



THE MODERN RUSSIAN DIASPORA: CIRCUMSTANCES OF FORMATION, IDENTITY AND ASSIMILATION

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Introduction

Traditionally only Jewish Diaspora is meant as Diaspora, which was described as unique phenomenon. In many years this term began to be used for many other ethnos, because human migration strengthened, and “dispersion” became more frequent phenomenon. In given research Diaspora is meant as not only a part of nation living abroad, having common mental, cultural and historical roots and striving for supporting of various links with historical native land, but, first of all, as transnational net which is in the beginning of its development but having great socio-cultural, social and political and economic potential.

At the beginning of 1990-s the size of Russian Diaspora beyond CIS-states and Baltic states was about 2 million persons. They live in USA (about a half), 300 thousands - in Israel and Germany accordingly, about 150 thousands of persons - in Latin America, about 100 thousands of persons - in Canada and the rest of persons is in other states. This part of Diaspora was formed in pre-revolution and soviet periods as result of migration.

Break-up of Soviet Union and foundation of newly independent states, and active emigration from Russia for last fifteen years increased size of Russian Diaspora greatly. In real time size of Russian Diaspora exceeded 25 million persons, and it was found in the second place after Chinese Diaspora. At the same time by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation data, more than 1,5 million of Russian citizens were accounted by Russian Consulate as permanently living abroad. We note, that it is approximately 10% of general size of Russian citizens living abroad really.

Russian Diaspora in the USA

The large Russian Diaspora is settled in the United States of America. However, the data on this country should be analyzed through knowledge of procedure of information collecting by ethnical composition. The principal feature of migration statistics of USA is that labour migrants

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are granted by non-immigration visas, stay in country temporarily and, as a rule, are not fixed by migration statistics. In course of census several types of data of ethnical composition are collected – data on place of birth, use of language, ethnical identity.

By census data (2000) in the USA 706 thousand persons spoke Russian. Approximately 2,6 million of American citizens or one percentage of population of the country called themselves as Russian in course of census (US Census Bureau, 2004). In the course of census (1990) 2,9 million persons marked out their ethnical identity as “Russian”, approximately 390 thousand persons called the place of their birth as USSR, i.e. they were immigrants of firth generation. There is nothing surprised in reduction of “Russians” number in the USA between the 1990 and 2000 years, because at the end of definite period of time many peoples begin to consider themselves as Americans. By estimates of U.S. Bureau of Census (taking into account of immigration) in 1994 about 460 thousand persons who were born in Russia lived in the USA, by data of 2003 this figure was approximately 544 thousand persons. Thus for the period since 1990 till 2003 the number of Russian Diaspora reached 154 thousand persons, i.e. approximately 40 percentage, basically at the expense of immigration.

The most part of Russians (39%) lives in the north-east of the country. Here the largest community is concentrated in New-York – about 300 thousand persons (Vanichkin: www.rusedina.org). It being known that since 1991 year Russian community in megapolis practically has doubled – the rates of its growth came to 190%. But the growth of number of communities, traditionally distinguished of significant rates of growth (for example, immigrants from Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan), was rather quicker. Brayton-Beach in Manhattan may be considered the district of compact settlement of immigrants from Russia, the large part of Russians also live in Brooklyn.

Approximately one fourth part of Russians live and work in the West – here the largest Russian community is situated in San-Francisco, Los-Angeles and Seattle. High-skilled Russians (mainly scientists and IT-specialists) are concentrated in the district of Silicon valley. Accordingly to the data of U.S. Bureau of Census there are some towns in the country, in which the proportion of Russians in the size of population is very great. For example, in Peacefull Valley Town (Washington State) and Concordia (New Jersy) more than 22 per cent of inhabitants declared about their Russian origin (Vanichkin: www.rusedina.org). Approximately 19 per cent of Russians live in the South of USA (mainly in Miami) and 17 per cent – in the Middle West (mainly in Detroit).

By data of Russian statistics approximately 14,3 thousand persons went to the USA from



Russia by labour contracts for the period since 1994 till 2004. It is approximately 4 per cent of all Russians, left abroad to work legally. By data which are published in the USA, it is impossible to follow up the number of Russian workers in details. It has managed to find out the OECD information of admission of approximately 17 thousand of Russians in 1997. The labour migration from Russia to USA is turned out to be much higher in comparison with Russian data. These disproportions confirm IOM estimates accordingly which about 130 thousand of Russian high-skilled specialists (scientists, IT-specialists and so forth) work in USA (IOM, 2002). This is “one drop in the sea” for American labour market, in which in 2003 about 21,6 million persons worked. Russia is not principal supplier of foreign labour force into the USA. In the American labour market 6,5 million Mexicans (1-st place) and 322 thousand of Columbians (15-th place) worked (OESD, 2005). The majority of Russians are engaged in the USA in computer technologies sphere, industry and service sector, few work by their profession. As a rule if migrants work by profession the employers for them are compatriots settled in the USA earlier.

The rest of students of various exchange programs, trainees, scientists and tourists may be added to the number of those who have legally entered for employment in the USA. Many of them work illegally because their visas have expired or do not accord with the kind of their occupation. By our estimates the number of “new” Russian Diaspora is nevertheless about 300 thousand persons. Many Russians, working in the USA, stay in contact with their Motherland.

Russian Diaspora in Germany

Russian labour migrants are represented in many countries of the Western Europe. In Germany about 3 million persons consider Russian language to be native; about 40 million persons understand or speak Russian. The major part of them is either immigrants from NIS-countries or Eastern Germans, who learned Russian language in Soviet time. In 1998 there were about 50 thousand persons, who had Soviet Union citizenship or NIS-countries citizenship. By data of 2002 approximately 156 thousand German citizens were born in Russia. In ethnical aspect Russian Diaspora is diversified and represented by Germans, Russians, Jews, representatives of Caucuses peoples (Kudryatz: www.rusedina.org). By data of official Russian statistics about 25 thousand persons (or 7per cent of total flow of labour migrants from Russia) left for German to work between 1994 and 2004. By IOM data approximately 50 thousand Russian specialists and IT-specialists work in Germany (IOM, 2002). About 75-100 thousand persons, who live and work in Germany, may be referred to “new” Russian Diaspora.



Russian Diaspora in Great Britain

At the beginning of 1990-s in Great Britain Russian Diaspora was represented by two opposite camps – these were either very rich people, or migrants who tried to get any job. Many Russians purchased expensive real estate in the amount of more than 1 million lb. sterling in Great Britain. By information of British “Daily Telegraph” there are about 250 thousand rich Russians, who could earn big money in the period of rapid state real estate privatization in Russia; the mansions in fashionable districts of London, Knightsbridge and Kensington belong to them. The composition of Russian migrants has changed gradually – at present time these are at the most representatives of middle class, who have entered to try their luck on permanent residence or for temporary earnings, also enough many pupils and students, studying at British schools.

By Russian Embassy data, at present time 100 thousand ethnical Russians live in London and its suburbs (Nalbaldyan Z., 2005). Accordingly to other estimates there are between 150 and 200 thousands Russian-speaking persons in London (www.bbcussian.com) . It is evidently that these figures include all the Russians – both “old” and “new” Diaspora.

There are data about 63 thousand gastarbaiters from Central and Eastern Europe countries legally working in Great Britain. There are not only Russians among them, but there are also rather many Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Polishes, Bulgarians and Romanians. By the BBC information, theirs number reaches 100 thousand persons only in the building industry. The detailed official statistics by geography of labour migrants in Great Britain is lacking in foreign sources. By the data of Russian statistics 25, 5 thousand persons (more than 7 per cent of total flow of labour migrants) went to Britain for employment for the period since 1994 till 2004. The total evaluation of “new” Russian Diaspora size may constitute at least 100 thousand persons.

The contribution of Russian Diaspora in economy and public life of Great Britain is considerably remarkable. Here outstanding scientists work, great businessmen, who has invested big amounts not only in real estate, but in companies, sport clubs live from time to time. The most famous Russian businessman is Roman Abramovich, who has bought football club “Chelsy” and invested big sums in purchasing of new players. Owing to these investments “Chelsy” has become one of the strongest clubs in Europe.

Russian Diaspora in Finland

In Finland in 1994 there were approximately 24,8 thousand persons born on the territory of



Russia and in 2002 – about 36,3 thousand persons (about 0,7 per cent of state population). Russians are the most numerous group among foreign population in Finland – their number has been rising steadily: in 1995 – 9,7, in 2000 – 20,6, in 2001 – 22,7 thousand persons, in 2002 there were 24,3 thousand persons. Russians constitute 90 per cent of immigrants in the East of Finland and literally “save this territory of slow death – in bordering towns Lappeenrantra, Imatra and Tokhmayavri the Russian speech is heard more often and there are more boards in Cyrillic”. By data of census (2000) there were about 8,8 thousand Russians in work- active age in Finland. There was very high rate of unemployment among them - about 48 per cent didn’t have job place (Statistics Finland, 2003). The labour market is enough saturated, but informal sector of economy is not significant. There are about 11 thousand legally working employees at industry enterprises and service sector in Finland. The number of legally entered labour migrants from Russia constituted 139 persons between 2002 and 2004. The number of “new” Russian Diaspora is at less 25 thousand persons in Finland.

Russian Diaspora in Cyprus

Considerably great Russian Diaspora has formed in Cyprus. The Island attracts Russians as place of rest, inhabitation, capital investment and job. Approximately 30 thousand immigrants from former USSR republics live in the Cyprus permanently. By ethnical composition these are Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks and representatives of other nations. Such a big Diaspora has been formed for last ten-fifteen years on the basis of closed economic, cultural and political links, which had been developed in the epoch of USSR existence. In Soviet time Russians ships were served in Cyprus, political links were supported by Communist parties of two states. Not by casually after the break-up of Soviet Union many former soviet ant party leaders went to Cyprus. Russian Diaspora is mainly concentrated in Limasol town on South-Eastern shore of Island, which is called as “small Russia”.

In the course of time the part of Russian elite settled down in the Island too. In 1990-th rich Russians invested here money into business, opened business, purchased real estate actively. Besides that Cyprus had privileged taxation regime for a long time, it is comfortably geographically situated on the “crossroads” between Europe and Asia, that’s why many Russian businessmen have chosen namely it for running business with partners from Middle East, South Europe, North Africa. At the present many of these businessmen live and work a half of their time in Russia time and the rest of time in the Cyprus, at that their families live in the Island permanently. About 21 thousand Russian companies are officially registered in Cyprus, which are profitable to national economy



equal to 3 milliards dollars. It is interesting that at the present Cyprus is on the second place by amount of investments into Russian economy among the country-investors. These are practically money of Russian Diaspora which returns to Motherland.

Russian economic migration to Island was supported by both States governments, partly, there was non-visa regimen of entry-exit between two countries for a long time. Russian banks, shops, restaurants, schools were founded in Cyprus. The Island has become one of the most popular places of rest for Russian residents – about 140 thousand Russian tourists come here annually. All of this made demand for Russian-speaking personal (jurists, domestic workers, teachers and etc.) for employment in Cyprus economy. By Russian statistics data about 75 thousand persons (one fifth of Russian gastarbaiters) in general left for Island to work between 1994 and 2004. By Cyprus statistics legal size of foreign workers was 41 thousand persons in Cyprus in 2003, including 2,6 thousand persons. It is evidently that number of Russian labour migrants including illegal workers may be about 5-6 thousand persons.

On the Eve of Cyprus entrance into EU migration exchange following migration and taxation policies have changed a lot recently. Firstly, 30-th of September 2003 Cyprus stated officially about its decision to break the agreement (1994) between Russia and Cyprus about non-visa regimen of entry-exit. Since this moment Russian citizens can come to Island only with Cyprus visa. In connection with it “for minimization of negative consequences of such step for Russian-Cyprus relations” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation worked out and transmitted to Cyprus side the draft of agreement, in which the definite visa simplifications are provided for separate categories of citizens. Now only Russian diplomats and Russians with work passports have right to stay in the country for the period of ninety days.

Secondly, Cyprus pursues reforms in the taxation legislation which must cease off-shore business in the Island at last. If old off-shore rate was 4,25 per cent, that as in the result of innovation all registered commercial enterprises in Cyprus (national and foreign) will be imposed 10 per cent tax on. Thus, the modification of taxation legislation and introduction of visa regimen can result to reduction of migration flows from Russia to Cyprus. However Cyprus side intend to simplify the granting of entry documents for Russians in maximum and to keep interest of Russians to their country as far as possible, maintained balance between wish of being the member of EU and keeping attraction and profits from Russian migration.

Russian Diaspora in Asian states



Many regions of Russia mainly Far East send labour migrants to Asia-Pacific region states. In Japan as a state is in nearby to our Eastern borders in 2002 more than 6 thousand Russian citizens were registered. The main regions of Russian settlement are Tokyo (about 1,4 thousand persons), Kanagava (0,5 thousand persons), Hokkaido (0,5 thousand persons), Niigata (0,2 thousand persons) and Osaka (0,2 thousand persons). The major part of them may be referred to “labour Diaspora”. “The rising sun country” has become the place for earnings for Russians, although its labour market is overcrowded, and it is rather difficult for foreigners to get job here. Nevertheless some of our compatriots have work in Japanese sea-ports, serving a great deal of Russian ships. The major part of Russian women is employed in entertainment industry – Japan grants visas for workers of this industry officially. Japan is also very popular among Russian businessmen, who buy here second-hand cars very cheaply for following resale in Russia. Not in casually the great number of cars imported from Japan may be seen in the Vladivostok streets. About 10 thousand of approximately 32 thousand persons visited Japan in 2002 year are businessmen. 16,5 thousand Russians entered Japan legally to work between 1994 and 2002. Approximate number of Russian labour migrants staying in Japan for a single time may be estimated at between 8 and 10 thousand persons.

By data of foreign statistics about 3 thousand of our compatriots work legally by labour contracts in Korea Republic. By Russian statistical data approximately 5 thousand Russians lived in the country in 2000. Since that time their number has increased, but nor Russian Embassy, neither Korea powers have exact data. Russians mainly live in capital Seoul and port Pusan. There is Russian block which name is “Texas” in one of Pusan district. These are mainly immigrants from Primorsky and Khabarovsk region among its inhabitants, who came to Korea for temporary earnings and stayed here for a longer time. The majority of Russians are employed in low-paid job, harmful enterprises (for example, in chemical industry) and entertainment industry. Korean businessmen recruit Russian women for working as waitresses, many of them work as prostitutes. In 2001 Russian Embassy in South Korea sounded data accordingly to which there were from 4,5 to 5 thousand Russian women worked in entertainment industry (bars and brothels).

The country has significant lack of scientific investigations and elaboration of progressive technologies. Accordingly to survey of private firms and scientific centers of the country, conducted by Korean Industrial Technologies Association, foreigners work in 10 per cent of them, it being known that their number has increased from 285 to 509 persons (in 80 per cent). The greatest dependence on high-skilled specialists flow from abroad is marked in clue spheres necessary for modern scientific-technical progress such as elaboration of newest information, bio- and



nanotechnologies. The main part of foreign specialists is concentrated in laboratories of leading industrial conglomerates. Russian specialists keep leadership – 114 persons. By other data Russian scientists and investigators are not less than 500 persons (Kutachov: www.rusedina.org). Many of them are very famous specialists in their branches, mature people, who have managed to accumulate knowledge and experience, to get candidate and doctor degrees, which are highly evaluated in Korea. Some South Korean companies recruit high-skilled specialists on competitive basis in chemical technologies sphere very actively. In recent time South Korean powers intend to activate scientific-technologists elaborations in such spheres as nuclear energetic and aero cosmic industry at the expense of Russian scientists.

The significant number of Russian Koreans-repatriates left Far East in the frames of official Programme, concerning to repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans, and also live in South Korea. They speak Russian well and as a rule gravitate towards Russian districts, work in trade and interpreters.

Between 5 and 25 thousand Russians live and work permanently in United Arab Emirates (UAE). The attempts of Russian consulate to register compatriots were unsuccessful. There are no districts of Russian compact settlement – they live in various Emirates. Many of them are former “chelnoks”, who at the beginning of 90-th got that it was more profitable to be mediators between Russians and UAE residents than to transport goods to Russia. Enterprising Russians could find their place in trade sector. As the best places in the main Dubai trade quarter had been occupied already Russians worked out their tactic – they met flights with “chelnoks” and offered goods straightly in the airport. Thus they could oppress their competitors. Approximately 80-90 per cent of Russians have their own business. Now the segment of business oriented to Russia has tapered significantly. The trade of fabrics, spare pieces, and everyday technique has great effect. Those Russians who could reorient to needs of national market, for example, trade of building materials (the country experiences building boom) and “Russian” products, have very successful business. The conditions of running business in UAE are close to ideal – there are no income tax, profit and sale taxes. Import custom is 4 per cent and annual installment for trade place is 10 per cent of rent payment for dwelling. The feature of UAE is that foreign citizens are limited in rights significantly – it is practically impossible to be granted civic rights, necessary to prolong work visa, have not right to own land and real estate.

Conclusions

We want to concentrate your attention on several important results and conclusions of the



research:

1. Modern Russian Diaspora was formed in unique conditions not like any of modern diasporas. The principal reason of rapid growth of Diaspora was break-up of Soviet Union and foundation of new states on its place where approximately from 18 to 19 million of Russians and representatives of other ethnoses of Russia live.

2. The second reason of growth of size of Russian Diaspora became mighty wave of emigration from Russia. At last time the principal channels of emigration and formation of Russian Diaspora were exit for permanent settlement, labour migration, scholar migration, marriage migration. For example, by our estimates since 1991 till 2005 770 thousands of persons left for Germany from Russia, 190 thousands of persons – for Israel, 120 thousands of persons – for USA, for permanent settlement accordingly. The greatest part of Diaspora lives in USA, Germany, Great Britain, Israel and other countries.

3. Russian Diaspora isn't ethnically homogenous and includes representatives of various ethnical groups – Russians, Jews, Tatars, Chechens and representatives of many other peoples. They themselves or they are often called as “Russians”, but statistics of several countries define them as “emigrants from former USSR”. In Germany even ethnical Germans are often called as “Russian Germans”.

4. Representatives of Russian Diaspora have abilities for quick and successful assimilation in host countries. Russians have high education level and adapt to new conditions very well. For example, by census held in USA in 2000, approximately 2,6 million of American citizens called themselves Russians, that less for 300 thousand, than in 1990 (by Russian statistical data, no less than 100 thousand persons left for USA for this period). The reduction of size of Russians was determined by assimilation – in the course of time many migrants became to consider themselves to be Americans.

At the beginning of nineties in Great Britain Russian Diaspora was shared in two poles - these were either very well-off peoples, who could get great money in the period of active privatization in Russia, or migrants who wanted to get any job. By Russian Embassy data, about 100 thousands of ethnic Russians live in London and its suburbs in real time. In course of time structure of Russian migrants has changed – now majority of them is representatives of middle class who came to catch a luck for permanent settlement or timely for earnings. There is great deal of schoolmates and students who study in British schools and colleges.

5. Representatives of Russian Diaspora have abilities for low degree of fastening and



practically full absence of ethnical consolidation of compact settlement districts of Russians, and the more so there are practically no reserved enclaves (exception with Brayton-Beach in New York).

For example in New York – about 300 thousands of persons live. Since 1991 Russian Diaspora has practically doubled in mega polis – its rate of growth was about 190% - only number of diasporas with great rate of growth (for example, emigrants from Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan) grew faster.

Nongovernmental organizations, working abroad, make functions as “clubs of interests” for already adapted migrants than they support new coming migrants.

Russian Diaspora implements important social and economic functions. It is exploring and advancement of projects in the sphere of business, trade, scientific and cultural collaboration, education, social support of population. Diaspora advertises Russian culture and Russian language in the host countries. In many countries it has great importance in sport, art, science and education. All of this impacts on formation of positive image of Russia abroad greatly. Russian Diaspora has great potential for collaboration with Russia. That’s why Russian state policy towards Diaspora has great importance.

6. For a long time official state policy of USSR and Russia related to compatriots has been practically absence, and sometimes it was directed to isolation. Only in 1994 State Commission on Compatriots Issues was founded, in 1999 Federal law of State Policy in Russian Federation towards compatriots abroad was accepted. Positive changes in this issue has happened last time. In 2006 State Program for Support to Voluntary Migration of Compatriots living abroad to Russian Federation was accepted. There is special Committee on Compatriots Issues in State Duma; Roszarubezhcenter with branches abroad was created.

There are several mechanisms of support to compatriots on regional level. For example, Moscow Government give scholarships for student from compatriots from CIS and Baltic-states for studying in Moscow universities annually.

But this policy isn’t enough. There is need in strengthening of state measures to Diaspora consolidation, support of Diaspora efforts in collaboration with Russia on various directions – business, cultural and educational. Several states created special structures and ministers on Diaspora issues. Probably such an experience could be useful for Russia.

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