

SCTCMG 2019
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural
Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»**

**MAIN STAGES OF CHECHEN NATIONALITY
REHABILITATION AND ITS REPATRIATION**

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Abstract

The article deals with government affairs on gradual rehabilitation and repatriation of Chechen nationality and other repressed people after Stalin's death. It has been emphasized that in 1954-1955 a variety of regulatory acts were passed, which mitigated the legal status of special settlers. The 20th Communist Party Congress was an important event for Chechen nationality rehabilitation whose landmark decrees gave an opportunity for the restitution of sovereignty of the repressed people. The authors pay special attention to Chechen-Ingush nationality repatriation onto the territory of Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Objective and subjective hardships took place in this process. The situation in the renovated Chechen-Ingush Republic became complex in all respects. The government overlooked that no barriers – bureaucratic or other ones would stop unauthorized return to the Motherland of a great number of people. The authorities of Grozny were not ready to both mass unauthorized and authorized return of people. Besides, there was no explanatory work among people living in former Chechen cities and rural communities. People's repatriation encountered the real situation – their villages and houses were occupied by other people, who themselves lived there unwillingly. Authorized repatriation of those people, which could ease the situation, was late due to unauthorized return of a great number of Chechen people. It caused conflicts. Delay in their solution threatened with serious escalation of the conflict. Small nationalistic incidents under the passive eye of authorities resulted in a real inter-ethnic clash between Chechen, Ingush and Russian nationalities in Grozny in August of 1958.

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Keywords: Chechen, Soviet state, deportation, rehabilitation, repatriation.



1. Introduction

Although, the problem of the Chechen nationality has been actively discussed recently by historians, lawyers, political experts, psychologists, many of its sides have not been studied yet. One of the problems is Chechen nationality rehabilitation and its national statehood restitution.

This theme is acute as any aspect of deportation remains politically loaded and may be used as an argument by different political forces, including extremely radical ones.

2. Problem Statement

The problems of deportation and further rehabilitation of repressed people, including the Chechen one, and restitution of their national statehood has been widely studied in national works. These are works by Bugaj and Gonov (1998), Bugaev and Ivanov (2013), Ibragimov and Ibragimov (2010), Osmaev (2018), Krinko and Cherkasov (2014) and others. This theme has also been studied by foreign authors, such as Conquest (1960), Dunlop (2001), Nekrich (1978), Avtorkhanov (1990). But, the process of autonomy restitution of Chechen and Ingush nationalities and their repatriation needs further scientific consideration.

3. Research Questions

The object of research is national politics of the Soviet State.

The subject of the study is the process of rehabilitation of the repressed Chechen nationality and its repatriation.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is analysis of milestones in Chechens political rehabilitation.

5. Research Methods

Principles of historicism, scientific objectivity and systematicity are the methodology and research methods of the study. The study has used an inter-disciplinary approach which conditioned the necessity of the historical, sociological and politological analysis of the issue with application of the general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, comparativity, description and others.

6. Findings

The Chechens are the most numerous indigenous people of the North Caucasus which has had a long mostly tragical way to the formation and development of its national statehood in the 20th century. In November 1920 at the congress of Terek nationalities the Mountain Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed, which included six areas, together with Chechen National District. On 30 November, 1922 Chechen National District was removed from the Mountain Autonomous Republic and reorganized into Chechen Autonomous Area. On 15 January, 1934 Ingush Autonomous Area was integrated to it and it became Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Area. On 5 December, 1936 the area was reorganized into the

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. During this period the republic was successfully industrialized, culture, science, education, national political and intellectual elites were formed. But progressive development of the republic was interrupted on 23 February, 1944 by forced deportation of the whole Ingush and Chechen nationalities to Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. For long 13 years, belied and exiled Chechens have waited for justice restoration and hoped to return home. At first this hope was connected with the end of the war, but it was not destined to come true. Vice versa, Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed on 26 November, 1948 about strengthening of the conditions of the special settlement seemed to put the final nail into the coffin of this hope. It ran that the Chechen and the Ingoosh had been deported forever.

Expectations for changes in their tragic destiny and possibility to return to the historical Motherland the Chechens connected with the death of Stalin. In prayers, religious namaz-songs they asked for the death of the Leader of Nations, who they blamed for their exile.

Stalin's death in March 1953, changes in the political situation caused by acute struggle for power among his team-mates, were a push for changes in the position of all repressed nationalities.

The Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR released on 27 March, 1953 "About amnesty", L. Beria's arrest, who the Chechens considered the main executor of the repressive politics, (Bugaev & Ivanov, 2013) strengthened the hope – reresoration of justice. Indeed, during 1954-1955 several Decrees of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR were released where the regime for "special settlers" was moderated. Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on 5 July, 1954 "Expunging of constraints in legal state of the special settlers" was especially important as well as cancellation of the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 26 November 1948 "Criminal liability for escape from compulsory and permanent settlements for individuals disposed into the distant areas of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic war". According to these decrees registered special settlers involved in socially useful work were allowed to live within the borders of a region, krai, and republic. They could go on business trips to any part of the country on usual terms, having informed about it a special commandant's office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Special settlers had to register in offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs not every month but once a year in situ of their actual residence. The children of all special settlers were expunged and hereafter the children were not to be specially registered. Teenagers older 16 were allowed to enter establishments of higher education in any part of the country. The Chechen and Ingush were given paports and since 1955 they were allowed to join the Soviet Army.

Early in November 1954 Kazakhstan Ministry of Internal Affairs reported to its authority in Moscow that on 1 November, 1954 children of special settlers registered in agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, born after 31 December, 1937 in number of 295023 people were diregistered from special settlements which was announced to their parents. Besides 1437 children of special settlers who were older 16 and studied in educational establishments were diregistered (Kozlov & Petukevich, 2011). For the authorities in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia special settlement regime remission caused additional troubles. They lost control of movement of special settlers within the republic. The authority of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Internal Affairs writes to Moscow that after the decree on "Expunging of constraints in legal state of the special settlers" the special settlers started moving actively within the republic, especially those from the North Caucasus, who aim to leave the north areas and come to the south areas of the republic, as well as leave the country and come to the cities and industrial centers (Kozlov, 2002). Only for a couple of months

more than 1000 people came from Karagandinsk region to Karagandinsk, and 600 people moved into the southern regions of Kazakhstan. During this period more than 1000 special settlers came to Alma-Ata. Law enforcement officials reported that Chechen special settlers in the capital of Kazakhstan sent letters to their relatives from other regions inviting them to live in Alma-Ata region (Kozlov & Petukevich, 2011).

Due to changes in regulations the Chechen tried to legally and illegally return to their native land. “Now you can go even to the Caucasus. Before the regime was strict and now you can go everywhere, you can secretly leave for the Caucasus and live there and return at the end of the year to register” – those were speculations of one of the Chechen special settlers (Kozlov & Petukevich, 2011). In November 1954 there appeared first reports that some Chechens and Ingush “in pretence of temporary departure into one of the regions in Kazakh S.S.R return to the former places of residence where they had been exiled from” (The State Archive of the Russian Federation, 1957).

In February 1956 the 20th Communist Party Congress was held where First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee N.S. Khrushchev made his famous report “The personality cult and its consequences”, where he sharply criticized the politics of repressions made by Stalin.

On 16 July, 1956 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR eliminated restrictions of special settlements for the Ingush, the Karachai, the Chechen and their families who were sent into exile during the Great Patriotic War.

On 24 November 1956 CPSU Central Committee passed a decree “On restitution of national autonomy for Kalmyk, Karachai, Balkar, Chechen and Ingush nationalities”. In this historical document referring to the decrees of the 20th Communist Party Congress it was stated that “... mass exile of the whole people was neither caused by the necessity nor dictated by war but was one of the manifestations of the personality cult non-characteristic for Marxism-Leninism, rude violation of main principles of national politics of our party” (Artizov, Kobelkova, & Sergeev, 2003, p. 71). And finally, on 9 January, 1957 following the decrees of central party bodies, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a Decree “On restitution of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR in the RSFSR”. The government agencies now had the hardest organizational task to repatriate repressed nationalities to the territories of restituted and reorganized republic.

Early in February 1957 in Moscow the sixth session of Supreme Soviet of the USSR took place (the fourth assembling), which according to the number of people determined certain dates for their organized repatriation. The dates for the Chechen-Ingush ASSR restitution were long – 1957–1960.

The situation in the restituted republic, especially at the beginning of mass repatriation of the native population was very difficult. First of all, it was possible “...only after deportation of 200 thousand people to other regions of the country. These people were brought into the regions of the former Chechen-Ingush ASSR in organised manner from different areas of the RSFSR and other republics” (Krinko & Cherkasov, 2014, p. 50). The government overlooked that no barriers – bureaucratic or other ones would stop unauthorized return of a great number of people to the Motherland. The authorities of Grozny were not ready to both mass unauthorized and authorized returns of people. Besides, there was no explanatory work among people, who due to some tragical events were living in former Chechen cities and rural communities. There were not many people in Grozny region welcoming historical decrees of the 20th Communist Party Congress and further actions on overcoming the consequences of Stalin personality cult, in particular,

repatriation of the Chechen and Ingush to their Motherland. Making use of this favourable situation, manipulating administrative and ideological factors, provoking written requests and other notes from the population to superior soviet party organs the authority of the former Grozny Republic headed by first secretary of regional committee of CPSU A.I. Yakovlev pressed ill concern about the Chechen-Ingush nationalities repatriation. The Head of the Department of the Committee for State Security in Grozny region V. Shmoilov acted together with them.

One of the leaders of Grozny region Rusin (2005) in his memoirs about this difficult time for the Chechen and Ingush wrote: “From the first minute, as they stepped onto their native land, they had problems. Nothing had been done in the republic for the returning people. Attitude to them was unfriendly” (p.22).

It is characteristic that the population which had lived for a long time together with the Chechen and Ingush on the territory of the restituted republic, welcomed the decrees of the state on repatriation of the excited nationalities to the native land. People in detachments of Shelkovsk, Naursk and Kargalinsk regions which had never been in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR tried to ease the life of repatriated people by kindness and care. “We meet you as brethren, – addressed the returning Chechens to the Kurd’ukovskaya detachment in Shelkovsk region the collective farmer F.M. Abidin. – Let’s live and work together achieving new success for the sake of our Motherland”. In Nazranovsk region farmers – Ossetians, Ingush, Avars – set up a collective farm together and elected their chairman a participant of the Great Patriotic War, an Ingush Dzortov M. (The State Archive of the Russian Federation, 1957).

First groups of Chechens and Ingoosh were small 10-15 people who encountered hostile attitude. Especially unfriendly were people who lived on their land and in their houses. The returned people were not registered, were not employed but that did not stop them.

Here a question arises: what factors conditioned such a sharp ethnic opposition in the Chechen-Ingush Republic? This opposition can not be explained only by irrational, psycho-emotional reasons based only on ethnic dislike, psychological incompatibility, different forms of psychosis, social-political prejudice, stereotypes and so on. Kozlov was right considering insufficient “explanations that the problem is in “bad character” and inborn aggression” of Nakh people or “Islam grounds of their informal leaders, as some Russian nationalists tend to think” (Kozlov, 2002, p. 39). The reasons here are more varied, and as we think, lay mainly in organizational mistakes of central and local authorities when fulfilling repatriation.

If it has been planned in decrees to repatriate the Chechens and Ingush into the restituted republic during four years, in reality this process went out of authorities’ control and became chaotic. The Chechens sold their houses, property in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia and returned in masses to their Motherland. They did not want to wait for four years. Besides they were afraid that the decree would be changed. It was planned to return 17 thousand of families into the Chechen-Ingush Republic in 1957. In reality, by 1 September 1957 twice as many people had returned – 34635 families (136444 people) (The State Archive of the Russian Federation, 1957). In the Act of the Bureau of Chechen-Ingush Regional Committee CPSU on 15.06.1957 it was self-critically stated that free flow permitted in migration, fanatical striving of most Chechens and Ingush return only to their former residence and capture their former houses and lands, resulted in great accumulation of people in some regions of the Republic..., which disorganized social order

in these districts, increased deceases and criminality (Russia's government-owned archive of politico-social history).

Natural striving of people to return to their native villages, houses encountered the reality – their villages and houses had been occupied by other people who themselves lived there unwillingly. Authorized repatriation of those people, which could ease the situation, was late due to unauthorized return of a great number of Chechen people. It caused conflicts. Delay in their solution threatened with serious escalation of the conflict.

As it was noted at the sixth Plenary Session of CI RC CPSU in August 1957 after the restituting the republic, the local authorities started repatriating the people without having done sufficient ideological and political work among the local population. In his speech at the Plenary Session the Chairman of Organizational Committee in CIASSR M.G. Gairbekov noted: "Practical fulfillment of this historical event should have been started from wide explanation to the population of the importance of the decree of CK CPSU and the Law issued by the sixth session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, lead people to deep understanding of these decrees. It should have been done, because, as we know, for a long time after the Chechen and Ingush had been repatriated, there was unwanted activity on discrediting the Chechen-Ingush people". It resulted in the fact that the authority of the Grozny region were afraid to publish in local mass media the reports by Gorkin and Zimin about the restitution of Chechen-Ingush ASSR, made at the sessions of Supreme Soviets of the USSR and RSFSR. Studying the archives creates an impression that the authorities of Grozny republic in the names of the secretaries of regional committee Yakovlev, Sajko, Fomenko and others sabotaged the decrees about the restitution of CIASSR, considering this an affair of the Organizing Committee in CIASSR. Nobody of the authorities met these returning Chechens and Ingush. At the plenary meeting M.G. Gairbekov reproached them that "... daily several trains with people came, but they had not found time to come to the station and meet people, say a few words of welcome, congratulate them on their repatriation" (RDASPH). party officials of Grozny region reacted nervously to critics from citizens and community for the mistakes in Chechen-Ingush repatriation and tried to rehabilitate their actions. Their reaction to the letter by a famous writer A. E. Kosterin to the CPSU Central Committee is remarkable. The copy of this letter was spread among the Chechen-Ingush intelligence. Its content, where the author blamed the party authorities and the Organizing Committee for not having done preliminary preparation for Chechen and Ingush repatriation and making several mistakes during economical and cultural development in CIASSR reached the authorities in Grozny. A paper was sent to Moscow where the Bureau of CPSU Regional Committee reports to the CPSU Central Committee "about wrong actions of the communist Kosterin, who wrote and distributed a harmful letter which disturbed restitution of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, and libeling the authorities of the party and soviet workers", though themselves in the Decision of Bureau of CI of the CPSU Regional Committee on 15 June 1957 admitted "having made serious mistakes and drawbacks in the republic restitution" and enumerate mistakes listed by Kosterin (as cited in Kozlov & Petukevich, 2011).

Small nationalistic incidents grew into a real inter-ethnic clash between nationalities. It was promoted by the shortfall policy of local authorities, who were against restitution of Chechen-Ingush people autonomy. As it was noted by the member of the Organizing Committee in CIASSR D. Mal'sagov at the plenary session of CI CPSU Central Committee in August 1957, "Almost in all collective farms in

Kurchaloevskiy, Nozhaj-Yurtovskij, Sajasonovskij regions, in some collective farms in Shalinskij, Achkhoy-Martanovskij, Sunzhenskij, NAzranovskij regions in some cases decisions were made at the meetings of collective farmers and citizens, in other cases, collective requests were written and speeches were made with aggressive remarks against the Chechen-Ingush people blaming it in betrayal of Soviet Motherland, gangsterism, robberies and so on. It was claimed impossible to live and work together with the Chechen and Ingush, as a result 375 decisions and collective request of similar content were made". At the meeting at the collective farm named after the Red Army, of Sajasanovsk region, communists Kikharaev and Musaev made a speech where Kikharaev claimed that if the restitution of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR Republic would not be stopped they would write to UN and wrote a demand about it. Musaev demanded fight against the Chechen with a double force. At the meeting of the collective farm named after Molotov, in village Valerik, Achkhoy-Martanovskij region, communist Chuprin, besides rude blaming of the Chechen claimed: "I will burst the Chechen with dynamite".

In its turn Russian population of the republic spread anti-chechen dispositions because of the conflicts caused by dividing houses, land which early belonged to the Chechen and Ingush.

7. Conclusion

The process of the Chechen-Ingush repatriation into the restituted Chechen-Ingush republic was very difficult due to a number of objective and subjective reasons. The main reason for that was that the local authorities overlooked the fact that neither bureaucratic nor other barriers were able to hold unplanned, unregistered return to the Motherland of a great number of people. Authorities in Grozny were not ready for not only "planned" but also unauthorized mass arrival of people. Besides, there was no explanatory work among people living in former Chechen cities and rural communities. It resulted in conflicts. Delay in their solution threatened with serious escalation of the conflict. Small nationalistic incidents under the passive eye of authorities resulted in a real inter-ethnic clash between Chechen, Ingush and Russian nationalities in Grozny in August of 1958 (Ibragimov & Ibragimov, 2017).

After these events the first secretary of CI RC of the CPSU A.I. Yakovlev was dismissed with the formulation "...as being inexperienced in work with national staff" (Ibragimov & Ibragimov, 2017, p. 77). A.S. Trofimov was elected a new first secretary of Chechen-Ingush CPSU regional Committee.

Further, the process of the republic restitution and the Chechen-Ingush repatriation continued without any accidents.

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