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**DEPORTATION OF THE CHECHEN AND INGUSH PEOPLES TO**  
**KAZAKHSTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA**

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**Abstract**

One of the tragic pages in the history of the USSR is repressions of political opponents of the Bolsheviks, and ordinary citizens. The establishment of the Soviet system in 1920–1930 was inconsistent. It deviated from those slogans that were declared fundamental in building the socialist state and developing its ideology. Under the Stalinist totalitarian regime, the repressive measures such as “decossackization”, “dispossession”, deportation of certain groups of the population were implemented. It is worth noting that the status of the deported peoples changed. During the eviction, the deported peoples became a special contingent. Since 1944, the settlers had the status of special settlers, implying their rigid administrative attachment in the places of their new residence to the network of special commandant's offices. According to Art. 135 of the Constitution of the USSR, they officially retained the status of full-fledged citizens, but could not leave the place of residence. This circumstance made the "rights" of special settlers formal and declarative. In addition to special settlers, there were exiled settlers with a defeat in civil rights and those sentenced to exile. The main features of deportations were their extrajudicial nature and the movement of a huge mass of people to geographically remote regions. In the USSR, many ethnic groups of Soviet citizens were deported: Balkars, Jews, Iranians, Ingush, Kalmyks, Karachays, Koreans, Crimean Tatars, Kurds, Germans, Poles, Tajiks, Meskhitian Turks, Ukrainians, Chechens, etc.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the first half of the 1940s, the largest autonomous entity of the North Caucasus region was the Chechen-Ingush Republic, on whose territory 731.7 thousand inhabitants lived, including 387.8 thousand Chechens (52.8 %), 75 thousand Ingush (12.0 %), 205.8 thousand Russians (27.8 %), and 57 thousand other people (7.4 %) (Dyachenko, 2013).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of forced migration is one of the important topics in modern historical science, since any aspect of deportation continues to be highly politicized and is often used as arguments by various political forces. The study of deportation of the North Caucasian peoples to Kazakhstan and Central Asia needs a specific historical study.

## **3. Research Questions**

The real picture of the life of the deported Chechens and Ingush in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will make it possible to overcome false stereotypes that still exist and to consolidate the society of the post-Soviet space.

February 23 was a tragic date in the history of the Chechen and Ingush peoples. On this day in 1944, about half a million citizens of Chechen and Ingush nationalities were forcibly resettled from their historical homeland to Kazakhstan and the republics of Central Asia. As Nekrich (1978) put it, a lot of lies were told about these unfortunate peoples who were forced to pay for the false betrayal of their fellow tribesmen.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the work is to consider the issues of accommodation, legal status and adaptation of Chechens and Ingush in places of forced stay.

## **5. Research Methods**

The article uses special-historical and general scientific methods, which made it possible to present the problem of social adaptation of Chechens and Ingush in the context of political events taking place in the USSR during the mass ethnic deportation. Following the principle of historicism, the material is presented in chronological order, comparing individual periods of the life of the deported peoples on the territory of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in close connection with the policy pursued by the government towards them. The dialectical approach to the study of the problem made it possible to see many internal contradictions in the history of the Chechens and Ingush during the years of deportation. The objective criterion for studying this problem lies in historical facts and sources.

## 6. Findings

The first legal and political assessments of the issues of deportation of peoples were formulated in official documents of the USSR government. On October 14, 1943, the secret Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 1118-342 On the procedure for receiving property, livestock and agricultural products from special settlers from the North Caucasus, as well as on the conditions for partial compensation of this property in places of resettlement", according to which special settlers were allowed to take their property (clothes, small household and household equipment, grain and food) weighing up to 500 kg for a family; all dairy and productive cattle, horses, poultry, food grain, houses and agricultural buildings belonging to collective farms, collective and individual farmers were delivered on the spot. Cattle, poultry and grain received from special settlers were used to cover state obligations for deliveries of 1943. 16,000 families from the North Caucasus were distributed in the Kazakh and Kirghiz SSR, including: in the South Kazakhstan region of the Kazakh SSR – 6,000 families; in Dzhambul region – 5000 families; in Frunze region of the Kirghiz SSR – 5000 families. They were resettled by entire collective farms in the empty premises of the existing collective farms and state farms of the regions, as well as by temporary resettlement in collective farm settlements and partial accommodation in insulated tents (Isakieva, 2021).

The so-called "troikas" were created to accommodate settlers. The "troikas" obliged the leadership of the village councils to prepare free housing and ensure the possibility of settling special settlers in order to compact them to the families of collective farmers, to ensure the availability of serviceable carts and live tax, bathhouses, vosheboyka, fuel during the accommodation of special settlers.

The memorandum of M.V. Kuznetsov, Deputy People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR Chernyshev on the reception and unloading of trains with special settlers of March 21, 1944 reported that "the reception and unloading of trains with special settlers Chechens and Ingush in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been completed. As of March 21, 1944, 180 echelons with a total number of 494,456 people arrived and unloaded in the Kazakh and Kirghiz SSR, including 147 trains arrived and unloaded in the Kazakh SSR, consisting of 405,941 people; 33 trains consisting of 88,515 people arrived to the Kirghiz SSR. 1361 people died in all echelons, 1070 people were hospitalized. There were no accidents when unloading and receiving trains".

Preparatory works for the accommodation of special settlers began in mid-January 1944; by February 16, it was necessary to prepare all empty living quarters for their accommodation. In the absence of empty buildings, the problem was solved by compacting the houses of collective farmers, workers, and employees. The issue of food was acute. The norms of flour of 3380 gr and cereals of 1670 gr per month were insufficient. Collective farms could not allocate additional food, as a result of which the special settlers starved and died of edema from hunger. Archival sources contain information that "the shortage of food caused negative manifestations. 120 special settlers resettled in the Panfilov were starving. There were cases when special settlers used herbs and all sorts of roots for food".

The indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus, evicted to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, found themselves in a completely different geographical and climatic, national environment, to which it was difficult to adapt. One of the most severe consequences of the special regime is the mass death from

hunger, cold, diseases and hard living conditions, which were observed in the first years of deportation. According to the declassified reports of the NKVD, the famine, which began already in 1944, continued until 1947, until they were able to acquire their own household. But even in 1948, famine continued in some regions of Kazakhstan (Khasmagomadov, 2010).

In 1944, 32,502 people died in Kazakhstan, and in 1945, the number was 32,111. The highest mortality rate refers to the second half of 1944 and the first half of 1945, i.e. autumn, winter and spring of the first year of acclimatization, which also coincided with the food shortage and the lack of clothing and footwear. In the Jalal-Abad region of the Kirghiz SSR, out of 26,378 people who arrived in March 1944, 10,366 people died by June 1946 (Benvenuti, 2011).

The archival materials contain information on living conditions of the majority of the Chechens and Ingush. In the South Kazakhstan region, "...instead of taking measures to resettle and employ migrants, create minimal living conditions and provide them with possible assistance, the district party-Soviet bodies shifted the tasks to the NKVD bodies. As a result, only 16,052 people were employed, 12,398 families were accepted by collective farms, 4,216 families were provided with household plots. It was established that the employment was formal. In the collective and state farms of the South Kazakhstan region, due to antagonism and failures to create minimum living conditions, and the barbaric attitude towards them, special settlers died from diseases and hunger. The Kuyuk state farm (directed by Comrade Vostrikov) employed 248 families, or 1,630 people. They were in extremely difficult living conditions and forced to eat wild herbs. As a result, from March to June, more than 200 people fell ill, of which 101 people died of exhaustion. The similar situation was in the state farm n.a. Stalin, where 35 people died of exhaustion. There were 896 people in Aurakhmatstroy. Chechens lived in tents under overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, as a result of which typhus spread, 13 people died. On the collective farm Kalinin in Khayal village, collective farmers were expelled from their apartments. For several days they were forced to live outside, and only after the intervention of the NKVD, they were moved back into their apartments. In addition, it was established that the special contingent in this area was not fully provided with food products".

In the first years, the issues of housing and household, labor arrangements, medical care, and placement of children in schools were acute. At the same time, the solutions were dependent on the use of labor of special settlers, since it was considered in close connection with an increase in labor productivity, and the housing construction lending systems were aimed at assigning special settlers to economic organizations (Ivanov, 2014).

The life of the special settlers began to improve after the end of the Great Patriotic War. The five-year plan for the development of the national economy was to restore the economies of the regions devastated by the war, with an emphasis on the heavy industry. These were a return to the pre-war schemes for the development of the economy and industrialization. In this regard, the methods of militarization of labor became more radical. In the mid-1950s, there were 142,267 Chechens and 44,600 Ingush in special settlements in different regions of the Kazakh SSR, and 39,663 Chechens and 1,389 Ingush in the Kirghiz SSR (Schneider, 2009). Undoubtedly, having found themselves in extreme living conditions, migrants, including Chechens and Ingush, quickly learned the importance of responsible and highly productive work for survival and adaptation to new living conditions. Therefore, they worked

selflessly and efficiently, which was repeatedly emphasized in state and party documents. Highly qualified specialists were in high demand, and there were many of them among the deported people. Contrary to the well-established opinion that Chechen special settlers did not receive state awards, several people were awarded in 1948-1956. Despite all sorts of restrictions, the special settlers began to participate in social and political life. They were elected to the governing bodies of the party, Komsomol, trade union bodies (Ibragimov, 2020). Labor was forced, as evidenced by the following signs: the impossibility of choosing and changing a job without the sanction of the NKVD/MVD bodies; purposeful involvement of a significant number of persons included in the category of "incapacitated" (elderly, disabled, adolescents); systematic discrimination in labor relations, primarily in matters of remuneration; regime status, which made the special settlers vulnerable to arbitrariness on the part of the heads of organizations. Each resolution of the party and government concerning special settlers, whether it was the allocation of land plots for building houses, livestock, loans, employment, etc., was brought to the notice of the special settlers as the concern of the Soviet authorities for them. For greater effect, agitators from among the special settlers were involved. The internal affairs bodies dealt with the Muslim clergy. For example, according to the report of the secretary of the Karaganda regional party committee Baimurzin to the Central Committee of the party, "in the autumn of 1945 and in the spring of 1946 general meetings were held among the Chechen population in connection with the livestock. During the election campaign, 84 agitators and interpreters explained the electoral law and the provisions of the Stalinist Constitution." During the election campaign, agitators held 864 conversations, which were attended by 10,364 people. At polling station No. 39 in Temirtau, the national artistic circle held 8 performances for Chechen voters. Similar circles operated at polling stations in Balkhash and in other districts of Karaganda region (Isakieva, 2016).

One of the most effective ways of destroying the negative image of the Chechen created by official propaganda was the ability to work selflessly appreciated by the economic leaders, who began to resort to an unusual form of encouraging. They were given the livestock as a reward for conscientious work, which was much more important than diplomas, orders and medals. According to the same reports of the NKVD, in 1947 in Kazakhstan, 255 heads of cattle and 2935 heads of small livestock were transferred to special settlers as a bonus. In neighboring Kyrgyzstan, 322 heads of cattle and 5942 heads of small cattle were given to the settlers. Starting from 1948, special settlers began to be presented for government awards (Khasmagomadov, 2010).

The certificate "On the situation of the population of the Chechen and Ingush nationalities" dated November 14, 1956 says that 315,000 Chechens and Ingush live in Kazakhstan and about 80,000 people live in Kyrgyzstan. The bulk of the Chechen-Ingush population treats work conscientiously. Of the 244,000 adults, 155,000 or 63.5 % were employed. 38,300 people were employed in industries, 91,600 in agriculture, and 25,000 in various organizations and institutions. The vast majority of Chechens and Ingush had their own houses, cows, and poultry. However, many Chechens and Ingush expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that they were not allowed to return to their places of former residence and urged to be allowed to travel to the North Caucasus. After deregistration of the special settlement, over 6,000 of them returned to the territory of the former autonomous republic.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the adaptation of Chechens and Ingush in uninhabited places with hard climatic conditions without means of subsistence was extremely difficult. There were economic problems, difficulties in allocating land. Funds allocated by the state did not reach their destination. The government made various decisions aimed at improving the supply, creating conditions for the consolidation of special settlers at enterprises. Labor has become a factor of survival and adaptation in their places of residence.

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