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THE MIGRATION OF KAZAKHS FROM XINJIANG TO INDIA: BASED ON ARCHIVAL SOURCES (1940-1954)

Abstract. In the 1930s, the migration of part of the Kazakhs from East Turkestan to neighboring regions of China and beyond began. One of the most difficult routes passed through the Altai region (from Barkol), followed by the resettlement of some migrants to Turkey. The migrants crossed Tibet and the Himalayas, enduring severe natural conditions and epidemics; by 1941, approximately 3,000 people had reached India (Bhopal). This process remains insufficiently studied due to the limited availability of sources, which complicates the analysis of the causes, conditions, and consequences of migration. The Kazakhs' residence in India for about ten years requires further research in terms of adaptation and interaction with the local population. The novelty of the study lies in the introduction of previously unused archival materials of British India into academic circulation and in a comprehensive analysis of the routes, conditions, and mechanisms of the Kazakh refugees' migration. The objective of the study is to analyze the causes, course, and consequences of the migration of Kazakhs from East Turkestan in the 1930s–1940s, including migration routes and features of their life in India. The study reconstructs the routes of Kazakh refugees from East Turkestan to India and analyzes the conditions of their migration through Tibet and the Himalayas. The article is based on archival documents and focuses on the migration of Kazakh refugees from Xinjiang to India in 1940–1954. Materials of the British Indian government from 1943, including correspondence between state departments and regional administrations, are introduced into academic circulation. The study examines the activities of the “Kazakh Committee,” issues of camp organization, financing, diplomatic disputes, and repatriation. The analysis is supplemented with diplomatic documents and historiographical review. The conclusions emphasize the significance of these events for the history of Kazakhstan and international relations in Asia, as well as their role as an example of identity preservation under conditions of forced migration.

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Keywords: Kazakhstan, migration of Kazakh refugees, Xinjiang, India, Bhopal, «Kazakh Committee», history, diplomacy, international relations, repatriation

Introduction

Archival documents preserved in the National Archives of India provide insight into the history of a Kazakh nomadic group that undertook a prolonged and arduous migration. After crossing the Altai Mountains and traveling through Gansu, Xinjiang, and Tibet, the group eventually arrived in India, where they remained for approximately twelve years before their final resettlement in Turkey. The archival records examined in this study cover the period from 1941 to 1951.

The documents from 1941 include File No. 239-W, “Decisions Taken Regarding the Kazakh Migration: The Problem of 3,000 Kazakhs Who Migrated from Central Asia”; File No. 460-W, «Migration of Kazakhs from the N.W.F.P. to the Bhopal State”; and File No. 16-W, «Settlement of a

Party of Kazakhs in India». These files contain specific data and detailed information concerning the Kazakh migration that arrived in India.

Among these materials, particular attention is given to the issue of settling the Kazakhs in the princely State of Bhopal (India). In inquiry letters sent to Hyderabad in 1942, it was noted:

«The issue of resettling approximately 2,800 Kazakhs currently residing in Tarnava, located in the north-western part of the country, remains one of the most urgent matters at present. Until a final decision is made regarding the status of the Kazakhs who arrived in India, they have been temporarily accommodated in Muzaffarabad and Tarnava at the expense of the Government of India. In addressing the Kazakh question, the Government of India is considering two possible courses of action.

The first option was the repatriation of the Kazakhs who had arrived in India to Xinjiang through negotiations with the Xinjiang authorities; the second was to grant them permission for temporary residence in India.

The document indicates that the implementation of the first option for addressing the Kazakh question would inevitably require prolonged and complicated negotiations with the Government of Xinjiang, the success of which appeared highly uncertain. It further notes that: «In the absence of a satisfactory resolution on the part of the Xinjiang Government, the question of their return, in our opinion, would be considered inadvisable». ¹

The migration of Kazakh refugees from Xinjiang into India during the Second World War represents one of the least examined episodes in the history of the twentieth-century Kazakh diaspora. This topic has long remained on the margins of scholarly inquiry, largely because of the limited accessibility of archival sources and the fragmentary nature of the materials available.

The period from 1940 to 1954 encompasses a broad array of issues, including forced migration, questions of citizenship, international humanitarian practices, the colonial policies of British India, and transregional connections between Central and South Asia. Of particular significance is the settlement of the Kazakhs in the princely states of India - especially in Bhopal, which occurred under wartime conditions and within a complex international context.

The aim of this article is to analyze, on the basis of archival documents of the Government of British India, the mechanisms of accommodation and maintenance of Kazakh refugees, as well as to identify the role of the colonial administration and local princely authorities in addressing this issue.

Materials and methods

The research is based on archival documents of the Government of British India preserved in the National Archives of India (New Delhi). The principal body of sources consists of records from the Political and Defence Departments for 1943, correspondence of the Central India Political Agency, as well as official letters and memoranda related to the activities of the so-called «Kazaks Committee» and plans for the settlement of Kazakh refugees in the princely states of India, primarily in Bhopal State.

In addition, diplomatic documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and materials from the Embassy of India in China for the period 1949-1954 were utilized, reflecting issues of repatriation and financial compensation.

A significant category of sources comprises financial and administrative records, including budget estimates, camp maintenance registers, reports on the transportation of refugees, and documents related to the provision of targeted loans (takkavi). These materials allow for a reconstruction of the economic mechanisms that supported the accommodation of Kazakh refugees and facilitate an assessment of the scale of the colonial administration's engagement in addressing humanitarian concerns.

The methodological framework of the study is grounded in the principles of historicism and scholarly objectivity. The research employs the historical-genetic method, which made it possible to trace the evolution of British policy toward Kazakh refugees, as well as the historical-comparative

method, applied in the analysis and comparison of different groups of sources-diplomatic, administrative, and financial. Additionally, elements of source criticism were applied to evaluate the informational value, provenance, and reliability of the archival documents.

The extensive utilization of archival sources and analytical methods has made it possible to study the settlement of Kazakh refugees in India as an institutionalized, multi-layered historical phenomenon, closely linked to colonial administrative practices, international humanitarian mechanisms, and transboundary migration processes in the first half of the twentieth century.

Discussion

An analysis of the existing historiography demonstrates that the issue of Kazakh migrations in the twentieth century has been widely addressed in both domestic and foreign scholarship. However, the Indian stage of the migration long remained on the periphery of academic attention.

The works of G. Mendikulova [Mendikulova, 1997; 2005; 2006; 2008], N. Ablazhei [Ablazhei, 2014], and K.N. Baltabayeva et al. [Baltabayeva et al., 2015] laid the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study of the Kazakh diaspora, focusing primarily on migration processes in Central Asia, China, and neighboring regions.

Foreign studies, in particular the book *Kazak Exodus* by Godfrey Lias [Lias, 1956] and the article «How the Kazakh Fled to Freedom» by Clark Milton Jr. [Clark, 1954], made a significant contribution to popularizing the topic and reconstructing the routes of the migration. However, they largely relied on a journalistic narrative and memoir sources.

The works of Abduvakhap Kara [Kara, 2008; 2016], based on oral testimonies, expanded understanding of the social and cultural adaptation of Kazakhs in the countries of the Middle East and in Turkey, yet they scarcely addressed the administrative and political context of the Kazakh refugees' stay in India.

A special place in the historiography is occupied by the study of the Indian scholar M. Thampi [Thampi, 2022], in which the issues of settlement and adaptation of the Kazakhs in Bhopal State during the Second World War were examined in detail for the first time.

At the same time, the study primarily emphasizes the socio-cultural dimensions and identity of the refugees, while the financial and administrative mechanisms, along with the role of colonial institutions, are treated only in a fragmentary manner.

Memoir literature produced by participants and witnesses of the events-such as Khalifa Altai [Khalifa, 1981; 2000; 2014], Dalelkhan Zhanaltay [Zhanaltay, 2000], Hasan Oraltay [Oraltay, 2005], and others-constitutes a valuable testimony to the subjective experience of migration and the preservation of identity. However, these sources are limited in their ability to fully reconstruct the institutional and administrative dimensions of British policy toward Kazakh refugees.

More recent scholars have continued to investigate this underexplored topic. In 2021, A. Aliakparova defended her doctoral dissertation entitled «Khalifa Altai and the Kazakh Diaspora: A Historical Analysis» [Aliakparova, 2021]. The following dissertations may also be noted in connection with this subject: L. Badavamova's «Kazakhs of Eastern Turkestan in the National Liberation Movement against the Kuomintang Clique of Chiang Kai-shek (1940-1949)» [Badavamova, 1967], and S. Rakhmetuly's «The History of the Socio-Political Life of Kazakhs in Mongolia and China (1912–1949)» [Rakhmetuly, 2009].

Certain aspects of these events have also been documented in articles published in conference proceedings: D. Zhakypuly's «On the Kazakhs of China» [Zhakypuly, 2016]; D. Makhat and G. Kurmangalieva's «Khalifa Altai: On the History and Fate of Kazakhs Abroad» [Makhat, Kurmangalieva, 2016]; ZhadiShäkenuly's works «Osman Batyr and the Issues of Eastern Turkestan» and the historical novel «Qaraly Kösh» [Shäkenuly, 2016, 2019]; as well as Kalban Yntyhanuly's monograph «Kazakh Refugee Migrations and Documentary Literature» [Yntyhanuly, 2015].

Therefore, a comparison of existing studies with the archival materials introduced in this article suggests that the Indian stage of Kazakh migration warrants reconsideration as an independent

historical phenomenon. The documents presented here both complement and refine the conclusions of previous research, shifting the emphasis from a primarily descriptive account of migratory experiences to an analysis of the mechanisms of colonial governance and international humanitarian practices in the first half of the twentieth century.

The archival sources in question are only now becoming widely accessible, allowing for a more precise reconstruction of the chronology and specific details of events. Historiographical analysis highlights the complexity of the situation, as the migrants were situated simultaneously at the intersection of Indo-Chinese interactions and the broader geopolitical upheavals of the period.

The archival materials of the Government of British India uncovered in this study enable a reevaluation of the Kazakh refugees' stay in India between 1940 and 1954. Unlike several previously published works, which examined this episode mainly through memoirs and oral histories, the documents presented here reveal the institutionalized and centralized nature of British colonial policy toward the Kazakh migrants.

A comparison of the archival data with the conclusions of foreign scholars, in particular M. Thampi, demonstrates that the settlement of the Kazakhs in Bhopal was not solely a humanitarian initiative of the local authorities. On the contrary, it was the result of coordinated decisions between the central government of British India and the princely states, accompanied by clearly regulated financial and administrative mechanisms.

The allocation of targeted loans (takkavi), the supervision of their administration, and the detailed accounting of expenditures indicate the colonial administration's intention to integrate the refugees into a controlled economic system.

Of particular interest is the role of the «Kazaks Committee» which served as a coordinating body across various levels of authority. Archival documents indicate that the committee's functions extended beyond advisory capacities; it actively developed practical measures for the relocation, settlement, and support of Kazakh refugees. Consequently, it can be regarded as a significant component of colonial governance in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

Financial data reflecting expenditures on camp maintenance and the resettlement to Bhopal complement the picture presented in memoir sources and make it possible to quantitatively assess the scale of the Government of India's involvement in addressing the issue. In this context, the Kazakh migration appears not as a local episode, but as part of broader migration and diplomatic processes in Asia during the Second World War and the postwar period.

Thus, the comparison of archival materials with the existing historiography leads to the conclusion that the experience of settling Kazakh refugees in India combined humanitarian motivations with the pragmatics of colonial administration.

This episode occupies a significant place in the history of the Kazakh diaspora and offers valuable insights into international humanitarian practices in the first half of the twentieth century.

Research results

Unauthorized Crossing of Kazakhs from Tibet into India and the Question of Compensation. Archival documents of the Ministry of External Affairs indicate that in 1942 several Kazakh groups crossed the border into India from Tibet without official authorization. These incidents generated concern among British authorities and local merchants, particularly members of the Bhotia trading community involved in commerce in Tibet.

According to a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, several Bhotia traders became victims of robberies allegedly committed by Kazakhs, including Sher Singh, who reportedly lost property valued at approximately 12,000 rupees. Following these incidents, the Kazakhs proceeded into the territory of Kashmir, where they were disarmed. Simultaneously, the British Trade Agent stationed in Tibet abandoned his post, leaving the local merchants without protection.

The affected traders were hesitant to resume trade in Tibet during the subsequent season, as certain Kazakh groups remained in the region and the risk of renewed violence persisted. Concurrently, reports indicated that local authorities in Kashmir had confiscated portions of the Kazakhs' valuable property, giving rise to disputes over the allocation of responsibility for these losses.

In this context, the member of the Legislative Assembly B. D. Pande put forward several proposals to the Government of India:

1. To ensure the security of trade between India and Tibet, including the possibility of issuing licenses to merchants and granting permission to carry arms for self-defense.
2. To dispatch a commission to Tibet to determine the actual losses and establish responsibility for compensation, with reference to the provisions of the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1908.
3. To take active measures to secure compensation for the losses incurred by Sher Singh from the Government of Kashmir³.

These documents underscore the complexity of interactions between the refugees, local authorities, and colonial structures. They also demonstrate that the movements of the Kazakhs from Xinjiang and Tibet into India were accompanied by significant social and political consequences.

Source-critical analysis. The study examines correspondence between the Defence Department and the Political Department of the Government of India, as well as letters from the ruler of Bhopal, Hamidullah Khan. The analysis demonstrates that the issue of Kazakh refugees was addressed by the British authorities at the level of state policy, in cooperation with Indian princely rulers.

The documents open a new chapter in the history of the Kazakh diaspora and international humanitarian connections during the Second World War. The core sources consist of translated diplomatic records from the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. They include, in particular, dispatches and memoranda from the Indian Embassy in China (Nanjing, Calcutta) covering 1949-1954, as well as reports from the Political Agent in Bhopal and correspondence from the Government of British India dated January-February 1943.

All these materials are preserved in the National Archives of India, and translations of these documents have been incorporated into the text of the present study.

The sources provide information on migration routes (including descriptions of the journey through Tibet and Kashmir), expenditures related to refugee maintenance and camp operations, as well as negotiations with the Chinese side. Of particular importance are the Aide Mémoire records (memoranda) of the Embassy of India in China addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC (translations of these documents are available from archival materials).

Administrative reports were also utilized—primarily financial statements and expenditure registers, essentially accounting books reflecting the spending of the Government of India and the State of Bhopal on the maintenance of refugees.

Many of these materials are being introduced into scholarly circulation for the first time, requiring careful source criticism and analysis. At the same time, the integration of multiple types of documents allows for a detailed reconstruction of the overall situation.

Origin and route of the refugees. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the struggle for power in Xinjiang—particularly the confrontation between Sheng Shicai and Chinese Nationalist forces—triggered the retreat of Kazakh groups toward the frontiers of the region.

In the winter of 1940, a «large group» of Kazakhs crossed the desert and entered the territory of Tibet.⁴

According to reports of the Indian diplomatic service, the tribes plundered Tibetan villages but retreated under military pursuit and eventually crossed into Kashmir, where they surrendered to government troops. The refugees were initially accommodated in Muzaffarabad (Kashmir) and were later transferred to the Tarnava camp in the North-West Frontier Province of India.

According to certain estimates, the camp population numbered approximately 2,548 individuals, of whom nearly 650 - most within the first four months-died as a result of severe weather conditions and disease [Thampi, 2022: 8].

Thus, the initial size of the group appears to have been considerable-amounting to several thousand individuals - although some sources refer merely to a “large group” without providing precise numerical estimates. The migration route passed through the highlands of Tibet and the Himalayas: across the Demchok Pass, then through Kashmir and the northern districts of what later became Pakistan, and onward to central India. According to the documents, these crossings were tragic: hundreds of people perished from cold and exhaustion [Thampi, 2022: 7].

Early records indicate that between the winter of 1940 and August 1944 the Government of India spent approximately 565,683 rupees on the maintenance of this group.⁵ This amount indirectly reflects the scale of the measures undertaken to provide assistance and accommodation for the refugees (Fig. 1).

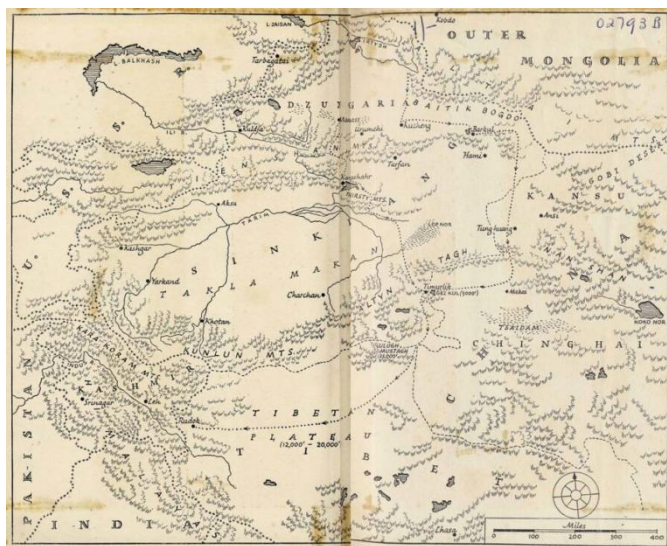


Figure 1. Route of the Refugees. Illustration from the book *Kazak Exodus*

Organization of Camps and Expenditures. After crossing into Kashmir, the surviving refugees were interned in camps located in the Hazara highlands. Initially, conditions in these camps were extremely harsh, reflecting both the sudden influx of displaced people and the limited resources available for their accommodation. Over time, however, the situation gradually improved as administrative structures became more organized and external assistance increased. Foreign volunteer organizations played an important role in alleviating the refugees' hardships. Among them were the Red Crescent League and the Kazakh Relief Committee in Abbottabad, which collected donations and provided the refugees with food, clothing, medicine, and financial assistance. In addition, the camp administration established a system of regular rations, under which refugees received daily provisions, as well as fuel and fodder for their livestock. According to official observations, the Kazakhs- led by two «pashas»-regulated internal camp affairs independently and periodically left the camp to engage in trade. In the spring of 1943, on the initiative of the British government, part of the settlers (588 persons) were transferred to the semi-autonomous princely state of Bhopal State (capital: Bhopal). In Bhopal, the princely authorities under the aegis of Hamidullah Khan organized a separate camp. A Refugee Assistance Committee (Bhopal State Kazak Committee) was established, and monthly allowances were introduced for each individual and their livestock (for a period of one year). Efforts to resettle the Kazakhs on agricultural lands and integrate them into farming activities did not yield the anticipated outcomes. Many instead reverted to their traditional occupations,

including handicrafts such as shoemaking, textile production, and the making of souvenirs as well as trade [Thampi, 2022: 7].

Financing of the camps. The financing of the camps was carried out from the budget of the Government of India. Only by the autumn of 1944 did China agree to assume further responsibility for maintaining the refugees, recognizing them as its citizens. Until August 1944, all refugee-related expenses were covered by India, and by that time the total amount had reached 565,683 rupees. Among the major expenditures were: Compensation to the Kashmir authorities for maintenance costs – 114,708 rupees; Compensation to Sher Singh (owner of confiscated property) – 8,000 rupees; Expenses for maintaining the Tarnava camp and transportation to Bhopal – 303,975 rupees; Donation to the Red Crescent of Lahore – 2,000 rupees; Advance payment to the Bhopal government – 15,000 rupees; Future allowances (allocated for Bhopal) – 122,000 rupees (Fig. 2).

Item	Amount (Rupees)
(1) Payment to Kashmir Government.	Rs.1,14,708.
(2) Payment to Sher Singh a British Indian subject, (compensated on account of property looted from him by the bands in Tibet)	8,000.
(3) Cost of Tarnava camp in the N.W.F.P. plus transport of the Exas to Bhopal.	3,03,975.
(4) Payment to the Society, Lahore.	2,000.
(5) Advance payment to the Bhopal State.	15,000.
(6) Advances and maintenance allowances.	1,22,000.
Total:	5,65,683.

Figure 2. Embassy of India in China (1952). Detailed Information on Expenditures Mentioned in the Aide-Mémoire.

Table 1. Financial Expenditures (Amounts in Rupees) by Year and Institution

Year	Recipient / Purpose	Amount (Rupees)
1944	Government of Kashmir	114 708
1944	Sher Singh (compensation for property)	8 000
1944	Tarnava Camp (NWFP) and transportation	303 975
1944	Red Crescent, Lahore	2 000
1944	Bhopal State (advancepayment)	15 000
1944	Bhopal (maintenanceallowance)	122 000
Total		565 683
1947	Bhopal Camp (Jan–June)	7 777
1947	Bhopal Camp (July–Sept.)	1 666

Settlement of the Kazakhs in India. Archival materials preserve correspondence related to the approval of the Central India Agency No. 9233-W dated 25 October 1943. The document indicates that the Kazakh refugees expressed their intention to resettle in Taxila. A nominal list of these

individuals was appended to the letter (Fig. 3), allowing for an assessment of their numerical composition and demographic distribution.

In this context, an urgent request was submitted to ascertain whether the government of the princely state of Bhopal was prepared to receive the specified group of refugees⁷

The figure shows two pages of a handwritten list. The left page is a table with columns: 'Name of Head, Name of member, Section of the Applicant, Amount asked, Total, Remarks'. The right page is a continuation of the same table. The list includes names such as Dhanraj, Dhan Bai, Sultan, and others, with corresponding family details and amounts.

Figure 3. List of Kazakhs Who Submitted Applications for Relocation to the State of Bhopal

The correspondence also included a copy of Letter No. BT.11-27-637 dated 23 October 1943, sent by the Chief Accounts Officer of Central Revenues (New Delhi) to the Treasurer in Indore for onward transmission to the Government of Bhopal (Fig. 4).

The presence of a nominal list indicates a high degree of administrative control over the movement of Kazakh refugees and reflects the practice of detailed registration of migrants within the framework of the colonial bureaucratic system.

The figure shows a handwritten list titled 'List of Kazaks who have applied for provision of journey expenses to proceed to Bhopal State.' The list includes names of heads of families and the number of family members (Male, Female, Child, Total). The list includes names such as Mohd. Idris, Kesh Bai, Saidam, and others, with corresponding family details and totals.

Name of the Head of the Family	No. of family members			Total
	Male	Female	Child	
1. Mohd. Idris	1	1	4	6
2. Kesh Bai	2	1	1	4
3. Saidam	1	1	1	3
4. Saidam	1	1	1	3
5. Raqmah	1	1	1	3
6. Qairanfor	1	1	1	3
7. Saidam Bahar	1	1	1	3
8. Qans Bai	1	1	1	3
9. Ismail Jan	1	1	1	3
10. Ghak Bahari	1	1	1	3
11. Atall Bai	1	1	1	3
12. Toqan	1	1	1	3
13. Aifatam	1	1	1	3
14. Marigan	1	1	1	3
15. Aman	1	1	1	3
Total	22	15	6	43

Figure 4. List of Kazakhs Who Applied for Travel Expense Assistance for Relocation to the State of Bhopal

Table 2. List of Kazakhs Who Applied for Travel Expense Assistance for Relocation to the State of Bhopal

No.	Name of Head of Family	Males	Females	Children	Total
1	Mohd. Idris	1	1	4	6
2	KeshBoi	3	2	1	6
3	Saidman	2	1	1	4
4	Saudilan	2	1	-	3
5	Rakhshad	1	1	2	4
6	Kairnfor	1	1	-	2
7	Babas Jabbar	1	2	-	3
8	Kans Bai	1	3	-	4
9	Tazul Jan	2	1	-	3
10	Sheikh Babpai	1	2	-	3
11	Atull Bad.	3	1	-	4
12	Togtan	3	1	-	4
13	Alfatan	1	1	1	3
14	Narigan	2	1	-	3
15	Adam	1	-	1	2

Total: Males – 28, Females – 15, Children – 6, Grand Total – 49.

Establishment of the «Kazaks Committee». A significant development in the history of the Kazakh refugees' stay in India was the creation of a specialized administrative mechanism to manage their settlement. According to an order dated 8 January 1943, the Government of India established a special Kazaks Committee under the Government of India to address the issue of settling Kazakhs within the country (Bhopal State Kazak Committee).⁸ (Fig. 5)

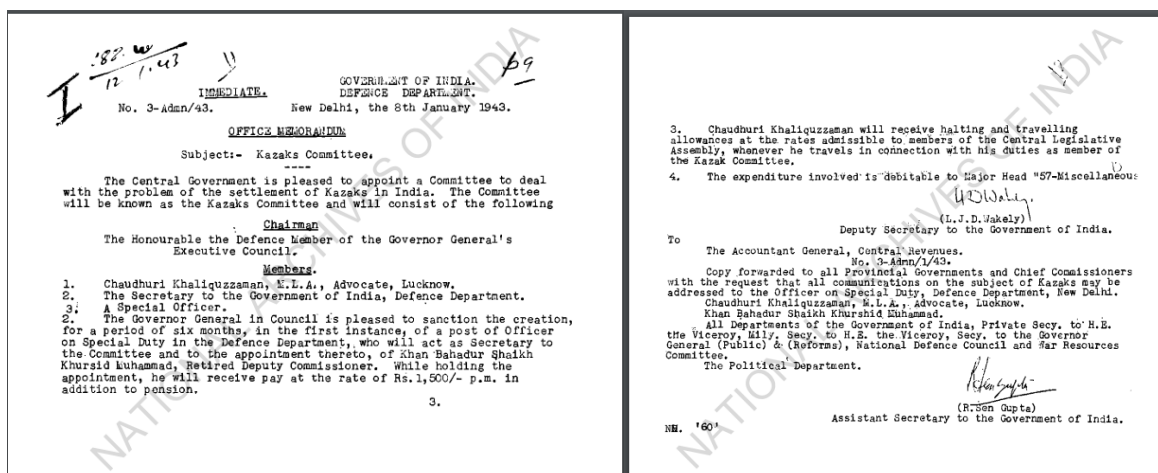


Figure 5. Memorandum of the Government of India on the Establishment of the Kazaks Committee. Order dated 8 January 1943.

The document specifies that the Committee was to be chaired by the Honourable Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council responsible for Defence, highlighting the initiative's high level of official endorsement. The Committee's composition included:

Chaudhry Khaliqzaman, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Lucknow and advocate;
The Secretary to the Government of India, Defence Department;

Sheikh Khurshid Muhammad, Khan Bahadur, former Deputy Commissioner of Punjab, appointed as Secretary of the Committee and designated Special Officer.

From the letter of Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. Falconer, Political Agent in Bhopal, it follows that the Committee's task was "to resolve the problem of the settlement of the Kazakhs in India" and to formulate recommendations for the Government.

The Committee's expenditures were allocated from a designated head of the state budget, and its members were provided with travel allowances in accordance with the regulations established by the Central Legislative Assembly.

Additional confirmation of the institutional nature of governance is provided by the decision to centralize all correspondence on the Kazakh question through the Secretary of the Committee, as well as the circulation of copies of the order to various departments and provincial governments.

The analysis of archival sources indicates that the Indian authorities treated the presence of the Kazakh refugees not merely as a temporary humanitarian concern, but as a systematically managed process necessitating an institutional framework, dedicated budgetary provisions and coordination across multiple levels of the colonial administration. The establishment of the Committee and the allocation of targeted funds indicate a transition from emergency response measures to a systematic policy of adaptation and economic organization of the Kazakh refugees.

Administrative coordination and diplomatic correspondence. Letter No. F.203-W/42 of 6 January 1943 from the Political Department, together with related documents from the Defence Department, reveals the mechanism of interaction between the British authorities and the Indian princely states.

In particular, Khan Bahadur Khurshid Muhammad was granted the right to conduct direct correspondence with the governments of the states of Bhopal and Hyderabad, on the condition that copies of all letters be forwarded to the British Residents in these princely states. This indicates strict colonial control even in humanitarian matters⁹.

Consequently, the resettlement of the Kazakh refugees was understood not as a spontaneous occurrence, but as a structured state-managed process necessitating coordination across multiple levels of authority.

The Bhopal initiative. Of particular interest is the letter of 2 January 1943 from the Ruler of Bhopal, Hamidullah Khan, addressed to a member of the Defence Department of India. In this letter, the prince expressed his willingness to receive a portion of the Kazakh settlers:

«...the Bhopal State would be interested in the proposal, as we possess extensive tracts of land suitable for colonization purposes».

He requested that the Government provide information regarding the expected number of families and the specifics of the resettlement plan. This demonstrates that the Indian authorities viewed the relocation of the Kazakh refugees not merely as a humanitarian undertaking, but also as a strategic opportunity to utilize and develop local land resources¹⁰.

The practical phase: preparation for resettlement. Khurshid Muhammad informed the Revenue Minister of Bhopal, Raja Gadhu (Udhu) Narain, about the forthcoming plans.

According to the document:

From the Kazakh camp in the North-West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.), approximately a dozen representatives were to be selected for an ознакомительная (inspection) visit to Bhopal;

They would be shown the lands designated for settlement, after which their consent to relocate would be determined;

The total number of families amounted to around 200;

It was necessary to identify plots “in upland or hilly areas with a cool climate and pastures for livestock.”

Khurshid Muhammad further noted, «The Kazakhs are a nomadic people, unfamiliar with agriculture, but very intelligent and capable of learning». He proposed allocating approximately 12½ acres of irrigated land to each household (or twice as much in the case of non-irrigated land), taking into account the experience of the Punjab canal colonies¹¹.

This proposal illustrates an effort to adapt established colonial agrarian models to the particular socio-economic characteristics of the Kazakh migrants, integrating elements of their pastoral traditions with a framework of planned agricultural settlement.

In this way, the British administration was formulating a concrete plan for sedentary resettlement, incorporating detailed considerations of land allocation, climatic conditions, and the organization of household economies.

Organization of the visit of the kazakh delegation. On 29 January 1943, the Officer on Special Duty notified the Revenue Minister of Bhopal regarding his forthcoming travel plans:

«I shall leave Delhi with a party of about a dozen Kazakhs by the Peshawar Express on the evening of 15 February and arrive in Bhopal on 16 February... I propose to stay for three days for the inspection of the sites».

This correspondence suggests that the relocation initiative had progressed beyond preliminary discussions and entered an operational phase, with Kazakh representatives actively participating in the assessment of proposed settlement areas.¹²

The visit was conceived as a pivotal stage in the resettlement program, providing the Kazakh delegates with firsthand exposure to the prospective settlement sites.

In subsequent letters (30 January and 8 February 1943), the details of the visit were discussed further, and it was clarified that among the settlers there were also craftsmen: «felt-makers, shoemakers, tanners, carpenters, and blacksmiths». This indicates that the project envisaged not only agricultural settlements but also the establishment of artisan communities, suggesting a more diversified and economically sustainable model of resettlement¹³.

Issues of bilateral settlement and financial responsibility. Beginning in the summer of 1944, the Chinese authorities became actively involved in the negotiations. Following a visit to Bhopal, the Consul General of the Republic of China in Calcutta confirmed that the Kazakhs were recognized as Chinese citizens and indicated the government's willingness to assume responsibility for their maintenance from that point onward [Thampi, 2022: 19].

India, however, insisted that it had not been informed in advance and had already incurred substantial expenses. This disagreement led to prolonged diplomatic correspondence. By 1950, the Government of India addressed Beijing with a «note of compensation» demanding reimbursement of 565,683 rupees for expenses incurred prior to 1944.

In 1951, India reiterated its claim for reimbursement of the outstanding sum, further noting that approximately 100 Kazakh refugees remained in the Indian camp. These individuals were to be repatriated to China by sea, as the overland route was no longer viable.

Thus, what had initially been framed as a humanitarian and administrative issue gradually evolved into a matter of interstate financial claims and diplomatic negotiation, reflecting the broader geopolitical transformations of the post-war period¹⁴.

Consequently, a diplomatic dispute emerged: India sought reimbursement for the expenses incurred on the grounds of civil responsibility, whereas China formally recognized the Kazakhs as its nationals and signaled its willingness to assume responsibility for their upkeep. While the extant sources do not indicate that either government formally renounced its position, the intensity of the disagreement waned in the aftermath of the Second World War and the ensuing shifts in political authority.

Archival correspondence indicates that the negotiations did not lead to a prompt settlement, and India's financial claims remained unresolved for nearly a decade. Nevertheless, in 1952 the Indian side submitted a detailed account of all expenditures, demonstrating that every item of expense had been carefully recorded and documented.

Repatriation and its consequences. After 1947, the issue of the refugees' subsequent fate assumed particular urgency. The Government of India formally contacted the Chinese authorities regarding the repatriation of the remaining Kazakhs by sea. However, the broader geopolitical context had shifted markedly: China was engulfed in civil war, while both India and the newly created state of Pakistan were undergoing significant political and administrative restructuring in the aftermath of Partition.

The surviving Kazakhs were located primarily in Bhopal and partly in territories that had passed to Pakistan. In practice, the repatriation process did not result in their return to China or the Soviet Union. Instead, following the wave of emigration in 1952, the majority of the Kazakhs relocated to Turkey, where the Turkish government accepted hundreds of Kazakh refugees from India.

In this context, «repatriation» did not denote a return to the refugees' former country of citizenship, but rather their resettlement in third countries. This usage reflects both the broader instability of postwar Eurasia and the limited practicality of restoring prewar national affiliations.

According to contemporary sources, during the period of repatriation both India and China were guided to a considerable extent by their respective political interests. The People's Republic of China initially proposed sending the Kazakhs back to Xinjiang as a symbolic demonstration of consolidating its authority. However, logistical difficulties and subsequent political developments - including the establishment of the PRC and the partition of India - rendered large-scale return impracticable.

By 1948, small groups of Kazakh refugees had returned to China, reportedly to take part in military operations against insurgent forces; however, the majority remained outside the territory of the newly established Chinese state.

This historical episode demonstrates that in the postwar period the return of refugees often occurred without the direct or fully coordinated consent of the states of their formal citizenship and formed part of broader migration processes, including onward resettlement to third countries such as Turkey.

Conclusion

The migrations of Kazakh refugees to India between 1940 and 1954 constitute a unique historical case at the crossroads of Central and South Asia. These developments illustrate how military and political upheavals along China's frontiers produced a refugee crisis among nomadic

populations, necessitating international cooperation that encompassed both Indo-Chinese diplomatic engagement and the involvement of local administrative authorities.

The episode highlighted the complex issues of citizenship and the obligations of states toward their nationals abroad, thereby establishing a significant precedent for examining the humanitarian dimensions of bilateral relations in the region.

These events had a long-term impact on international relations in Asia. Through the prism of the fate of the Kazakh refugee-nomads, broader patterns of population movement became visible - including their migration to Turkey - confirming that issues of nomadic displacement and refugees can intertwine with foreign policy and security concerns.

They illustrate that migration carries significance beyond immediate humanitarian concerns, shaping patterns of interstate cooperation, informing diplomatic interactions, and influencing the understanding of territorial sovereignty amid shifting geopolitical conditions.

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ШЫҢЖАҢНАН ҮНДІСТАНҒА ҚАЗАҚТАРДЫҢ ҚОНЫС АУДАРУЫ: АРХИВТІК ДЕРЕКТЕР НЕГІЗІНДЕ (1940–1954 ЖЖ.)

Аңдатпа. 1930 жылдары Шығыс Түркістаннан қазақтардың шекаралас өңірлерге және одан тыс аймақтарға қоныс аударуы басталды. Ең күрделі бағыттардың бірі Алтай арқылы (Баркөлден) өтіп, кейін мигранттардың Түркияға қоныстануымен жалғасты. Қоныс аударушылар Тибет пен Гималайды еңсеріп, ауыр табиғи жағдайлар мен эпидемияларды бастан өткеріп, 1941 жылға қарай шамамен 3000-дай адам Үндістанға (Бхопал) жетті. Бұл үдеріс дереккөздердің шектеулі болуына байланысты жеткілікті зерттелмеген, сондықтан көші-қонның себептерін, барысын және салдарын талдау қиындық тудырады. Қазақтардың Үндістанда шамамен он жыл өмір сүруі олардың бейімделуі тұрғысынан қосымша зерттеуді қажет етеді. Зерттеудің жаңалығы Британ Үндістанының бұрын пайдаланылмаған архив материалдарын ғылыми айналымға енгізу. Зерттеудің міндеті – Шығыс Түркістаннан Үндістанға қоныс аударған қазақ босқындарының Тибет пен Гималай арқылы өту жолдарын, олардың жағдайларын, Үндістан Үкіметінің қабылдауы, қабылданған шешімдер мен шығындарын архив құжаттары негізінде көрсету. Зерттеудің мақсаты – 1930–1940-жылдары Шығыс Түркістаннан қазақтардың қоныс аударуының себептерін, барысын және салдарын, сондай-ақ олардың Үндістандағы өмір сүру ерекшеліктерін талдау. Мақала архивтік құжаттарға негізделіп, 1940–1954 жылдары Синьцзяннан Үндістанға қоныс аударған қазақ босқындарының тарихына арналған. Британ Үндістаны үкіметінің 1943 жылғы материалдары, мемлекеттік ведомстволар мен аймақтық әкімшіліктердің хат алмасулары ғылыми айналымға енгізіледі. «Қазақтар комитетінің» қызметі, лагерьлерді ұйымдастыру, қаржыландыру, дипломатиялық даулар және репатриация мәселелері қарастырылады. Талдау дипломатиялық құжаттар мен тарихнамалық шолумен толықтырылған. Қорытындыда бұл оқиғалардың Қазақстан тарихы мен Азиядағы халықаралық қатынастар үшін маңызы, сондай-ақ мәжбүрлі көші-қон жағдайындағы бірегейлік пен әлеуметтік құрылымдардың сақталуы айқындалады.

Алғыс. Мақалада «Архив-2025» мемлекеттік жобасы аясында Үндістан Ұлттық архивінен анықталған, әлі ғылыми айналымға түспеген тың құжаттар қолданылды. Авторлар мақаланы жазу барысында архив құжаттарын ұсынған Қолжазбалар және сирек кітаптар ұлттық орталығына және Қазақстан Республикасының Ұлттық архивіне алғыс білдіреді.

Кілт сөздер: Қазақстан, қазақ босқындарының үдере көшуі, Шыңжаң, Үндістан, Бхопал, «Қазақтар комитеті», тарих, дипломатия, халықаралық қатынастар, репатриация.

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ПЕРЕСЕЛЕНИЕ КАЗАХОВ ИЗ СИНЬЦЗЯНА В ИНДИЮ: ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ АРХИВНЫХ ИСТОЧНИКОВ (1940–1954 ГГ.)

Аннотация. В 1930-е годы начался исход части казахов Восточного Туркестана в сопредельные регионы Китая и за его пределы. Один из наиболее сложных маршрутов пролегал через Алтай (из Баркола) с последующим переселением части мигрантов в Турцию. Переселенцы преодолели Тибет и Гималаи, пережили тяжелые природные условия и эпидемии; к 1941 году около 3000 человек достигли Индии (Бхопал). Данный процесс остается

малоизученным вследствие ограниченности источников, что затрудняет анализ причин, условий и последствий миграции. Проживание казахов в Индии в течение около десяти лет требует дальнейшего изучения. Новизна исследования заключается во введении в научный оборот ранее неиспользованных архивных материалов Британской Индии и комплексном анализе маршрутов, условий и механизмов переселения казахских беженцев. Задачей исследования является реконструкция маршрутов переселения казахских беженцев из Восточного Туркестана в Индию и анализ условий их миграции через Тибет и Гималаи. Целью исследования является анализ причин, хода и последствий переселения казахов из Восточного Туркестана в 1930-1940-е годы, включая маршруты миграции и особенности их проживания в Индии. Статья основана на архивных документах и посвящена откочевке казахских беженцев из Синьцзяна в Индию в 1940-1954 гг. В научный оборот вводятся материалы правительства Британской Индии (1943 г.), включая переписку государственных ведомств и региональных администраций. Рассматривается деятельность «Комитета по казахам», вопросы организации лагерей, финансирования, дипломатических споров и репатриации. Анализ дополнен дипломатическими документами и историографическим обзором. Выводы подчеркивают значимость этих событий для истории Казахстана и международных отношений в Азии, а также их роль как примера сохранения идентичности в условиях вынужденной миграции.

Благодарность. В статье использованы ранее не введенные в научный оборот архивные документы, выявленные в Национальном архиве Индии в рамках государственного проекта «Архив-2025». Авторы выражают благодарность Национальному центру рукописей и редких книг, Национальному архиву Республики Казахстан за предоставленные архивные материалы и содействие в подготовке статьи

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, откочевки казахских беженцев, Синьцзян, Индия, Бхопал, «Комитет по казахам», история, дипломатия, международные отношения, репатриация

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