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## **Mordvins in Western Siberia in the Late 19th to Early 20th Century: Certain Issues in the Migration and Settlement**

*This study addresses the main aspects of the Mordovian peasants' relocation to Western Siberia from the mid-1800s to Stolypin's agrarian reform, with a focus on resettlement and relationships with old residents, successful and failed unauthorized and reverse migration, and the displacement level. The sources are archival data, specifically E.I. Krivyakov's and V.B. Rusyaikin's manuscripts owned by the archives of the Research Institute for the Humanities under the Government of the Republic of Mordovia. Causes of migration were mostly economic, and the process was triggered by the abolition of serfdom in 1861, and then by Stolypin's reform that was meant to defuse the imminent agrarian crisis in central Russia. On the basis of archival and published evidence, it is demonstrated that the main problems faced by the authorities were their unpreparedness for arranging the relocation of large numbers of peasants, insufficient funding, the small sizes of the plots of land allotted to new settlers, difficulties with obtaining documents, the fact that governmental help was insufficient and not provided to all those in need (plots were not allotted to unauthorized settlers), the administration's laissez faire in the resettlement process, failure to limit admission fees paid to old settlers, and other factors caused by poor organizational training.*

**Keywords:** *Western Siberia, Volga Region, Mordvins, settlers, resettlement, migration policy.*

### **Introduction**

The Mordovian ethnic group is characterized by its scattered dispersal. Large groups of the Mordvins live in the regions and republics of the Middle Volga, in Siberia, in the Russian Far Eastern regions, Central Asia, and elsewhere. The changes in dispersal pattern of the Mordvins began in the 16th century owing to migration of Russians to the Mordovian territories, as well as migrations of Mordvins within their native region and their resettlement to the new lands of the Russian State (Mordva..., 1995: 47). Recurrent migrations of the Mordvins from the Volga Region started in 1847; the available official data indicate the resettlement to the Asian part of Russia not earlier than in 1852 (Volkova, 2007: 57). Prior to the mid-19th century, migration of

the Mordvins to Western Siberia was unauthorized. Later, government policy played a significant role in the development of Siberian lands. Upon the reform of 1861, the Russian state policy aiming to defuse the agrarian crisis was directed towards relocation of peasants to Siberia. The Mordovian peasants were motivated to move to Siberia for a long time (Razzhivin, Nikonova, 2007: 46).

### **Resettlement process after the reform (1861–1917)**

The resettlement of the Mordvins to Siberia was a long-term process. What were the reasons that the people moved so far away from Mordovia? The main reason

was the difficult economic situation of the peasantry. In the late 19th to early 20th centuries, the Mordovian economy was based on backward agriculture and animal breeding; the proportion of the population engaged in the agrarian economy was about 96 %, while that in the Penza Governorate was 90 %, and in the Simbirsk Governorate 83 %, etc. The land was owned by landlords, monasteries, and a specific category of wealthy peasants—*kulaks*. Commoners owned small plots of land. Stratification of the population developed: the numbers of both poor farmsteads and kulak farms increased. No less than 15 desyatins of land were necessary to run a self-sufficient average farm. In Mordovia, in the early 20th century, a single peasant farm commonly accounted for 7.5 desyatins of land, including only 4.5 desyatins of arable land. The Mordovian and Russian peasantry was heavily oppressed and exploited by the monasteries, which owned huge capital and vast lands. The monastery estates were located mostly in the Krasnoslobodsky and Temnikovskiy uyezds. For instance, the estates of three monasteries in the Temnikovskiy Uyezd were equivalent to the total area of the plots of 4500 peasant farms. The Sarov monastery, one of the largest and richest in Russia, owned 26,250 desyatins of the most fertile lands and forests (Filatov, Yurchenkov, 1989: 146–147).

There was a deficiency of horses, large and small cattle, and agricultural tools. Frequent droughts and crop failures aggravated the hardships of peasantry. The military horse census in Mordovia in 1905 recorded 27.1 % of horseless farms and 39.1 % of farms with a single horse. The single-horse and horseless peasants usually owned no or small plots of land, and represented the poorest social stratum of population in the Mordovian and Russian villages. In Mordovia, prior to 1905, the share of this poorest population reached 66.2 % of the total farms, which is greater by 6.7 % than in other areas of the European Russia on average (Ibid.: 147).

Land-hunger and poverty in the Mordovian villages in the late 19th to early 20th centuries, when the social stratification of peasantry accelerated, as well as poor industrial development in Mordovia, led to the wide spread of seasonal work beyond the main place of residence. Peasants from other Middle Volga regions (Mari and Chuvashia) were also engaged in seasonal work, but to a lesser extent. In the discussed period, over 100 thousand poor Russian and Mordovian peasants, which is over 30 % of the total adult male population, yearly moved away from their families for seasonal work. In contrast to the feudal period, characterized by “creeping” migrations over short distances, the capitalist period was marked by a large scale of migration over long distances. However, the long-distance migrations did not improve the peasants’ living standards (Ibid.). Available historical data demonstrate a bad arrangement of peasant

relocation, and by 1912, many Mordovian peasants, deprived of land and means of subsistence, returned to their original places of residence.

The part of Western Siberia closest to the European part of Russia, with its favorable climatic conditions and fertile soil, was the most suitable living place. The Mordovian peasants tried to settle in the areas with environmental conditions similar to those of their native land. These were the forest-steppe and steppe regions of the Tomsk, Yenisei and Tobol governorates. The Mordovian population’s size in these regions increased rapidly.

According to the statistical data, in 1859, the Mordovian population in the Tomsk Governorate was 957 persons of both sexes; they lived in ten settlements (Spiski..., 1868: LXXXII). The official statistics recorded the first monoethnic Mordovian settlement in the Tomsk Okrug of the Krivoshchekovo Volost; this was the Maryina village with 393 residents, “the Mordvins from Penza, who were good plowmen and were fairly well-to-do” (Volosti..., 1894: 66). There were villages of joint habitation of the Russians and Mordvins: Malo-Pichugina village of the Mariinsk Okrug, Pochitanskoye Volost with 108 persons of both sexes; Soltonskeye settlement of the Biysk Okrug, Uksunai Volost (102 persons); Nizhny-Neninsky settlement of the Yaminskoye Volost (38 persons) (Ovcharova, 2016: 102).

According to V.I. Kozlov’s data, the Mordovian population in the Tomsk Governorate prior to 1861 was about 1 thousand persons (1960: 27, 41), and by the census in 1897 it had increased to 14.7 thousand persons (Volkova, 2007: 59). Prior to 1861, mostly government-owned serfs from the Tambov and Penza governorates were relocated to Siberia. According to the data collected by N.F. Tyugaev, a researcher of the serfdom in the rural areas of Mordovia in the late 18th to first half of the 19th centuries, in 1859–1882, from the Saransk Uyezd of the Penza Governorate 1077 persons were relocated to the Tomsk Governorate; from the Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd 721 persons, and from the Insarsky Uyezd 41 persons (Ibid.: 57). According to the data from the Minusinsk Archive in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, in 1861–1914, about 200 thousand persons left the Penza Governorate (today, the area of the Republic of Mordovia). In 1862, in Ural and Siberia, 39 families came from Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd; in 1863–1888, 200 families from Saransk Uyezd; in 1889–1891, 140 families from Insarsky, Spassky, and Temnikovskiy uyezds. The real rates of migrations from Mordovia and Volga Region were higher; the official data did not consider unauthorized settlers and “walkers”, who, having found new favorable residence in a new place, did not come back to their native land (Nikonova, Ternyaev, 2007: 26). Having no legal opportunities to resettle, till the end of the 19th century, the Mordvins migrated unauthorized.

The resettlement to Siberia at the end of the 19th to early 20th centuries gradually accelerated. For example, from 1861 to 1891, about 450 thousand persons migrated to Siberia, including 350 thousand to Western Siberia, and up to 100 thousand to Eastern Siberia. The peasants migrated because of loss of cattle, crop failure, wildfire, and for other reasons. For instance, upon the fire that took place in 1891 in the village of Guzyntsy, Saransky Uyezd, Penza Governorate (currently, Bolshebereznykovsky District of the Republic of Mordovia), which destroyed most of homesteads, some part of its residents moved to Siberia, another to the Caucasus, and others moved to the Ufa Governorate (Rusyaikin, 1987: 134, 138).

The general census of the 20th of January 1897 provided fairly precise information on the population's size and distribution, social composition, religious structure, and educational level. The total of 1,023,841 Mordvins were recorded in governorates of the Russian Empire, including 20,223 persons in Siberia (0.4 %). The greatest proportions of the Mordvins were noted in Barnaul, Mariinsk, Zmeinogorsk, Tomsk, Biysk, and Kuznetsk okrugs of the Tomsk Governorate; Minusinsk Okrug of the Yenisei Governorate; Tukalinsk and Ishim okrugs of the Tobolsk Governorate (*Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis naseleniya...*, 1904–1905: Vol. LXXV, p. 2–3; LXXVIII, p. 2–3; LXXIX, p. 2–3; LXXIII, p. 2–3).

The most important role in the allotment of plots of land to the migrants in the settlement places, and in provision of necessary facilities, was played by the Resettlement Department established in 1896. The government guaranteed cheap railway transportation, loans, free use of local forests, and other benefits.

With the opening of the railway, the main peasant migration route to Siberia passed through Chelyabinsk. In 1896, the relocation office where new settlers from Tyumen were registered was transferred to Omsk. In Omsk, barracks for temporary accommodation of new settlers, canteens, hospitals, and various warehouses were built, as well as offices of the Resettlement Department (Khleb..., 1999: 35–36).

Having decided to move, the Mordovian peasants sold their property and expected that the collected money would cover transportation to a new place of residence, building a new house, and starting a farm. During the long and difficult move, the migrants often spent all available money and remained without means of subsistence in the new place. The exception was a few more prosperous peasants, who had sufficient means and the necessary tools for the rapid establishment of a new farm. The majority of the migrants, in order to settle in a new place, had to seek employment at the farms of the old residents or those immigrants who managed to start their own farms (*Istoriya Sibiri...*, 1968: 26). Property records indicate a predominance of the poor among the new settlers.

In 1894, A.A. Kaufman noted that 104 families were relocated from Mordovia to the Tomsk Governorate, of which 81 families (79.4 %) were horseless, or owned a single horse (1895: 250). In the settlements of Ostrovsky, Voznesensky, and Naumovsky, the proportions of the poorest peasants were 80.6 %, 83.3 %, and 90.0 %, respectively (Kriviyakov, 1977: 38). Kriviyakov stated that peasants with the lowest resources migrated from the Penza and Simbirsk governorates. For example, in 1895–1896, 84 % of migrant families had no houses, and some of them estimated the price of their buildings at less than 100 rubles (*Ibid.*: 46).

At the end of the 19th century, two categories of settlers participated in the resettlement movement: one was arranged by the state, the other consisted of so-called spontaneous, “unorganized” migrants. The conditions of resettlement were extremely difficult. The allocation of plots was a slow process; thousands of families could not get settled, and were on the verge of death. The unauthorized settlers were faced with the greatest hardships: half of them were homeless and were forced to beg alms. As a rule, all such migrants were classified as “unregistered”. The government did not provide plots of land or material aid to such settlers. When plots were still allocated, this was done hastily, often without water resources and in the areas unbeneficial for farming. As a result, these new settlers were in much worse conditions than the “legitimate” migrants. The government, depriving self-volunteers of the right to get land, did not interfere in the settlement in old residents' villages and did not limit the amount of admission fees. For instance, in 1882, four families arrived at Legostaev of the Barnaul Okrug, the Tomsk Governorate, from the Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd, and three families from the Saransky Uyezd of the Penza Governorate. The old settlers' communities required the newcomers to pay from 80 to 100 rubles for registration of every male settler (and in 1900, four families arriving from Krasnoslobodsky had to pay from 50 to 100 rubles); the locals also sold their old huts to the newcomers. Owing to their lack of funds, the newcomers were forced to register themselves as petty bourgeoisie in the town of Barnaul. Having arrived with their families at new places of residence, the newcomers settled without plots of land, pastures, or other holdings (*Ibid.*: 154, 157). A.I. Komarov wrote that “old settlers often take as much as 150–200 rubles for registration of a male” (1913: 76). A report of the Saransky Uyezd Officer from February 22, 1900 also contains information about unauthorized relocation of peasants from the Mordovian villages of Vyazovka and Verkhny Shkaf of the Gorodishchensky Uyezd in the Penza Governorate. It reports: “Five families, according to the information from their relatives, departed from the old place of residence without any written permission documents, and undertook an unauthorized relocation in the Tomsk Governorate”

(Grebnev, 1959: 59–60). Sometimes the police managed to track down the immigrants, to detain them and return them to their former place of residence. For example, at the Timiryazev station of the Moscow-Kazan Railway (currently, the Krasny Uzel station in the Republic of Mordovia), according to a report to the governor, “on the 12th of April, unauthorized migrants (46 persons from nine families) from Kochunovo, Chufarovo Volost, Saransk Uyezd of the Penza Governorate were detained. They had all sold off their residential and household buildings, yet they were returned to the old place of residence” (Ibid.).

The unauthorized settlers had two options: they could either be registered in the villages of old residents, or rent land from the Siberian Cossack troops or Kazakhs. Taking advantage of the desperate situation of illegal immigrants, the wealthy old residents oppressed them. For example, in 1901, six unregistered families from the Krasnoslobodsky and Spassky uyezds settled in Dumchevsky, the Barnaul Uyezd, the Tomsk Governorate, noted that “they live very poorly, have no property except houses, and pay to the old settlers 3 rubles for a farmstead, 2 rubles for cattle pasturing, “summer payments” of 2 rubles for a desyatin of arable land, etc.” (Krivyakov, 1977: 157). This is how an officer assessed this situation in the early 20th century: “Registration was unaffordable for the majority of the migrants, because the male registration fee was from 30 to 50 rubles, and for the average family it accounted for 90–150 rubles. And to live with unregistered status was ruinous, since the newcomers were subjected to such high fees that the life of peasants in such conditions was impossible, not to mention their economic development” (Novovarshevskiy raion..., 2004: 18–19).

Often the migrants could not have settled in the old resident's settlements because the locals were concerned about a possible constraint in the use of their personal plots of land. Nevertheless, the newcomers tried to settle in old residents' villages, as it was easier there to find a part-time job, a dwelling before one could construct one's own, or more suitable arable land, as well as to buy food before their own harvest yielded anything. When the migrants managed to settle in the old residents' village, they usually settled separately, creating new migrant residence areas. For example, the Mordovian village of Tavly, Zyryansky District of the Tomsk Region, according to the great-grandson of its founder Viktor Mikhailovich Petrov, was founded by Eremey Petrov, who moved with his family from the village of Podlesnaya Tavla in Saransky Uyezd, the Penza Governorate (currently, Kochkurovsky District of the Republic of Mordovia) in 1863 (Kak Eremey Petrov..., (s.a.)). The ethnographic expedition to the south-eastern part of Western Siberia, arranged by the Research Institute for the Humanities under the Government of the Republic of Mordovia in 2009, reported that there was one only one resident of the

Mordovian nationality left in the village, and the other Mordvins had moved to the nearby Vysokoye village in the Zyryansky District, where some of the Mordovian residents had migrated from the city of Zarinsk, Zarinsky District of the Altai Territory.

Why did the Mordvins move for permanent residence to Western Siberia? One of the main factors affecting the material culture of an ethnic group was the geographical setting and the economic situation in the hosting area. The economic activity of an ethnic group depended on the climate, landscape, soil, and availability of various natural resources. Many people believed that Siberia was a land rich in fur-bearing animals, fish, hayfields, and chernozem soil that never produced a poor harvest. Rumors spread among the migrants that the local authority provided the newcomers with significant financial aid, ready farmsteads, cattle, agricultural implements, etc. Indeed, for a long time, lands in the Akmol Region of the Omsk Uyezd were considered hardly suitable for agriculture. In this respect, the Governor General of the Akmol Region G.A. Kolpakovsky wrote that “there are no free lands for resettlement in the Akmol Region, and the steppe is not suitable for agriculture”. That's why there was an instruction “not to allow migrants to remain in this region for a long time under any pretext; the unauthorized settlers should be removed to their old places of residence” (Novovarshevskiy raion..., 2004: 17–19).

Severe natural and climatic conditions, as well as the difficult socio-economic situation, forced many newcomers to leave their allotted plots of land, and to search for new places and better lands in other Siberian regions. Disillusioned migrants often returned to their homeland completely ruined. According to archival data, the reasons forcing migrants to leave Siberia were as follows: lack of funds and harsh climate; poor quality of soil; shortage of free plots, water, and forest, or the opposite—excessive foresting, wetlands, or flooding of plots; lack of hay lands and pastures for livestock, crop failures, etc. For instance, in 1882, four families returned to their homeland in Slobodskiy Dubrovki in the Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd from the Barnaul Okrug of the Tomsk Governorate. They explained the reason for the failed resettlement as follows: “to settle on a suitable and fertile land, it was necessary to pay 100 rub. for registration in the old settlers' community; other plots of land were unsuitable for agriculture. In addition, their relatives fraudulently persuaded them to come by writing that life was rich in Siberia. Having decided to move, they resettled to Siberia, but were very disappointed. To the question: ‘Why did your relatives invite you to come?’, they answered, ‘out of meanness; so that they weren't the only ones ruined’” (Krivyakov, 1977: 159–160).

Not all migrants dared to return to their homeland; many remained in Siberia, because moving back required a lot of money. In 1896–1900, the “reverse” migrants were



predominantly natives from the Simbirsk Governorate (20.0 %), then from the Penza (17.5 %) and Tambov (14.1 %) governorates (Ibid.: 162–163). The vast majority of peasants returned to the Tambov, Simbirsk, and Penza governorates mainly from the Tomsk Governorate, although the largest immigration from these governorates was to exactly the Tomsk Governorate. Reverse migration from the Yenisei, Tobolsk, and Irkutsk governorates was determined by the environmental conditions: thick taiga forests were difficult to clear. The largest percentage of reverse migrants from the Tobolsk Governorate were the residents of the Penza Governorate, and those from the Yenisei Governorate the residents of the Tambov Governorate.

The greatest part of the peasants returned to their homes in the year of unsuccessful resettlement. The main reason for the return of such peasants was the lack of beneficial conditions for farming in new places, and most importantly, shortage of land suitable for cultivation. Reverse relocation took place slowly, because many migrants often went on foot, did some temporary jobs, begged, starved, and returned home poorer than before (Ibid., 1977: 165–167). Thus, the mentioned data indicate that the government did not create favorable conditions for the economic activity of the newcomers in their new places of residence. Government assistance was inadequate, and not provided to all the needy population.

The rate of resettlement increased after the adoption of the Act of the 13th of June, 1889 “On the Voluntary Resettlement of Rural Inhabitants and Townspeople on the Government Owned Lands”. A reason for the relocation was also crop failures and famine in European Russia in 1891–1892. To become an authorized migrant, it was necessary to get permission from the two ministries: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Property. Officials did not manage to cope with the number of submitted applications, and those who left without permission were returned by force. However, despite the newly established rules, the flow of illegal migrants increased. In 1892 alone was the proportion of unauthorized migrants 35 %. In the same year, the government temporarily suspended the granting of permission, and resettlement became completely unauthorized. This is despite the fact that unauthorized migrants had neither benefits to obtain travel loans, nor deferment of military service, nor discounts for travel by rail. According to the law of the 13th of June, 1889, they were granted an exemption from the land tax for the first three years; in the next three years, they had to pay half quit-rent in the amount of 7.5 kopecks for 1 desyatin; and only six years later, the full quit-rent of 15 kopecks for 1 desyatin. In case of legitimate relocation, they received loans for travel and household development: 51 rubles 28 kopecks at minimum, and 118 rubles 29 kopecks at maximum (Novovarshevskiy raion..., 2004: 18–19). For

instance, in 1903, the migrants to the Kyshtovka Volost (currently, the Kyshtovksky District of the Novosibirsk Region) were each granted by the government the loan of 14 rub. 50 kopecks (Archive of the Kyshtovka Museum of Local History, F. 296, Inv. 1, fol. 8). The official status of the authorized migrant was the most reliable and economically profitable. However, as was mentioned, the officials had no time to “cut” plots or do paperwork, owing to lack of funds.

After the revolution of 1905, the situation of migrants in places of exit became even worse. For example, in 1906, 350 householders from the Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd of the Penza Governorate wrote in a telegram to Tsar: “Lack of lands and crop failure drive us to distant Siberia... Dear Sir, do not refuse our request for relocation to a specified area in Siberia”. In a note describing the property of 16 families of Sivin, the Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd, who moved to the Tomsk Governorate in 1909, it is stated that “none of the families has a plot of land” (Kriviyakov, 1974: 28, 31).

### **Resettlement during Stolypin’s agrarian reform**

The next stage of the resettlement of peasants from the central regions of Russia to Siberia was connected with the implementation of Stolypin’s agrarian reform. The government did a great deal of work on determining the resettlement sites where settlements would be established in future. Such plots were selected from the vacant land, or cut after land-surveying from the possessions of the old residents’ rural communities. The site’s selection was preceded by a geological survey. In the course of selection, preference was given to places located, as a rule, near a river or a lake, or near groves. The vegetation cover was also taken into account. From 1906 to 1916, a total of 5092 resettlement sites was populated in the territory of the Tomsk Governorate. In the Tomsk resettlement district, there were 21 sub-districts of relocation, although the majority of the migrants settled in the Tomsk and Kuznetsk sub-districts (Nikonova, Ternyaev, 2007: 31). The migrants from the Penza Governorate were allotted land (plots) in the Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yenisei, Akmolinsk, and other regions. From the Penza Governorate, in 1909 alone, applications for 7631 plots of land were submitted to the chief of the land management agency in Siberia. However, only 2004 plots were granted for the entire governorate (Grebnev, 1959: 63, 65). According to archival data, in 1910–1911, ca 100 families from Kolopino, Krasnoslobodsky Uyezd, moved to Siberia (settled in the Tomsk Governorate) (Materialy..., 1955: 18). At that time, many new settlements were established in the territory of today’s Omsk Region: Novovarshevka, Novotsaritsino, Yasnaya Polyana, Russkaya Polyana,

Pavlogradka, Odesskoye, Yuzhno-Podolsk, Dobrovolsk, etc. Over 25 years (from 1889 to 1914), more than half a million people moved there (Rashin, 1956: 70), including the Mordvins (representatives of this ethnic group live nowadays in the village of Novovarshavka). In the Kyshtovka Volost, Tomsk Governorate (currently, Omsk Region), 47 villages were established. In 1871–1889, the Tomsk Governorate land-use detachment was responsible for the settlement of the newly arrived peasants, as well as for the replanning of the existing villages. The land use maps showed the places of settlements, farmsteads, and plots of land; these maps also contained lists of people inhabiting the existing villages. In 1911, the settlement of Shastinsky was established, where the Mordvins resettled. According to the 1926 census, there were 69 inhabitants of both sexes, including 30 men and 39 women (Archive of the Kyshtovka Museum of Local History. F. 296, Inv. 1, fol. 3–8).

During Stolypin's reform, many settlements and villages were established in Siberia, as the government initiated a number of laws on land allotment for peasants: on the special assistance of the Peasant Bank to the purchase of land by peasants (The Imperial Edict of November 3, 1905); on the lowering of interest on bank loans (The Edict of October 14, 1906); on the conversion of crown and state-owned lands and parts of forests to the expansion of peasant land use (The Edict of August 27, 1906); on free withdrawal from the community; on allotment of plots; on government assistance in the destruction of strip farming, resettlement in separate farms, and land division in plots; and on Peasant Bank loans against a pledge of land plots (The Edicts of March 4, and November 9, 15, 1906); and the Edict of March 10, 1906, under which all peasants and commoners-plowmen were given the right to move to Asian Russia and settle on the state-owned, specially allocated land without special permission of the authorities or public gathering. However, the government constantly warned the citizens wishing to resettle that for normal settling and the establishment of farm (building a house, buying livestock and labor tools) it was necessary to spend at least 400 rubles, and government assistance for resettling to the Amur and Primorye regions did not exceed 150 rubles, and in other regions and governorates of Siberia 100 rubles. The "Stolypin" migrants were allotted land at the rate of 15 desyatins per male. The families with a lot of sons had an advantage, because they had a chance to increase the family's welfare (Novovarshavskiy raion..., 2004: 28–30).

The government's resettlement program faced many problems; migrants addressed the central government bodies with numerous petitions for land-allotment and complaints about oppression by old residents; but most cases remained unanswered. The worsening conditions and limitations in registration resulted in the accumulation

in Siberia in 1910 of over 700 thousand unregistered migrants, most of whom were unauthorized. Some of the "legitimate" migrants who did not arrive in the appointed areas were also regarded as unauthorized. During 1910–1915, the Resettlement Department allotted plots to 288,272 unregistered migrants, while over 40 thousand unauthorized migrants were left without plots (Sklyarov, 1962: 440).

The government's agricultural policy was severely compromised in 1911. Another drought in Siberia had the most devastating impact on the farms of newcomers that were not yet set up and did not provide enough food. "We are starving and urgently asking for help", telegraphed the migrants from the Tarsky Uyezd (Manyakin, 2003: 13). During Stolypin's agrarian reform, almost a quarter of the migrants returned to the Tambov Governorate, and one fifth returned to the Simbirsk and Penza governorates. During the years of political reaction (1907–1909), the percentage of reverse migrants was negligible. At that time, the tsarist government tried to stop the reverse migration. They did not issued discharge certificates to reverse migrants; without such certificates the migrants could not have been registered again in their home communities; various claims were instituted against such migrants. In addition, the government abolished cut-price travel fares for reverse migrants (Krivyakov, 1977: 162–163).

The migrants were also subjected to severe trials during their move from Central Russia. They rode in freight cars, with skimpy food, mostly breadcrumbs. In Siberia, they lived in overcrowded barracks for several months, waiting for the allocation of land. But the worst was ahead. Having moved the poor peasants to Siberia, the government took almost no care for their settlement in new places. Hundreds of thousands of people could gotten no land, and the allotments did not allow the peasants to provide for themselves fully, leading to further settlement. Few had the opportunity to buy or rent private or other land. The poor rented the land owing to the lack of plots, the well-off bought it for the organization of business. The land was distributed unevenly, especially the plots acquired in property, which was concentrated mainly in the hands of wealthy settlers. Among Mordovian settlers, there were few who had plots of land acquired in property. For example, in the Tomsk Governorate, only 2 out of 146 families had bought plots of land: one owned 20.0 desyatins, and the other 8.4 desyatins. The migrants who had 20 des. could have sown only 15 des., and those with 8.4 des. only 3 des. Owing to the fact that it was difficult to obtain land, and not everyone was able to buy it, the new settlers often arbitrarily seized vacant lands and plots intended for sale. The authorities had no choice but to enter into lease contracts with the settlers on the land they had seized (Nikonova, Ternyaev, 2007: 32–33).

Development of new lands was full of hardships. In the settlement of Ust-Kaysas (since 1912, Kuchum) of the Mariinsky Uyezd, according to information from old residents from the Volga Region, four poor migrant families arrived in 1904, one family in 1905, and 17 families in 1907–1908. In order to build huts, to clear land for vegetable gardens and arable land, the newcomers had to fell trees in the thick forest. Some of them were engaged in hunting, bee-keeping, and harvesting pine-nuts. There were no roads, the taiga trips were carried out on foot, on horseback, or on sledge drags. The produced goods (planks, barrels, fur, game, honey, and wax) were transported on sleighs to Kemerovo or to the steppe villages and traded for bread. During the harvesting period, many poor newcomers were employed for bread by the prosperous peasants in the steppe areas. The living standard of the villagers was extremely low. In winter and summer, migrants used to wear bast shoes and clothing made of coarse home-made sackcloth. Women and girls spent nights spinning yarn in the light of a smoking torch of splinters (Ibid.: 33).

Over the years of Stolypin's reform, approximately 3.3 million people moved to the Trans-Urals, and only 2.0 million managed to establish their farms in the new lands. Approximately 0.5 million returned to their homelands (Osnovy kursa..., 2017: 343). Despite the enormous difficulties, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the rate of migration of the Mordovian peasantry to Siberia increased. According to V.I. Kozlov's assessments, the total number of the Mordvins was about 70 thousand, which was 1.2 % of the total number of new settlers (1960: 41).

## Conclusions

Siberia has always attracted the peasants of the European part of Russia oppressed by landlessness and poverty. They dared to undertake a long trip, understanding only vaguely how remote this land was. Only a few of them sent scouts before starting their trips; many migrants were guided only by stories from relatives and friends, and often moved hoping for good luck.

Migration policies of the imperial government until the early 20th century were inconsistent: at one moment the policy was permissive, at another prohibitive. The massive migration of the Mordvins to Western Siberia started in the second half of the 19th century, after the abolition of serfdom. The Mordovian migrants settled in rural areas, and usually arrived in settlements that had been established by representatives of other nationalities. With a reduction of available free lands, the newcomers had to develop the taiga areas. Their economic plight caused reverse migration of the peasants. Thousands of

ruined families were forced to return to Central Russia. The economic situation of the newcomers in Siberia changed for the better as late as in the first decade of the 20th century. Various commissions were established whose activities were aimed at improving the conditions of transportation of migrants to the places of their intended resettlement; special resettlement districts were established, etc.

According to archival and field data, the main reasons for reverse migration were insufficient funding for subsistence and settlement in a new place; harsh climate; lack of favorable conditions for individual economic activities; and most importantly, shortage of arable lands (lack of free plots of land, water and forests and, on the contrary, excessive woodlands, swamps, and flooded lands, the lack of hayfields and pastures for livestock, crop failures, etc.).

The next wave of migration from the Volga Region was associated with Stolypin's reform mandating the resettlement of peasants on vacant lands in Siberia, Central Asia, and Kazakhstan. The agrarian reform facilitated peasants' withdrawal from their communities: they got the right to sell their holdings in order to raise funds for resettlement. Stolypin's reform failed radically to resolve the problem of the agrarian overpopulation in European part of Russia, but it gave a powerful impetus to the development of Siberia. The resettlement process was of great importance. Thanks to the migrants, vast uninhabited territories were developed, the deserted and thinly populated lands were turned into agricultural areas, new settlements were established, and the volumes of grain and milk production increased, etc. In the course of developing the new lands in the outlying districts, the new settlers revived the life style of the outskirts, and ultimately increased the national income.

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