants’ from Kazakhstan. The Agency for Restructuring state-owned farms promised to provide 270 apartments. It is known that repatriation will proceed on a piecemeal basis, according to the government's financial position. However, it is highly probable that in the near future some thousands (rather than hundreds) of Poles from Kazakhstan will be coming each year to Poland.

A questionnaire has been designed and issued by the Polish Ministry of Interior to establish the ethnic credentials of Poles in Kazakhstan who wish to apply for entry to Poland on the basis of a repatriation visa. This questionnaire consists of several dozen pages containing very detailed questions about the Polish roots of the applicant dating back three generations. In addition, the applicant has to complete a questionnaire in the Polish language. According to experts from the Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs, the use of such a detailed questionnaire is intended to exclude persons who have no rights to Polish citizenship. For it is expected that with the beginning of repatriation process – which is a new procedure for the Polish authorities – many people who are not entitled to Polish citizenship may nevertheless take the opportunity to try to obtain it. Only in August 1996, after a cursory reading of the questionnaire as many as 150 persons resigned from applying for repatriation visas. On the other hand, the same experts expect a side-effect of such a detailed and demanding procedure to be the creation of a black-market for false documents ‘establishing’ Polish nationality⁶. There is also a

⁴ Let me remind the reader that until the middle of 1996, there was no clear and declared Polish state policy concerning repatriation. The settlement procedure for Kazakhs of Polish descent from Kazakhstan was the same as the settlement procedure for other foreigners. This meant that Kazakhstan Poles, after being granted PRP, had to wait five years and only subsequently apply for Polish citizenship. It caused a lot of difficulties for these people, since (until 1995) a foreigner with permanent residence permit had to apply for work permit in order to work. There is no possibility of buying a land in Poland without Polish citizenship.

⁵ It will be undoubtedly a ‘push’ factor to repatriation. The lack of possibilities of obtaining a pension in Poland was the most substantial reason against older generations of Kazakhstan Poles returning to Poland.

⁶ We observed a similar situation in Poland in late 1980. when people applying for German citizenship had to prove their German ethnicity. There were even chains of illegal agencies which could deliver proofs of German descent of every kind.

requirement to have an official invitation from a Polish municipality (commune council) which is a precondition to benefit from the 'repatriation' policy of the Polish government. This may limit the movement of those who are not entitled to Polish citizenship.

At the other end of the repatriation procedure, persons who establish their Polish descent and get the required invitation will obtain permanent residence permits (issued by the Ministry of Interior) and repatriation visas. They will also be given Polish citizenship automatically once they arrive in Poland.

At present no-one can say how Kazakhstan Poles will adapt to life in Poland and how the integration process will proceed. All considerations about this matter can only be speculative. It is very important that during the first half year of their stay in Poland, the newcomers should be provided with state welfare benefits. This is a key factor that will simplify their adaptation.

The decision whether to stay permanently (settlement) in Poland is taken mainly by persons who are strong and determined or by those who have nothing to lose. They are pioneers. They have become used to severe living conditions, not only political, economic or social but climatic as well. Therefore the relative 'ease' of life in Poland can only be viewed by them in positive terms. Anyway, in the opinion of many Kazakhstan Poles quoted by the Polish press, Poland is regarded as 'a lost paradise' or 'a land of milk and honey'. In these declarations one can detect an extremely strong determination and will to stay in Poland whatever the costs (Głos Pomorza, 1996; The Warsaw Voice, 1996; Polityka, 1996).

Young people of Polish descent from Kazakhstan who are presently studying in Poland make it clear that they are not going to return to Kazakhstan after completing their studies⁷. Their plans are accepted by parents who treat a child's departure abroad as a chance of emigration for the whole family (Gawecki, 1996). A hope for successful life in Poland is encouraged by the fact that for the total number of 300,000 ethnic Germans who during the last 2–3 years left Kazakhstan for Germany, the number of returns to Kazakhstan is few.

What factors may impede the integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Polish society? Generally speaking every social characteristic of this community presented in the previous part of this article may play a negative role in the adaptation process. Thus, in the first place, lack of knowledge of the Polish language is the most important factor that will hinder adaptation in the receiving society. Many studies of the migration process and of migrants bear out the fact that those migrants who know the language of the country of destination adapt rather faster and are less likely to find themselves on the margins of cultural and social life than those who did not know the language (Massey, 1986; Frejka). The next factor which may make adaptation difficult in the short-term is the Kazakhstan Poles' very imperfect knowledge of Polish history, culture, and (in case of the younger generation) of the Roman Catholic religion.

I mentioned above that more than 50% marriages involving Kazakhs of Polish ancestry in Kazakhstan are already mixed. Therefore, we have to assume that repatriation of Kazakhstan Poles will bring to Poland a substantial number of Russians, Ukrainians, or Belarussians. Under such circumstances the migrants will not only be confronted with difficulties of adaptation due to insufficient knowledge of a culture and a history of Poland but, in many cases, with a completely alien cultural environment.

A very important factor which may impede the integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Poland is the way of acting in civil society by persons popularly referred to as 'Homo Sovieticus'⁸. It is true that all the people of Eastern and Central Europe (and Poles among them) fell into a state of torpor as far as making collective initiatives or decisions about local community affairs were concerned. This sluggishness was caused by the communist system, during an era when the

⁷ This remark is also relevant in case of students from other countries of the former USSR who, after completing their studies in Poland, do not consider returning to their homelands. On the contrary, they think about settlement in Poland or in one of the countries of Western Europe (Iglička, forthcoming).

⁸ In Poland this term is used to describe the character typical of people whose mentality has been shaped under the communist system.

authorities did not allow for any social initiatives and themselves made decisions in the name of citizens. However, people of the former Soviet Union were completely deprived of the possibility of being actors on the community stage even more than peoples of the other Communist block countries. This holds true whether we are talking about individual, group or local community activity. For example, the mass collectivization of agriculture created a situation in which people's lives were organized for them. As mentioned above, at least 90% of ethnic Poles, inhabitants of Kazakhstan villages, were (or still are) involved in kolkhoz work. They identified themselves in the first place as members of a kolkhoz rather than as inhabitants of a given settlement or a region. In Poland, by contrast, they will be expected to work their own land and take their own business and commercial decisions. It may be a traumatic experience.

A story appeared recently in the Polish press concerning the Brodowski family – a family of Kazakhstan Poles, who settled in Poland in the summer of 1996 (Urbanek, 1995). The family is extremely large, consisting of 29 members living already in Poland, and another 25 waiting in Kazakhstan. They were given furniture (by the inhabitants of the Polish village in which they had settled). This furniture was transported to the Brodowski house, and then remained there for a few days because the family were simply waiting for some one to tell them to unload. They were unable to take the decision by themselves.

In considering the attitude of Poles towards the repatriation of 'fellow-countrymen' from Kazakhstan, it is important to mention the results of a study by Grzymala-Moszczyńska (1995). This study was conducted in three stages in 1994. It covered a wide range of problems concerning conflicts with refugees in the receiving society, in this case, in Poland. Kazakhs of Polish ancestry from Kazakhstan were perceived by respondents as a particularly privileged group of migrants. Interviewees maintained that Kazakhstan Poles had more rights to social welfare benefits in Poland than war refugees from other countries.

Where the attitudes of Poles to foreigners are concerned we must also remember factors which may influence and shape opinions. Among these, for example, would be:

- 1) the economic situation in Poland;
- 2) labour market conditions;
- 3) the level of criminality ascribed to particular nationalities; etc.

The economic situation of a given region or a given local community (the level of unemployment, the level of welfare, etc.) may also affect opinions about, and perceptions of, foreigners who want to settle in Poland. In some cases they may be welcomed and treated as rich developers who will invest money; in others they may be treated as poor men looking for jobs which are in short supply even for local people. Other important factors which influence opinions are the stereotypes of given nations reflected in current judgements and expressions. In a study of causes and consequences of migration from Poland during the last twenty years carried out by the Institute of Social Studies at the University of Warsaw in 1994 and 1995, researchers asked, for example, about respondents' opinions of the repatriation problem (Pawelec, 1996). This study was conducted in two regions of Poland; in the north-east (Podlasie) and in the south-west (Opole district). In each of these regions two local communities (*gmina*)⁹ were selected and random samples of the households were drawn up.

In this study, respondents' attitudes were, on the whole, positive towards the return of Kazakhstan Poles. More than 60% of respondents maintained that Kazakhs of Polish descent should be allowed to return¹⁰. However, regional differentiation of opinion was strongly marked in this study. Generally speaking, respondents from the north-eastern region were much more positive towards repatriation. In this region, 70% of respondents from a rural community (Perlejewo) and 75% of respondents from an urban community (Monki) claimed that Kazakhs of Polish ancestry should be allowed to return. Meanwhile, the percentage giving the same answer

⁹ The 'gmina' is the smallest unit in the administrative division of Poland.

¹⁰ For comparison; in the same study respondents were also asked about their opinion on returns of Silesians and Germans to Poland. Only 56% of them were positive towards this idea.

in the south-western region oscillated from 48% (rural community – Lubniany) to 53% (urban community – Namyslow). This may partly be explained by the fact that Kazakhstan Poles are descended mainly from deportees who inhabited the former Eastern territories of Poland. The numerous deportations to Siberia which affected the population of this region have probably resulted in the locals feeling a sense of solidarity with Poles in Kazakhstan. A striking fact is, though, the urban community which has the highest percentage of respondents calling for repatriation to be limited, is inhabited mostly by people who transferred from Ukraine and Belarus during the late 1940s. This may be explained by a very high rate of unemployment in this region. Poles from Kazakhstan are treated there as ‘poor cousins’ who have to be provided with apartments and jobs. Thus, the local population feels threatened by them.

Table 3. Opinions on ‘repatriation’ of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry from Kazakhstan (% of responses)

Region-local community	returns should be limited	returns should be facilitated	lack of data	number of respondents
north-eastern region				
Monki	27	70	4	213
Perlejewo	17	75	8	171
south-western region				
Namyslow	45	53	2	331
Lubniany	37	48	15	198
Total	34	60	6	914

Source: Pawelec, A. 1996 p. 22.

Opinions varied also between those respondents who, in their family history, had encountered migration problems and those who had not. The first group was generally more positive towards repatriation, The percentage of respondents claiming that returns should be facilitated was 64%, whereas in the group of non-migrants it constituted 57%.

Summing up our discussion of Poles’ attitudes towards ‘repatriation’, one may assume that positive attitudes of most of Polish society to the settlement of kazakhs of Polish ancestry will also be a factor contributing to their adaptation and integration in Poland.

At this point I should like to quote the opinion of Professor Stelmachowski, Chairman of the Association for the Polish Diaspora (Wspolnota Polska), which may serve as a good illustration of the integration process. Asked how the first repatriates had adapted, he answered;

‘I think of the Markowski family, currently living in Reszel. At the beginning of their stay in Poland the parents were very happy, but the sons were apprehensive. They did not speak Polish. Now the situation is reversed. The sons have started studying, they have girlfriends, they speak Polish – I am sure they have adapted completely to life in Poland. However, at the same time older members of the family have begun to have problems. Nowadays, even Polish farmers have problems, so those who have had to switch over from the kolkhoz system to private farming may well have encountered twice the difficulties. But as far as I know, they are trying to get their sister and her family to come from Kazakhstan, so maybe the situation is not so bad. Maybe they have adapted as well as their sons’ (Kaczynski, 1996:8).

Summary

The process of settlement of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry from Kazakhstan in Poland was set in motion at the beginning of 1990. However, until 1995 the number of 'repatriates' was not great. In the middle of 1996, under massive social pressure, a Polish government resolution on the principles of repatriation was finally adopted. According to this resolution, everybody who is able to prove Polish ethnicity (under the terms included in a proof of ethnicity questionnaire) will get a repatriation visa and, soon afterwards, Polish citizenship. We may therefore expect at least a few tens of thousand repatriates arriving in Poland in the near future. The dynamic of this process may be demonstrated by the fact that in 1995 citizens of Kazakhstan ranked third in the table of foreigners applying for permanent residence permits in Poland. The Polish government policy of gradual (piecemeal) repatriation may cause a serious danger for internal stabilisation in Poland. The assigning of annual quotas of repatriates – each of between 200 to 300 persons – will cause prolongation of the repatriation process into the distant future and will be (in my opinion) very difficult to maintain. The pressure of divided families and the deprivation of those who still wait in Kazakhstan may be so strong that it will induce a wave of illegal immigration to Poland.

On the other hand, one has to remember that the financial resources of the Polish state cannot guarantee a completion of repatriation during a short period of time (as was the case with 300,000 ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan).

The process of adaptation of Kazakhstan Poles will not be easy. However, we should remember that all considerations about this problem could be only speculative. Important factors which may impede the integration of Kazakhstan Poles in Poland are as follows: 1) lack of knowledge of the Polish language; 2) scarce knowledge of the realities of social, political, and economic life in contemporary Poland; 3) cultural 'differences'; 4) the perceived distinctiveness of Kazakhstan Poles.

Among factors conducive to integration, the most important are the positive opinions and attitudes of the most of Polish society to repatriation. These are shown not only in the results of public opinion polls, but more importantly, they appear in the concrete activities, which bring real help to 'fellow-countrymen' from Kazakhstan¹¹. On the other hand it is not clear for how long, along with the growing scale and dynamic of the repatriation process, these attitudes will remain positive. Recent studies on attitudes and behaviour patterns of Poles towards foreigners point out that Polish society is very exacting towards the 'alien'. This is not a conducive factor to integration (Polakowska-Kujawa, 1996).

The Polish government's financial support of the repatriation process is another, very important factor, which may simplify adaptation. Finally, the determination of the Kazakhstan Poles themselves, their will to persist and live in Poland, will probably prove to be the most important factor aiding adaptation.

¹¹ Years of experience by Western European countries with integration of ethnic minorities indicates that the basic condition in integration process is the appearance in receiving societies of such factors as: acceptance of foreigners and lack of discrimination. Integration based only on economic and political basis can not succeed alone. (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1986).

References

- Budakowska E., 1992, 'Polacy w Kazachstanie – historia i współczesność', *Przegląd Polonijny* 4: 5–37
- Ciesielski S., A. Kuczynski, 1996, *Polacy w Kazachstanie*, Wrocław: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe (PWN)
- Czerniakiewicz J., 1987, *Repatriacja ludności polskiej z ZSRR 1944–1948*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe (PWN)
- Frejka T. (ed). (forthcoming) *In-depth international migration surveys in Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine*, Geneva: ECE, UN
- Gawecki R., 1996, *Kazachstanscy Polacy*, Warsaw: Polskie Towarzystwo Demograficzne (PTD)
- Głos Pomorza*, 1996, weekly magazine, Szczecin: Spółdzielnia Pracy, no.3/4
- Gross J.T., 1988, *Revolution from abroad*, Princeton
- Grzymala-Moszczyńska H., 1995, 'Społeczność lokalna wobec ośrodków dla uchodźców', *Polityka Społeczna*, 3, pp. 32–41
- Hoffman-Nowotny J.H., 1986, 'Assimilation and Integration of Minorities and Cultural Pluralism: Sociocultural Mechanisms and Political Dilemmas' in: D. Rothermund, J. Simon, and F. Pinter (eds.) *Education and the Integration of Ethnic Minorities*, London: Longman
- Iglicka K. (forthcoming), The economics of the petty-trade on the Polish eastern border, in K. Iglicka, K. Sword (eds.), *Steering the flood? The challenges of East-West migration for Poland*, London: Macmillan
- Iwanow M., 1991, *Pierwszy naród ukarany – Polacy w Związku Radzieckim 1921–1939*, Warsaw–Wrocław: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe (PWN)
- Kaczynski A., 1996, 'Asymetria', (rozmowa z profesorem Andrzejem Stelmachowskim, prezesem Stowarzyszenia 'Wspólnota Polska'), *Rzeczpospolita*, 64: p.8
- Kolstoe P., 1995, *Russians in the former Soviet Republics*, Hurst & Company, London.
- Lizak W., 1990, *Rozstrzelana Polonia. Polacy w ZSRR 1917–1939*, Szczecin, University of Szczecin
- Massey D.S., 1986, 'The settlement process among Mexican migrants to the United States', *American Sociological Review*, 51: pp. 16–32
- Pawelec A., 1996, 'Postawy wobec cudzoziemców, wyniki badań na Śląsku Opolskim i Podlasiu', Institute for Social Studies, Warsaw University, June 15, (manuscript)
- Polakowska-Kujawa J. (ed.), 1994, 'Migracje, mniejszości, nacjonalizm – problemy teoretyczne i realia społeczne', Monografie i Opracowania, Warsaw School of Economics Press
- Poland, Statistical Data on Migration*, 1996, Warsaw, Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs, Ministry of the Interior
- Szemplinska E., 1988, 'Krotka relacja z bogatego życia' (rozmowa z Janem Platerem-Gajewskim), *Lad*, 35: p.3
- The Warsaw Voice*, 1996, weekly magazine, Warsaw: Spółdzielnia Pracy no.2
- Urbanek M., 1996, 'Z kolchoznika pan', *Polityka*, 35: p.8
- Vestnik Statistiki*, 1990, monthly magazine, Moscow: Russian Academy of Science (RAS), no.12
- Zaron P., 1990, *Ludność polska w Związku Radzieckim w czasie II wojny światowej*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe