

Aleksandr M. Nekrich

THE PUNISHED PEOPLES

*The deportation and fate of
Soviet minorities at the end
of the Second World War*

Translated from the Russian
by George Saunders



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Author's Note

THIS BOOK was completed in the spring of 1975. In the summer of that year the first copy of the manuscript was sent to the West. I sent it out because there was no chance of this work being published in the Soviet Union. Nor was there for any of my other principal works.

For the last ten years an unstated quota has been set for me—one article per year in an academic publication of limited circulation. Wider publication was refused even for research that I carried out in accordance with the projects of the Institute of General History of the USSR Academy of Sciences, where, for all practical purposes, I worked throughout the postwar period, research that had been approved for publication by the academic council of the Institute. The fact is, I received the salary of senior research scholar and doctor of historical sciences (by Western standards this corresponds to the position of full professor) in return for my silence.

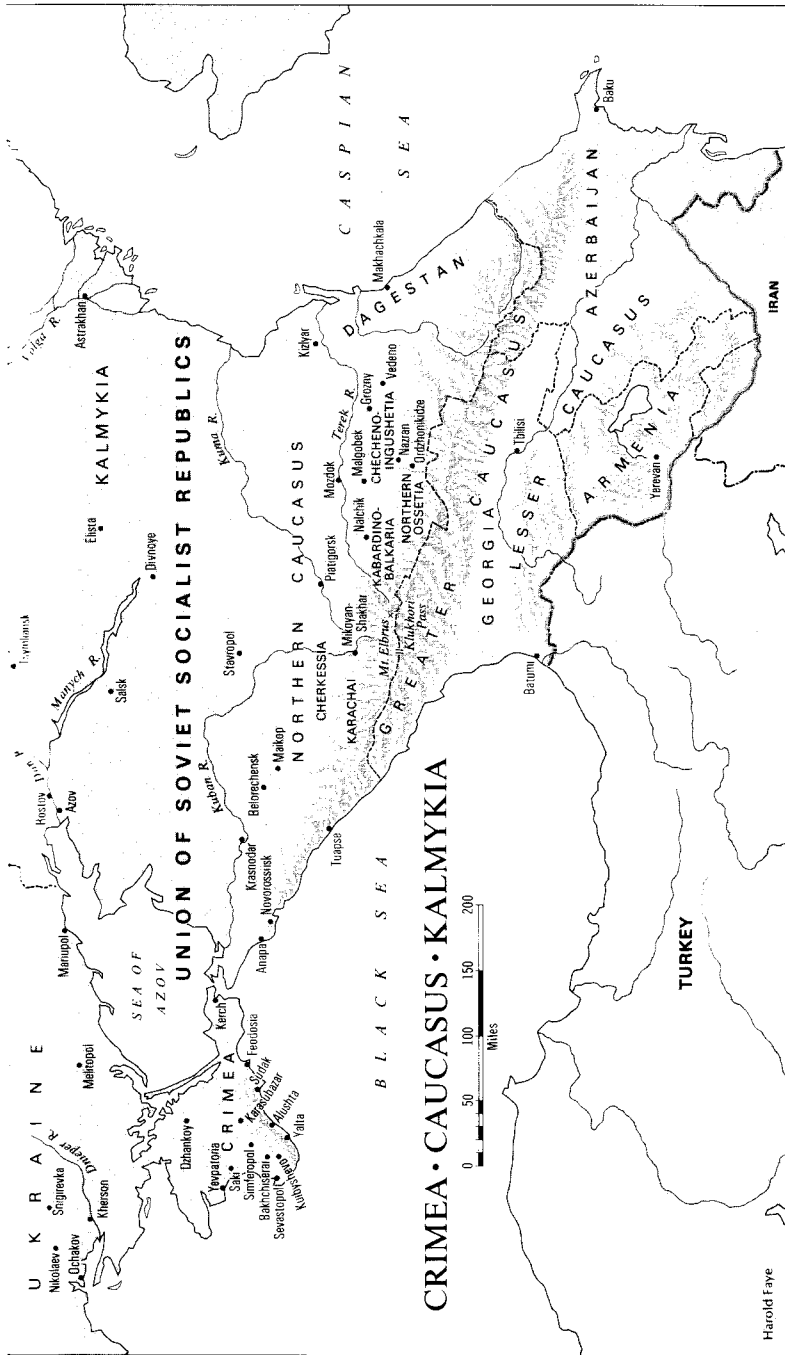
I was ostracized because of my book *June 22, 1941*, published in Moscow in 1965 by Nauka (Science) Press, and subsequently translated and published in the United States and many European countries.

In June 1967, for my refusal to acknowledge my "errors," the

Party Control Commission of the CPSU Central Committee, presided over by Politburo member A. Pelshe, expelled me from the party. In August 1967, by order of the authorities, my book was removed from most libraries in the Soviet Union and destroyed—the exception being those libraries which have a “special collection.” Since then the professional opportunities available to me as a historian have been limited in the extreme. My attempts to break out of this charmed circle and still remain in the Soviet Union ended in failure. Therefore I made the decision to leave my country and did so in June 1976.

I wish to work, and to have the results of my labors visible. I hope that in the West I shall be able to publish my works freely and—no less important—to write freely, shaking off the inner policeman of self-censorship once and for all, and no longer being inhibited by fear of official censorship.

Aleksandr M. Nekrich
London, July 1976



CRIMEA • CAUCASUS • KALMYKIA

B L A C K S E A

C A S P I A N S E A

U N I O N O F S O V I E T S O C I A L I S T R E P U B L I C S

K A L M Y K I A

N O R T H E R N C A U C A S U S

G E O R G I A C A U C A S U S

A Z E R B A I J A N

L E S S E R

A R M E N I A

T U R K E Y

Introduction

IT WAS May 1944 and I was twenty-four years old. I was serving in the political department of the Second Guards Army. Our troops were liberating the Crimea. In the aftermath of the heavy fighting at Sevastopol I found myself in Yevpatoria, a small resort city on the Black Sea coast.

Waiting for someone I needed to see, I was standing outside a theater building where a meeting of the town's active party membership was in session. I had instructions from my superiors to set up a town commission to investigate the crimes of the German fascist occupation forces and make sure it was running smoothly.

The theater doors opened and the slim, dark-haired chairman of the town Soviet, K., appeared. "How are things?" I asked him—that ordinary question to which no reply is expected. But a reply was forthcoming, and it was a puzzling one to me. "We're getting ready for the big day." I nodded, simply to be polite. In fact I couldn't imagine what he meant. But this book should have been started at that very moment.

Our conversation had barely begun when an unfamiliar colonel-general came out the doors of the theater. "Who is that?" "That's Kobulov, Beria's deputy," my interlocutor replied, for some reason lowering his voice. K. drove off. I found the person I wanted and we went about our business.

The next day, or perhaps two days later, I was returning from Yevpatoria to the political department headquarters in the town of Saki. An unusual air of tension prevailed everywhere. A friend told me: "Tonight they are going to ship off the Tatars, every last one. The men have been locked up for the time being in the registration and enlistment building." I walked past that building, pausing for a moment. Through the closed doors someone's voice carried, a rapid, fiery speech in an unfamiliar language.

Today I must return to that past in my thoughts. After all, the study of the past is my profession.

No one—neither the people nor the government leaders—ever imagined that the war would start out so unfavorably for the USSR. The psychological preparations for the war caused people to expect not only that we would be victorious from the beginning but also that the war would be fought on enemy territory. A reflection of that attitude could be seen in the widespread rumors in Moscow on the first evening of the war that Soviet troops were storming Koenigsberg.

How much more bitter and hard to bear the truth turned out to be. After heavy fighting along the border, beginning at dawn on June 22, 1941, the Soviet front line was broken, and Hitler's troops, driving deep wedges and leaving behind them thoroughly defeated Soviet armies lacking any strategic leadership, moved rapidly ahead into the heart of the country. On June 28 Minsk was taken, in September the battle for Kiev was fought, in October the fascist armies stood on the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad, Tauria had fallen, and the enemy was knocking at the gates of the Crimea.

In three months of war the Soviet armed forces had lost at least three million persons.

The courageous struggle of the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army, of individual units, and even of large formations could not contain the enemy onslaught.

The population of the abandoned Soviet territories watched the

retreating Red Army units with tears in their eyes and, soon after, gazed with horror at the endless columns of Soviet soldiers being marched off as prisoners-of-war. The Nazis took between three and four million prisoners in 1941. They were driven into hastily constructed camps where, denied food and water and subjected to insults and humiliations by their guards, they soon began to die off. Tens of thousands of prisoners-of-war were simply shot by the Nazis.

Alexander Dallin reports that by May 1944, 1,918,000 prisoners of war had died in Hitler's camps. In addition, about 1,248,000 were exterminated.¹

The confusion and disarray of the Soviet military and political leadership were intensified by the de facto desertion of Stalin, who hid himself in his country home at Kuntsevo, abandoning his post for an entire week. Fortunately the people didn't know that Stalin was the first deserter of the war.

Because of the circumstances, a new psychological atmosphere began to develop during the very first days and weeks of the war in the enemy-occupied republics and regions of the Soviet Union. The farther east the war moved, the more hopeless the situation seemed to the population that found itself under the enemy's boot in 1941. As yet there was no partisan movement; here and there it was being created from scattered groups that had broken out of encirclement and were stranded deep in the enemy's rear. Moreover, diversionary and underground groups had not yet undertaken decisive action. The enemy arrived. The *Einsatzkommandos** were already on the prowl, hunting down Jews and Communists and their families for extermination. In the market-places, on the walls of buildings, and on fences white leaflets gleamed, bearing the commands of the new Germany authorities. And, here and there, black-and-crimson posters appeared depicting a man with plastered-down hair and a Charlie Chaplin mustache, with the caption "Hitler the Liberator."

* A special branch of the German army devoted to seeking out and destroying "enemies of the Third Reich."

From the earliest days of the occupation the Germans began to set up their own administrative apparatus, which in each town consisted of a *Burgomeister* (German-appointed mayor), his deputies, a chief of *Polizei* (police), and local police officers. In the villages, *starosty* (elders) were appointed. In a number of localities recruiting went on among the local inhabitants to form "self-defense" detachments. Later on, *Hilfswillige* (volunteers) also began to be recruited for service in the rear echelons of the German army and, later still, for participation in punitive actions against the partisans, as well as in front-line operations.

No historian has yet succeeded in gaining access to the archive materials that would make it possible to piece together an accurate picture of who the Soviet citizens were who entered the service of the Nazi occupation apparatus, to clarify their social make-up. From the scanty information published in connection with local trials of war criminals held in the USSR it is possible to isolate certain categories. First of all, there were individuals who had been convicted by the Soviet authorities at one time or another, hardened criminals, and deserters. A second category consisted of people hostile to Soviet rule because of their political convictions. Prominent among them were advocates of secession from the USSR for the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the southern and eastern borderlands, and the Baltic states. They hoped to achieve their aims with the help of Hitler and Germany. Third, there apparently was a substantial layer of people without political convictions, conformists willing to serve any regime. Besides these, there were people who simply lost their bearings, demoralized by the defeats of the Red Army and lacking any hope of victory.

It was with such people that the local apparatuses were staffed, including the local police.

Separate mention should be made of the prisoners-of-war. They were placed under horrifying and inhuman conditions, next to which the conditions provided for prisoners of war from the Western countries, especially the Americans and British, could be called quite satisfactory. The captured Soviet soldiers' situation was complicated further by the fact that their own government in

fact repudiated them, leaving them to the mercies of fate. The prisoners-of-war had this dinned into their heads incessantly by their own tormentors, the guards, and by those seeking to recruit them to serve the Germans.

Many prisoners had to face the problem of choosing whether to perish behind barbed wire in a German camp or to betray their oath, their own people, and their entire past life by signing up as "volunteers." Many of those who took the latter course planned to seize the first favorable occasion and return to their own people, to the Red Army. But few succeeded in doing so.

On the Manych in the winter of 1943 I first saw former Soviet soldiers dressed in German uniforms. I asked one, then another, "How could you have done this, fellows?" I felt sorry for them but at the same time I could scarcely bear to look at them. They remained silent, staring at the ground or looking off to the side, but after a while one of them looked directly at me, and with an expression of such unconcealed despair that my heart shrank. And this is what he told me. In the summer of 1941 he was taken prisoner. They were herded off to a camp at Ovruch. And there it began: German guards and Ukrainian *Polizei* (it is hard to say who brutalized the prisoners worse); hunger and beatings, beatings and hunger; and all the while the recruiters—not Germans, but our own people, Russians and Ukrainians—insistently repeating the promises of a soft and comfortable life. "But if you stay here, there's no way around it, you'll die like a dog." For a long time he remained firm, but in the summer of 1942 he could hold out no longer. He put on the German uniform, hoping to escape at the first opportunity. But no such occasion presented itself. The German command kept his battalion of "volunteers" in the rear, and only during the retreat was the battalion compelled to cover the withdrawal of the German units. As soon as the German soldiers had gone, many of the Russian "volunteers" threw down their guns. And that was how he came to be back among his own. I do not know what became of him. But his look of despair, of no hope and no future, engraved itself in my memory forever.

Hitler was categorically opposed to the formation of auxiliary or front-line units composed of Russians. He distrusted, hated, and feared them. Tens of millions of Russians were slated for annihilation, and the remainder were to become the slaves of the Reich. The Fuehrer was also opposed to giving any support to the Ukrainian nationalists, and in general he took a negative view of the nationalism of the conquered peoples, regarding nationalists as potential enemies of the Reich. However, in practice the Nazi command made use of the nationalists for its own purposes. For example, in the Ukraine, the nationalist leaders Stepan Bandera and Andrei Melnyk were used to help form local "self-defense" detachments. The concentration-camp guard force was similarly staffed, as were the town police, the *Einsatzkommandos*, etc. At the same time the Nazis decisively cut short any attempt by the Ukrainian separatists to establish their own governmental forms. The rival "governments" of Bandera in Lvov and Melnyk in Kiev were dispersed by the Germans and the leaders placed under arrest. Later, one section of the Banderists engaged in armed struggle against both the Red Army and the Soviet partisans, on the one hand, and the German army, on the other. According to German data, the "self-defense" forces in the Ukraine reached the impressive figure of 180,000 by mid-1942.²

In August 1941 a Major Kononov of the Soviet army went over to the enemy, taking with him part of the personnel of the 436th Infantry Regiment. Kononov, a Don Cossack, was given permission to form a Cossack cavalry regiment, which reached a strength of seventy-seven officers and 1,799 enlisted men. Hitler consented to the formation of Cossack units because he had been told that the Cossacks were descendants not of the Slavs but of the Ostrogoths!³

The formation of "self-defense" forces coincided with the period of the Wehrmacht's greatest successes (the summer of 1941 and the summer of 1942).

The Cossack formations were made a part of the Wehrmacht. In the summer of 1942, the general staff of the German ground forces established a special department to handle the formation of

military, auxiliary, and police forces from the ranks of former Soviet citizens. By early 1943 there were 176 battalions and thirty-eight companies in this category, with a total of 130,000 to 150,000 men. The overwhelming majority of them made up the so-called Russian Liberation Army, under the command of former Lieutenant General of the Soviet Army A. A. Vlasov. By the end of the war Vlasov had 300,000 men.

The non-Russian military formations in the Wehrmacht at the end of the war numbered 700,000. Thus the total number of former Soviet citizens who took up arms on the enemy side was approximately one million. An impressive figure, it might seem. But this represented only 1/194th, or 0.5 percent, of the total population of the Soviet Union at the end of 1939, and only 1.75 percent of the able-bodied male population of sixteen or older. The vast majority opposed the enemy.

The military units made up of "Oriental peoples" included the Turkestan legions and battalions (i.e., people of Central Asian origin), as well as Georgian, Armenian, Turk, Volga Tatar, Crimean Tatar, Mountaineer (i.e., people from the Northern Caucasus), Kalmyk, and some other legions and battalions.

But can we really equate such "legionnaires" with the populations of the republics from which they came? Of course not. Those who took up arms against their homeland, who stood in the same ranks with the Nazis, were renegades and traitors to their own peoples.

Since August–September 1941, when special trains full of Volga Germans proceeded eastward and their national state structure, the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, was dismantled; since the period in 1943–44 when the same road of sorrow was traveled by freight trains loaded with Kalmyks, Karachai, Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars, and Balkars likewise deprived of their native homes and hearths, their property, and their autonomy—since those times and those events more than thirty years have passed.

Quite a few lies have been spread about these unfortunate peo-

ples who were forced to pay, one and all, for the treason of a small number of their countrymen.

In the second half of the 1950s the Kalmyks and the deported peoples of the Northern Caucasus were completely rehabilitated by the government authorities. They returned to the lands which their ancestors had inhabited for centuries and their autonomy was restored.

But the chariot of justice travels slowly in the USSR; it barely pokes along. Far from their traditional lands, the Volga Germans, now numbering some two million, and the Crimean Tatars, half a million in number, still live as before. Yet the sanctions against them have formally been lifted; under the law, they are allowed to live in any part of the Soviet Union, and consequently in the Crimea as well.

Yet even today falsehoods still circulate, especially among the population of the Crimea, to the effect that the entire Crimean Tatar population collaborated with the German occupation. These lies are spread and encouraged by groups and individuals who have an interest in preventing the return of the Tatars to the Crimea.

Similar fairy tales were spread at one time about the Volga Germans, who were said to have hidden Nazi spies and saboteurs at the beginning of the war; and about the Chechens, Ingush, and Karachai, who were said to have served, every man, woman, and child, as guides for the Nazis during their offensive against the Caucasus in 1942; as well as about the Balkars, all of whom were said to have gone over to the enemy. As proof of this last assertion, a great deal was made for many years of the fact that a white horse had been sent as a gift to Hitler from Balkaria. This fact was blown up and magnified with incredible zeal by functionaries in every possible government office at every level, so that there came to be not just one white horse but entire herds of Caucasian racers grazing and cavorting on the slopes beneath Hitler's Berghof retreat. This legend is already half-forgotten, and the wounds inflicted upon the peoples of the Caucasus are healed somewhat. But how do things stand in the case of the Volga Ger-

mans and the Crimean Tatars? Where is the healing remedy that will close up the deep wounds inflicted by the many years of exile? And when will this exile be ended?

Rude attacks against the Crimean Tatar people continue to this day. In December 1973 in Simferopol three Crimean Tatars were placed on trial—not traitors, not butchers who served the Germans, not even criminals who had been amnestied in 1955, but simply three grown persons who had returned to their historic homeland and wished to remain there. The “people’s judge” who presided at the trial, a certain Mironova, in her remarks demanded that the Tatars “get out of the Crimea” and go live in the region to which they had been deported, or else “the harshest possible measures” would be employed against them.⁴ And this was said by a representative of the judiciary six years after the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet which restored to the Tatars all their civil rights—including the right to live in their own homeland.

And why were Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils* deported to the east? Why were Greeks living on the Black Sea coast deported in 1944? Why were several tens of thousands of Armenians deported from Armenia soon after the end of the war? After all, none of them had presented Hitler with the gift of a white horse!

Can we today answer the questions: By what mechanism were these decisions, affecting the fate of entire peoples, made? By what government body, on the basis of whose reports or memorandums? What part did the local authorities, military bodies, and state security agencies play in these decisions? Who bore the personal responsibility for these crimes? Stalin himself? Beria? Or X, Y, and Z? In my opinion, we can arrive at only approximate answers to these questions at this time.

Let us note parenthetically that the decision-making mecha-

* Khemshils” is a corruption of “Khemshins”—the name used by Armenian Muslims from Turkish Armenia who lived along the Black Sea coast in Adzharia. They numbered about twenty thousand altogether, with some seven to eight thousand living on Soviet territory.

nisms are nowhere surrounded with such impenetrable secrecy as in the Soviet government, and nowhere has the invisible system of mutual cover-up and tacit understanding and the prevalence of code words and conventional formulations acquired such a sophisticated character. The unwritten laws by which the apparatus functions and under whose cover orders and instructions are drafted and issued, the anonymity of their authors in relation to the public at large, reliably conceal not only blunders and mistakes but also, when necessary, crimes. And all this serves as a tremendous obstacle to any objective study or investigation.

There is a need, long overdue, for this unhappy and shameful part of our recent past to be examined with the eyes of the historian. Not surprisingly, this subject does not appear in any of the plans for scientific research work of the USSR Academy of Sciences. I have carried it out at my own risk, because in the USSR there is an unspoken ban on discussion of matters involving official lawlessness or arbitrary acts.

II

The Situation in the Northern Caucasus, and German Occupation Policies

IN THE SUMMER of 1942 the German army resumed the offensive, one of its aims being the conquest of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia.

The offensive began in the southern sector on June 28. It was marked by extremely heavy and bitter fighting.

By the end of the day on July 15, a breakthrough had been made in the Soviet defenses between the Don and the Northern Donets.¹ The offensive of the Germany armies extended across a front five hundred to six hundred kilometers wide.²

The Soviet troops managed to extricate themselves from an encircling maneuver by the fascist armies. On July 24, Rostov-on-Don was abandoned³ and the Soviet forces withdrew across the Don.

On July 29 the Germans broke through on another sector of the front, in the Tsymliansk region. On August 2, the Germans began their drive on Salsk, on the part of the front held by the Soviet Don army group. The next day the Don group was pulled back across the Kuban River. On August 5 German units entered Stavropol. On August 11 Soviet troops abandoned Krasnodar. The Germans reached the Maikop region and took Belorechensk but failed to break through to Tuapse. Advancing to the

south of Rostov, the German armies reached the Mozdok area on August 8 and the Piatigorsk area on August 9. On August 25 they occupied Mozdok.

Along the line of advance toward Tuapse, German forces broke through to the Black Sea on August 31 and took Anapa. Soviet troops were forced to abandon Novorossiisk on September 10, 1942. On the front held by the Soviet northern army group, during the period from August 17 to September 9, the Germans captured several passes in the sector from Mount Elbrus to the Klukhori Pass.⁴

On August 21 the Germans placed their flag with its emblem, the swastika, on the peak of Mount Elbrus. (There it waved until February 17, 1943, when it was torn down by Soviet soldiers and replaced with the state flag of the USSR.) On October 25 the Germans entered Nalchik.

They did not succeed in breaking through to Grozny. Likewise they were unable to gain control of all the passes in the Greater Caucasus range. Early in November the Germans were forced to go on the defensive.

In Hitler's plan of conquest the Caucasus was regarded above all as a source of oil supplies for Germany.* The projected Reichskommissariat Kaukasien was to cover a substantial territory—from Rostov-on-Don in the north, to the Black Sea in the west, to the Caspian in the east, and to the borders with Turkey and Iran in the south. This Reichskommissariat was, in turn, divided into seven lesser commissariats: Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Mountain region (Dagestan, Northern Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Checheno-Ingushetia, and Cherkessia), Krasnodar, Stavropol, the Kalmyk region (including Astrakhan and part of Rostov region), and Armenia.

The Germans established contacts with the Caucasian émigrés

* A special organization with the abbreviated name *Konti Oel*, headed by a representative of the Reich, Hermann Neubacher, was formed to carry out the economic exploitation of the Caucasus. Neubacher already had considerable experience in such matters, having organized the exploitation of the natural riches of Yugoslavia.

who had been living in Europe since the end of the civil war in the USSR. The intention was to utilize them in the German scheme.

Among the émigrés from the Northern Caucasus there was a group that had a pro-German orientation. It published the journal *Caucasus* in Berlin. One of the editors of this journal, Ali-khan Kantemir, offered his services to the Nazis. He drew up a memorandum examining the "Caucasian question" and submitted it to the Ostministerium in August 1941. A rival group of émigrés was headed by Said Shamil, grandson of the celebrated imam. Earlier, the Shamil group had been oriented toward France and belonged to the émigré Prometheus group. After the German attack on the USSR, Shamil tried to enlist the support of the Hitler regime for his plan to create an "independent Caucasus." In Berlin the idea of backing Shamil was found highly tempting, considering his origins.* But his program proved to be overly independent, and consequently Shamil broke off negotiations in the fall of 1942 and departed for Turkey. The Kantemir group, on the other hand, entered into active collaboration with the Hitler government. In addition to Kantemir, the Nazis won over the former White Guard General Bicherakhov, from Dagestan, as a collaborator. With the blessings and support of the Ostministerium, Kantemir and his followers founded the so-called Northern Caucasus National Committee. The Committee engaged in recruitment efforts among Soviet prisoners of war from the Northern Caucasus, persuading them to enroll in military formations of the German Reich. However, in the Northern Caucasus itself the émigrés' influence proved to be insignificant, their ideas being alien and unattractive to the Mountain peoples of the Caucasus.

Hitler's Germany sought to conceal its real plans for the Caucasus behind a mask of demagogic propaganda.

* The German fascist leaders were quite impressed by the prospect of collaboration with the bearers of such "distinguished" Caucasian family names as Prince Hercules Bagration and Prince Vachnadze, in addition to Said Shamil (Patrik von zur Mühlen, *Zwischen Hakenkreuz and Sowjetstern: Der Nationalsozialismus der sowjetischen Orientvölker im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Dusseldorf, 1971), pp. 125-27).

Early in the spring of 1942, in preparation for the renewed German offensive on the Soviet front, the question of policy in the Caucasus was discussed at length in Berlin.

In April 1942 the basic themes of the German propaganda line were laid down, as follows:

1. The German empire regarded the Caucasian peoples as friends.

2. The German armed forces took it upon themselves to "protect the Caucasian peoples" and to liberate them from "the Bolshevik yoke."

3. Without German aid it would be impossible to take the offensive against Bolshevik, Russian, and British imperialism, which had oppressed the peoples of the Caucasus for so long.

4. The national, cultural, and economic forces of the Caucasus would be allowed to develop freely. Their independent national and cultural development was in need of German protection. The age-old customs and traditions would be respected. The Caucasian peoples would use their native languages and have their own schools. In the realm of religion, all the Caucasian peoples and all their religious denominations would enjoy full freedom of worship. Churches and mosques would be re-opened.

5. Self-government would be granted, guaranteed by Germany.

6. The *kolkhozy* would be abolished.

7. Trade and free enterprise would be permitted without restriction.⁵

The proposed slogans were:

8. "Come over to the side of Germany, and support the German troops, at whose side your brothers are already fighting, united as one in the ranks of the German armed forces."

9. "Long live the free Caucasians in alliance with and under the protection of the Great German Empire of Adolf Hitler!"

The draft of this document met with strong objections from Rosenberg, especially Point 9, which seemed to promise freedom for the Caucasians. Rosenberg apparently succeeded in convincing Hitler that this slogan was ill-considered.⁶

However, in September 1942, when the German armies reached the Caucasus, the decision was made in Berlin to undertake the formation of local puppet administrations and, for propaganda purposes, to allow the use of such terms as "freedom," "independence," and "cooperation."

In contrast to the occupied territories of Central Russia, forced labor was not introduced in the Caucasus. Since the Caucasus continued to be a combat zone, power remained in the hands of the military command. In one of the orders of the commander of the First Tank Corps, von Kleist, dated December 15, 1942, instructions were given to treat the population "as friends" and not to create obstacles for the Mountain peoples if they wished to abolish the *kolkhozy* (in almost all the remaining occupied territory the Nazis preferred to retain the collective farms as economic units that would facilitate the extraction of food and raw materials to meet German military and economic needs); to permit the reopening of all places of worship; to respect private property and pay for requisitioned goods; to win the "confidence of the people" through "model conduct"; to give reasons for all harsh measures that would affect the interests of the population; and especially to respect "the honor of the women of the Caucasus."⁷

In issuing this order, von Kleist was trying to secure the rear of the German army in the Caucasus, especially because its position was increasingly threatened after the preponderance of Soviet arms had been established at the battle of Stalingrad.

Let us now look at the situation in some of the regions of the Northern Caucasus occupied by the German army in the fall of 1942.

THE KARACHAI AUTONOMOUS REGION

While the Red Army was trying to extricate itself from the enemy and to pull back from Rostov to the Greater Caucasus Range, it often happened that between the retreat of the Red Army units and the arrival of the Germans, several days of de facto in-

terregnum would elapse, during which anyone who wished could assume power.

Thus it was in Mikoyan-Shakhar, then the capital of the Karachai Autonomous Region, that a former teacher, M. Kochkarov, appointed himself mayor.

The Karachai Autonomous Region was part of Stavropol territory in the RSFSR. It was founded on January 12, 1922.

Karachai was united with Russia in 1828. The Karachai people rose up in armed rebellion against the colonialist policies of tsarist Russia a number of times. The unending oppression of the Karachai by the tsarist authorities led, in the early 1870s, to a powerful movement in favor of resettlement in Turkey.

After the October revolution life began to change rapidly in the Caucasus, including in Karachai. At the time the Karachai Autonomous Region was established, there were 57,801 Karachai, 85 percent of the population.⁸ Their numbers grew steadily and by 1939 there were 70,900 Karachai. However, their position relative to the population of the region as a whole declined substantially, to 28.8 percent,⁹ while the Russian population grew rapidly both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the whole.

In 1926 there were 2,916 Russians in the region,¹⁰ but in 1939 there were 119,800.¹¹ In proportion to the rest of the population in the region, Russians increased from 4.5 percent to 48.3 percent during this period.¹²

In the Karachai Autonomous Region, which the German fascist army occupied at the beginning of August 1942, the occupying authorities tried to apply a "special" policy. Having confirmed the self-appointed Kochkarov in power, they decided to create a "Karachai National Committee." This "committee" obtained a pledge from the occupation regime that it would, in the future, be allowed to dissolve the *kolkhozy*; Soviet state property and public property were placed under the trusteeship of the Committee, which also had some voice in economic and cultural affairs—with the Germans, of course, retaining ultimate control. The Committee, for its part, made no little effort to justify the confidence of the German authorities and sought volunteers to

form a squadron of horsemen for joint military operations with the Germans.¹³ The Karachai Committee was the special protégé of the former German military attaché in Moscow, General Köstring.

During the occupation, a partisan movement developed in Karachai and Cherkessia. According to the evidence cited by Ch. S. Kulayev, thirteen partisan detachments numbering twelve hundred persons were operating in this territory.¹⁴

During the five months of the occupation the Nazis killed more than nine thousand civilian inhabitants of Karachai and Cherkessia, including many children.¹⁵

In late January 1943, units of the Thirty-seventh Soviet Army liberated Karachai and Cherkessia. Feverish but happy months of liberation and reconstruction began.

But unexpectedly, in November 1943, the entire Karachai population was deported from its native lands and shipped in closely guarded freight cars to "special settlements" in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The Karachai Autonomous Region was abolished.

To make this dissolution of Karachai autonomy irreversible, two districts—Karachaiskii and Uchku-Lanskii—together with the former capital of the autonomous region (which now bears the name Karachaevsk), were transferred to the Georgian SSR and became part of Klukhori district. In December 1943, 2,115 Georgians were resettled here. The Russian population, numbering 5,672, remained in these districts.¹⁶ The other part of the Karachai Autonomous Region (the districts of Zelenchuk, Ust'-Dzheguta, Pregrodnenskii, and Malo-Karachai) remained in Stavropol territory.¹⁷

The deportation of the Karachai occurred while the overwhelming majority of the male population was serving in the Red Army.

THE CHECHEN-INGUSH ASSR

Checheno-Ingushetia passed through several stages before December 1936, when it was finally transformed from an autonomous region into an autonomous republic. In 1939 its territory was inhabited by the following nationalities:

Chechens	368,100, or 50 percent of the total population of the ASSR
Ingush	56,500 or 7.8 percent
Russians	258,200, or 34.8 percent
Ukrainians	10,100, or 1.4 percent
Armenians	8,600, or 1.2 percent.*

The great bulk of the native (Chechen-Ingush) population lived in the rural areas. The working-class layer remained quite thin until the early 1930s and even by the beginning of the war had not greatly increased. According to official information, in 1937 there was a total of 5,535 Chechen and Ingush employees in the factories of Grozny, the capital of Checheno-Ingushetia.¹⁸

Collectivization undermined but did not destroy the age-old way of life in Chechnia.

Under the particular conditions in Chechnia—which had a clan system of kinship (the *teipa*)[†] and a system of land tenure based on common clan ownership, and where, among a certain part of the rural population, the distribution of land continued to be based on the principle of descent from either free peasants (*uzdenei*) or slaves (*lai*)—the policy of wholesale forced collectivization provoked resistance from the population. In turn, the authorities applied greater and greater pressure, with the result that conflicts became so greatly intensified that it probably would have taken many years to iron things out.

According to recently published information, sixty-nine acts of terrorism were recorded in Chechnia in 1931–33,¹⁹ the victims being responsible party and government workers, activists, NKVD agents, etc. But there is no indication of what provoked these acts of terrorism. And did they actually occur on such a scale? After all, we know from Soviet history the extent to which accusations of terrorism were fabricated. In the spring of 1932 an armed uprising erupted in Nozhai-Yurtov district. The

* The results of the 1939 all-union census in reference to the autonomous republics were not published. The present statistics are taken from Korkmasova, p. 497.

† The Chechen term *teipa* means "clan" (plural, *teipy*).

strength and scope of this outbreak can be judged from the following official assessment of it: "This was the last armed action of the class enemy, who succeeded for a certain length of time in attracting a certain section of the peasantry to his side."²⁰ Here again we must wonder whether peasant protests have been inflated to the status of "armed uprisings" in order to justify the use of mass violence against them.

There is what we might call the unofficial view of the situation in Checheno-Ingushetia during collectivization. It takes as its starting point the fact that the clan system was still very strong there. Chechnia did not have private ownership of land. Only in the mountain *khutory* did families own a certain amount of property individually. In the lowlands everything was held in common—the land, the water, and the forests. Therefore, the term "kulak,"* applied to the concrete conditions in Checheno-Ingushetia, loses all meaning.

As for the 1932 armed uprising, those who support the unofficial view contend that no actual uprising occurred, that the whole affair was blown up on purpose to explain away the failure of the unintelligent policies pursued in Chechnia.

Periodically, military expeditions were made into the hills. Individual murders or attacks of a personal nature, not political acts, usually served as the pretext for these expeditions. Often these campaigns were simply a sham, and had the purpose of showing how loyal and indispensable the OGPU was for the Soviet system, enhancing the OGPU's power and prestige, and satisfying the personal ambitions of certain leaders. Here is the kind of story I have been told, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted.

One such expedition was undertaken in the winter of 1929–30 in connection with a rumor that many "kulaks" had gathered in the hills. Included in the expedition were *kursanty* (cadets) from

*The Soviet terms for the most prosperous peasants in the USSR, who exploited farm laborers. In 1929 those designated as kulaks were denounced as "class enemies," their property was confiscated, and they were sent to labor camps. Many thousands of so-called kulaks and their families died from starvation and violence.

the Vladikavkaz Infantry School for Middle-Echelon Officers, a cavalry regiment of Caucasian nationals, units of the Twenty-eighth Mountain Rifle Division (Russian units only), as many as two OGPU* divisions, and a number of other units. The expedition was headed for the Osinovskoye gorge, where—as OGPU information had it—many hostile elements had congregated. According to an eyewitness, Kh. U. D. Mamsurov, commissar of the Caucasian cavalry regiment (and in the future, a colonel-general and Hero of the Soviet Union), there turned out to be a total of fourteen “enemies.” That evening, at their place of bivouac, Mamsurov overheard an OGPU agent (there was fully empowered OGPU representation in the Caucasus at that time, headed by the not unknown E. G. Yevdokimov, a man “renowned” for his cruelty) dictating a report to Rostov along the following lines: “Overcoming bitter resistance on the part of numerous bands, the expedition has reached . . .”—and then the name of the locality was given. When Mamsurov returned he appealed to A. D. Kozitsky, who had headed the expedition and was director of the Vladikavkaz Infantry School. Kozitsky’s reply to Mamsurov was that he was not at all surprised, because in such cases the OGPU agents always resorted to lies to serve their own purposes.

Not long after, Mamsurov related this incident in public, in a speech at the regular party conference of the Northern Caucasus Military District, to which he was a delegate. As he told his story the auditorium rocked with laughter. However, it was not long before Mamsurov was summoned to Moscow, where he was severely reprimanded for publicly ridiculing the OGPU.

Exaggerated and inflated reports were made about the supposedly bitter “class struggle” in the mountains. There was a disturbance in the village of Goity, the population of which was

* Ob’edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (Unified Political Administration), the state security apparatus created in 1922 to replace the Emergency Security Commission (VCHK or Cheka, 1917–22). The OGPU was replaced in 1934 by the People’s Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD). In our time, Soviet state security is delegated to the KGB (Committee of State Security).

famous for its resistance to the White Guards, who were never able to take the village during the civil war. The methods of forced collectivization had aroused the indignation of the inhabitants, among whom there were approximately 150 former Red partisans. They were dealt with severely, some even being shot.

Early in 1938, 490 collective farms were established in the territory of Checheno-Ingushetia, embracing 69,400 households. They covered three-fourths of the arable land in the republic (308,800 hectares out of 401,200). A large part of this arable land was located in the lowland areas—some 246,900 hectares.²¹ Also in the lowland areas, fifteen machine-tractor stations, equipped with 571 tractors and fifteen combines, were established. However, such powerful advances against the backward forms of land cultivation did not apparently arouse great enthusiasm among the collective farmers: the productivity of labor remained extremely low. According to official statistics, in 1938 the number of collective farmers in the lowland areas who did not work a single *trudoden* (workday unit) was 17.4 percent; the number who put in up to fifty *trudodni* was 46.3 percent; up to 100, 15.9 percent; up to 200, 11.1 percent; up to 300, 5 percent; and up to 400, only 2 percent.²² On January 1, 1939, 53 percent of the collective farms did not have any livestock sections, 68.2 percent had no dairy farming, and 75.3 percent had no sheep ranching.²³

The system by which individual households worked their share of the commonly-held clan lands persisted almost everywhere despite collectivization. Alongside the elected administrative boards of the *kolkhozy* there existed underground bodies which actually ran everything, the "elected ones" merely serving as camouflage.²⁴ The audit of all agriculturally valuable lands in 1938, an official history reports, disclosed that in a number of lowland *kolkhozy* "no accounts were kept in regard to a large portion of the cropland and hay fields. . . . This made it possible for certain elements who had penetrated the leading bodies of individual *kolkhozy* to violate the land laws, to sell and rent land, and to maintain certain areas under crops secretly."²⁵

In several districts (Achkhoy-Martan, Achaluki, Prigorodnyi,

etc.) there were cases in which the best lands remained in the hands of individuals. Such holdings ranged in size up to as much as nineteen hectares per household, whereas on the *kolkhozy* there were only 2.5 hectares per household.²⁶ There were very small *kolkhozy* consisting of only twenty to thirty households, which actually remained *teipy*, having only changed labels.

In the upland areas, all the lands were categorized as "terraced." (These were narrow, flat, and not very productive strips hugging the slopes.) Here, despite the existence of 158 *kolkhozy* embracing 33,205 households, or 99.8 percent of all households in the upland regions, individual farming in fact remained the basic way of life.

Of the land suitable for cultivation, only 32 percent of the hayfields had been socialized. Pastureland, which amounted to 152,413 hectares, was not socialized.²⁷ In January 1940 in Chalanchozhskii, Itum-Kamenskii, and Cheberloyevskii districts, 67 percent of the land was being worked individually by so-called collective farmers, while about 90 percent of the horses and cattle and about 80 percent of the sheep and goats were owned individually.²⁸ One-ninth of the *kolkhoznik* (collective-farmer) households in the upland areas owned as much as 30 percent of the total number of cows (there were 9.3 cows per household on the average, 2.7 times more than the number of cows in the truck and dairy farming subdivisions of all *kolkhozy* in the upland areas).²⁹

V. I. Filkin, a penetrating and thoughtful researcher, cites several examples, in one of his works, of trade in land on the *kolkhozy*. In 1937, in the settlement of Pliyev, in Nazran district, the chairman of the administrative board of the Budenny *kolkhoz*, a certain Pliyev, sold two hundred hectares of land to *kolkhozniki* and individual farmers. In the same district the chairman of the "Twelve Years of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army" *kolkhoz*, a certain Yevloyev, sold two hundred hectares of plowland and two hundred hectares of meadowland to *kolkhozniki* and individual farmers.³⁰

The official history, *Essays in the History of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, 1917-1970*, openly admits that "private farming

remained the basic economic form among the Mountaineer peoples."³¹

One of the standard explanations for this is that "kulak and mullah* elements" infiltrated the leadership of the *kolkhozy*. This infiltration, in turn, is explained by the serious errors of the local Soviet bodies. What "serious errors"? It is said that these consisted in an incorrect understanding of the structure of Chechen-Ingush society, the denial of the existence of a kulak layer within the Chechen-Ingush population, and—as a result of such views—the continuation or preservation of kulak farms in many instances. Not so long ago, in 1973, at the Tenth Plenum of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of the CPSU, the "non-class approach to the assessment of historical phenomena and the idealization of the past" were sharply condemned.³²

The most frequently cited example of the influence of the Chechen-Ingush kulaks is the following: During collectivization most of the kulaks migrated from the lowland areas to the *khutory* (individually-owned farms) in the mountains. In 1938 the official count of individual farms in the mountains was three thousand. The authors of the *Essays* write that these "were formally *kolkhozy*, but in fact their owners, taking advantage of the absence of any checking by government authorities, arbitrarily took control of plowland, hayfields, and pastureland in forests belonging both to the local governments and to the national government, and there raised crops secretly and maintained large numbers of livestock."³³ Filkin adds that bandit groups often hid in the mountain *khutory*.³⁴

Another explanation is that the leading bodies of many *kolkhozy* and village soviets "were riddled with hostile class elements."³⁵ In fourteen of the twenty-three *kolkhozy* in the Achkhoi-Martan district the chairmen were kulaks and traders or their sons.³⁶

In the late 1950s and early 1960s another reason was added to help explain the rather complex situation in Checheno-Ingushetia,

* A Muslim religious leader or teacher.

namely, the weakness of the party organization as a result of the repression of the late 1930s. The first explanation is maintained in abridged form to this day. But when it comes to the effects of the repression, official historiography now makes only passing reference.

The party organization in the upland areas was particularly weak. Out of 824 Communists, 50 were totally illiterate (i.e., did not know even the alphabet), 265 had no primary school education, 275 had only primary education, and 153 had not completed secondary school.³⁷ In a number of districts the party organizations consisted primarily of the personnel of the party and government apparatus of the district and did not exceed twenty-five in membership. Thus, on February 1, 1939, the party organization in Cheberloyevskii district consisted of twenty-five people (eleven members and fourteen candidates); in Chalanchozhskii district there were eighteen and in Shatoyevskii twenty-three.³⁸

The party organizational staff was completely contaminated. Both the party and state apparatus contained a good many self-seekers and careerists, i.e., the least reliable types in a complex and dangerous situation. In a number of district divisions of the NKVD, there were what V. I. Filkin calls "accidental people." Other NKVD agents, even "many" of them, as a resolution of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of the party testifies, "underestimated the strength of the anti-Soviet elements and the harm they did by their work in subverting the measures taken by the Soviet government." This resolution also indicated that an incorrect assessment of the class struggle in the village had led to the use of "passive methods," for the most part, in the struggle against "bandits, kulaks, and anti-Soviet elements."³⁹ In other words, the regional committee was calling for harsher methods.

But where did the self-seekers and careerists in the party organization come from? The answer to that question is not difficult. The main wave came after the repression of 1937-38, when most of the old cadres were expelled and destroyed. Nowadays in the Soviet Union it is customary to evade this question with the use of doubletalk, but there can be no doubt that the crude administrative

methods and harsh repression were among the main reasons for the complicated situation that arose in Checheno-Ingushetia at the beginning of the war with Hitler's Germany.

In Checheno-Ingushetia in 1938 all the directors of district land departments, fourteen out of eighteen machine-tractor station directors, nineteen chairmen of district executive committees, and twenty-two secretaries of district party committees were removed. In 1939, twenty-one chairman of district executive committees and thirty-three directors of district land departments were ousted. Most of them were arrested. Repressive measures were taken against party and government workers on the regional as well as the district level.⁴⁰

At the time of the formation of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Region, in January 1934, the party organization had 11,966 members and candidate members. After the exchange of party documents 3,500 were expelled and 1,500 moved to other regions. As of April 1, 1937, there were 6,914 members and candidates remaining in the regional party organization. In 1937 and early 1938, 822 members were expelled, 280 of them being labeled "enemies of the people" or "Trotskyists."⁴¹

Repression continued in 1939 and in 1940, right up to the beginning of the war. This time the purge was carried out on the rank-and-file level and in the middle echelons. From March 1939 to March 1940, 129 chairmen and 130 secretaries of village Soviets, and nineteen chairmen and twenty-three secretaries of district executive committees, were replaced.⁴²

On April 26 a resolution of the AUCP(B) Central Committee was adopted on the basis of a report on the work of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of the party. The work of the committee was harshly criticized.⁴³

If the close ties of the *teipa* kinship system are kept in mind, it is easy to imagine the attitude of the bulk of the population toward the repression and toward the authorities who carried it out.

Here, where age-old concepts of honor and mutual aid to one's kin still prevailed, where the custom of blood vengeance persisted, protests against the repression took the familiar patriarchal

form—blood for blood. The injured parties or their relatives avenged their kin and fled into the hills. The system of mutual protection which reigned in Chechen-Ingush society provided fairly reliable concealment for these fugitives. Bands of the most oddly assorted elements formed in the hills, and it was no easy matter to combat them.

On the other hand, measures were taken to normalize agrarian relations, which were closely bound up with the relations between the different nationalities. In connection with the decree of the May 1939 plenum of the AUCP(B) Central Committee "On Measures to Protect Socialized Lands from Being Sold Off" it was revealed that 31,745 *kolkhozniki* had excessive holdings, and 8,410 hectares were taken back from them. Socialization of livestock, agricultural equipment, and harness gear was also carried out, although the authorities had refrained from this earlier. At the same time resolutions were passed to eliminate "leveling" (*uravnilovka*) in payment for labor. A system of additional pay for crops of higher yields and for increased livestock productivity was instituted. But this measure was passed by the Council of People's Commissars and the AUCP(B) Central Committee literally on the eve of the war and could not have had much effect on the situation in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

In 1939-41 the party organization in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, bled white by repression, once again reached its 1934 level in membership, i.e., had grown substantially. At the beginning of the war the organization had eleven thousand members and candidate members.⁴⁴

In examining the factors that shaped the situation in Checheno-Ingushetia and affected the morale of its population at the beginning of the war, official historiography puts great stress on the Muslim religion as a powerful negative influence. At the time of collectivization in Chechnia there were 2,675 mosques and houses of prayer and 140 religious schools, as well as 850 mullahs and thirty-eight sheikhs financially supported by their congregations.⁴⁵ An enormous number of religious sects exerted their varied influences upon tens of thousands of people. The Muslim

clergy, if the official view is to be believed, fought desperately against collectivization and against the establishment of Soviet schools and veterinary and health centers, and whipped up an atmosphere of hostility against the teachers, doctors, and veterinarians, condemning them to ostracism. Many of these victims could not endure this moral terror and preferred to leave.

In 1937 the mullah Bersanov, in the settlement of Atagi, forced a substantial group of *kolkhozniki* to swear on the Koran that they would not work on the *kolkhozy*. In the settlement of Valerik, in Achkhoi-Martan district, the Kunta-Hajji sect, through the chairman of the *kolkhoz*, Khasbek Ozdemirov, forced the *kolkhozniki* to swear on the Koran "to sabotage *kolkhoz* production by every means possible."⁴⁶ Probably these incidents actually did occur. However, the motives that prompted the *kolkhozniki* to follow the mullahs remain undisclosed. It should not be forgotten that the majority of village mullahs were peasants like the others. Only on Friday did they go to the mosques to read to their fellow villagers from the Koran. Belonging to a religion is seen as something reprehensible in the USSR. But isn't it ironic that in many foreign Communist parties membership is compatible with belief in God? If the leaders of the Communist parties of Italy and France, let us say, were to announce tomorrow that after they came to power religious adherence would be regarded in a purely negative way, their parties would rapidly decline in membership and influence.

It is no new observation that repressive measures only strengthen the hold of religion and increase its power of attraction.

Even in the light of the few, sparse facts that we know, the situation in Checheno-Ingushetia at the beginning of the war appears unusually complex.

It is undoubtedly true that a section of the native population, especially in the upland areas, was hostile toward Soviet rule. This, however, is not the same as saying they took a friendly attitude toward the Nazi army. Rather, they simply wanted to lead their own lives. Some possibly dreamed of a return to the legen-

dary times before the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. However, their conception of those times was not only romantic but one-dimensional and far from accurate.

Filkin points out that with the outbreak of war "the remnants of the socially hostile elements, which had been shattered but not wholly destroyed, . . . intensified their resistance and began to commit terrorist acts against the best representatives and most active supporters of the Soviet regime and *kolkhoz* system and to undermine the *kolkhozy*."⁴⁷ Filkin emphasizes that "unconscious elements"⁴⁸ were drawn into the armed groups: he is referring to participation by various layers of the local population.

In 1940 the Sheripov band began to make its raids. Then there appeared the band of a certain Izrailov, formerly a Communist. Subsequently the two bands united. There were other armed groups or detachments "headed by inveterate anti-Soviet elements," wrote the newspaper *Groznenskii rabochii*, "such traitors and deserters as Badayev, Magomedov, Baisagurov, Gachirov, Shetsipov, Musostov, Alkhastov, Dakiyev, and others."⁴⁹ This very listing of the names of the leaders of the bands seems to point to the fact that the armed struggle in the mountains was not just some episodic occurrence, or merely a matter of isolated individuals.* The bands did not limit their actions to raids on the *kolkhozy* and government offices, nor were they content with merely plundering these organizations; they also terrorized the population and attempted to frustrate the authorities' efforts to mobilize against them.

At the end of 1941 the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of

* Evidence of the complexity of the problem of evaluating the bandit movement in Chechnia may be seen in the story of the alleged leader of the Sheripov band, younger brother of Aslanbek Sheripov, a famous hero of the civil war. The younger Sheripov was employed in the courts. According to his sister, Aisha Sheripova-Oshayeva, wife of the well-known writer Kh. D. Oshayev, her brother was sent into the mountains by the state-security organs to disrupt the functioning of a band and then "accidentally" perished in a crossfire. For many years she unsuccessfully sought an investigation into this case and the rehabilitation of her brother.

the party "placed a single task before all party organizations, the task of curbing the kulak-mullah elements."⁵⁰ People holding high posts in the party organizations of the committee were sent into eighty of the major *kolkhozy*, and representatives of the largest *kolkhozy* were added to the *nomenklatura* (the list of the most highly placed party personnel) of the committee. This represented a strengthening of the central government and at the same time the granting of broad powers and privileges to the chairmen of the *kolkhozy*. One hundred and fifty persons were sent from the towns to the *kolkhozy* to carry out a mass agitational campaign for a period of three months. In November 1941, by way of implementing the AUCP(B) Central Committee decree on the establishment of political departments in the machine-tractor stations and *sovkhozy*, over one hundred Communists were sent out into the rural areas. However, despite these exceptional measures, a year later, the armed struggle in the mountains, if the official reports are to be believed, was still in full swing.

Thus on November 22, 1942, in the settlement of Guni, in Vedeno district, a band of thirty-four attacked the "Red Livestock Breeder" section of a *kolkhoz*. The fighting, in which the *kolkhozniki* participated, went on for two hours, and several people were killed. Twenty-three of those who took part in the fighting were awarded certificates of honor by the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.⁵¹

More decisive measures were taken against the bands and deserters—special security units were organized, and the active party membership was everywhere mobilized to uncover and liquidate "the bandit groups and other counterrevolutionary elements."⁵²

According to a much later report in the newspaper *Groznenskii rabochii*, the Soviet command was forced to withdraw large Red Army formations (*soyedineniya*) from the front lines and throw them against the armed bandit groups in the mountains. It is generally known that a *soyedinenie* is a troop unit of rather large size, a brigade or larger. On the basis of this it is easy to reach certain

conclusions about the dimensions of the battle unfolding in the mountains.

In August 1973, Kh. Kh. Bokov, secretary of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of the CPSU and later chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, said the following at a symposium on the book *Essays in the History of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR*: "It is important for the patriotic education of the working people of our republic not only to hold up models worthy of imitation but also to condemn with righteous anger the traitors, deserters, and enemies of the people who sought to hamper the struggle of the Soviet people against the foreign invader."⁵³

Responding to this appeal, V. I. Filkin published an article in which he attempted to define the situation in which Chechen-Ingush society found itself during the war of 1941-45. He categorically asserted that the social base of "political banditism" was the kulaks, as well as the mullahs, sheikhs and—bourgeois nationalists!⁵⁴ (As though "bourgeois nationalists" form some separate social layer.)

In Filkin's opinion, the middle peasantry, which constituted a substantial percentage of the population, supported all the measures of the Soviet authorities and rendered assistance to the authorities in the battle against "anti-Soviet elements." Another section of the middle peasantry, which was somewhat better off, is said to have observed neutrality, but at times offered "direct support" to the anti-Soviet elements. However, this schema seems rather abstract and greatly resembles the well-known schematic representation of the roles of the "kulak" and "middle peasant" given in the *Short Course of the History of the AUCP(B)* (1938). One question, however, remains unanswered: If class differentiation was so clearly expressed in Chechnia, what role did the "poor peasants" play? No place has been found for them in Filkin's schema.

As early as the fall of 1941 the reverses of the Soviet army in the south began to have unfavorable repercussions in the Cauca-

sus. Fear that Turkey might strike a sudden blow from the south speeded up the mobilization effort. The events in and around Moscow on October 15–16, when tens and hundreds of thousands fled the capital out of fear that the Nazis would soon take it, heightened tensions in the south still further.

On October 22 the Grozny Municipal Defense Committee, headed by V. I. Ivanov, first secretary of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee, was formed. Thousands of people poured out to help erect defensive barriers around the city. A special sapper brigade was formed out of those of draft age. These efforts were not in vain: Grozny kept the Germans at bay in the fall of 1942. The German offensive slowed, and it died out at the approaches to the city. In mid-November 1941, formation of the 255th Special Ingush Cavalry Regiment and Reserve Division began. It should be remembered that part of the draft-age pool had already been called into the Red Army before the war began and were fighting all along the vast Soviet-German front. The formation of the new units took place amid the tensions created by the fighting in the mountains. V. I. Filkin, who was then one of the secretaries of the regional committee, writes that “serious distortions” occurred at certain district enlistment offices. The entire male population was called up, including old men and invalids who were absolutely unfit for military service. The draftees were often kept sitting in the barracks without rations, and sometimes they would leave without permission in order to have a decent meal at home. Absence without leave grew to such dimensions that the authorities became seriously alarmed, and in March 1942 the drafting of Chechens and Ingush of military age was discontinued. This decision was later acknowledged to have been an error, and of course was attributed to the machinations of Beria.*⁵⁵

In August 1942 the decision was made to mobilize Chechens and Ingush into the Red Army on a voluntary basis. A second

* After Stalin’s death in 1953, many of his crimes were attributed to Lavrenty Beria, head of the NKVD from 1938 until his execution in 1953.

mobilization was carried out from January 25 to February 5, 1943, and a third in March of that year.

A decree of the regional committee of the party and the Council of People's Commissars of Checheno-Ingushetia noted with satisfaction "the courage, fearlessness, and firmness" demonstrated by the Chechens and Ingush mobilized in September 1942.⁵⁶ In May 1943, summing up the results of the second and third mobilizations, a special commission of the Transcaucasian Front commented in a completely favorable way on the conduct of the Chechens and Ingush at the front, and the regional committee stated with satisfaction that the "call-up of Chechen and Ingush volunteers into the Red Army was accompanied by the demonstration of genuine Soviet patriotism."⁵⁷

In addition, 13,363 Chechens and Ingush underwent military training in the ranks of the people's militia (*narodnoe opolchenie*). This represented about 40 percent of all those receiving such instruction in the autonomous republic.⁵⁸

V. I. Filkin cites data which he considers incomplete on the number of Chechens and Ingush drafted into the active army. He gives the figure of more than 18,500, not counting those drafted before the war began.⁵⁹

Several hundred Chechens and Ingush were part of the garrison of the legendary Brest Fortress.* But the attempt to play down this fact continues to this day.

Not long after the Germans were driven from the Caucasus reconstruction work began in Checheno-Ingushetia as elsewhere, and at the same time a purge of the party ranks and state apparatus began. Speaking at a plenum of the Grozny municipal committee of the party on February 19, 1943, the secretary of the committee, Berdichevsky, demanded "that mass political work among women, young people, Komsomols, and especially among the Chechens and Ingush, be decisively strengthened, and that the best people, those totally devoted to the cause of the party, be ac-

* Behind German lines, it was under siege for three months.

tively sought out and won to the party's ranks."⁶⁰ The importance of this declaration is obvious, for it, in fact, contains a positive assessment of the role of the Chechens and Ingush in the defense of the Caucasus. The continued expression of this point of view can easily be followed in the pages of *Groznenskii rabochii* for 1943.

At the end of the year the newspaper published a round-up article by G. Borisov and M. Grin entitled "The Friendship of Peoples Is the Source of Our Party's Strength," which once again confirmed the self-sacrificing struggle of all the peoples of the Caucasus, without exception, against Hitler's armies.⁶¹ The newspaper recalled heroes of the war and the fact that fourteen million rubles had been raised to build an armored train named after the hero of the civil war Aslanbek Sheripov.⁶²

February 23, 1944, was Red Army Day. Everywhere men were invited to meetings at the village Soviet buildings. No one suspected that disaster was at hand. Studebaker trucks rolled up (lend-lease from the American allies to help the Red Army). Soldiers holding automatics appeared. The Chechens were held at gunpoint. In every village the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was read, announcing the total deportation of the Chechens and Ingush for treason and collaboration with the enemy. Twenty kilograms of baggage per family was the maximum that could be taken.

Bidding farewell to their native lands, the older people whispered the words of a prayer: *Allah il illahu* (Allah is great). Women wept; some children were happy at the prospect of getting a ride in a truck, but others were not sure and stuck close to their elders.

During the deportation terrible tragedies occurred. A certain Chechen writer has told of one.

The chairman of one of the village Soviets, the eighty-year-old Tusha, assisted in the removal of his fellow villagers, his own family being shipped off as well. Only his daughter-in-law remained with him, with her child at her

breast. Addressing a Georgian officer, Tusha said in his broken Russian, "Me born here, me here die. Me no go anywhere!"

Tusha spread his arms out and stood before the gates of his home. The daughter-in-law understood. She cried out and, pressing her child to her breast, took hold of her father-in-law. She pulled him and pulled him toward our group, crying out all the while, "Daddy, Daddy, come on! They'll kill you." It all happened in an instant. The officer gave an order to a Russian soldier standing with his automatic at the ready.

"Shoot! All three."

The soldier blanched and trembled. He said, "The man I will shoot, but not the woman and child."

A TT pistol flashed in the officer's hand. Before the soldier had finished his last word he lay on the ground, shot through the head. Within the same instant, the officer had killed Tusha, his daughter-in-law, and her child. They drove us in haste down the path to the roadway. There trucks were waiting for us. Those who lagged along the way were shot. That is the way it was.*

Did this nameless Russian soldier know that the moment he refused to kill that woman and child he saved the honor of the Russian people?

It is not likely that he thought so. He was simply behaving like a human being. And his entire person rebelled when they tried to turn him into an animal. He was left there in the mountains, lying by the old man, the woman, and the child, a symbol of human brotherhood and its inseverable bonds. Someday at that place a monument will be erected to Mankind.

The lend-lease Studebakers rolled down out of the mountains.

And then came the decree of the Presidium of the RSFSR

* *Narushiteli ego voli* [Violators of his will], unpublished manuscript. About two thousand resisters remained in the mountains. They wandered from place to place. They were hunted and killed, but they did not surrender. And the mountains hid many of them in safety.

Supreme Soviet on the changing of the names of the following districts:

Achkhoi-Martan	to Novosel'skii
Kurchaloyevskii	to Shuragatskii
Nazranovskii	to Kosta-Khetagurovskii
Nozhai-Yurtovskii	to Andalalskii
Sayasanovskii	to Ritliabskii
Urus-Martan	to Krasnoarmeiskii
Shalinskii	to Mezhdurechenskii

The district centers were also renamed accordingly.

The Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished. In its place Grozny region was created. The native population of Chechens and Ingush, which had numbered 425,000 before the war and had constituted more than 58 percent of the total population of the autonomous republic, was forcibly removed. Chechens and Ingush from Northern Ossetia and Dagestan shared their fate. Similarly, Chechens and Ingush in other cities and regions of the Soviet Union were deported. Only in Moscow did two Chechens manage to remain during the period of deportation.

Part of the territory of the autonomous republic, the Prigorodnyi district populated primarily by Ingush, was transferred to the Northern Ossetian ASSR. At the same time, by order of the authorities, tens of thousands of Russians, Avars, Dargins, Ossetians, and Ukrainians as well were resettled in Grozny region. There was one main reason for this—to make the restoration of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR impossible in the future. But this measure also served an immediate purpose—a utilitarian one, so to speak—to prevent the economy of Grozny region, especially its agriculture, from collapsing as a result of the depopulation of the territory.⁶³

THE KABARDINO-BALKAR ASSR

The Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Region was founded on September 1, 1921. Fifteen years later, on December 5, 1936, the

autonomous region was transformed into the Kabardino-Balkar Soviet Autonomous Socialist Republic.

In 1939 the republic had 349,700 inhabitants. Of these, 150,300, or 43 percent of the population, were Kabardinians; 127,100, or 36.3 percent, Russians; and 39,000, or 11.2 percent, Balkars.⁶⁴

The war reached the territory of the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR in the fall of 1942. On October 29, German troops took the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, the city of Nalchik. Taking advantage of the brief interregnum, a former civil servant, Selim Zedov, assumed the post of mayor. Subsequently, under the aegis of the occupation authorities, a local administration was formed in which three émigrés played an active role—Prince Z. Kelemetov, Prince Shekmanov (Shaposhnikov), and a certain A. Uzenov, whom Soviet sources identify as a kulak.⁶⁵ Besides these, the "government" included Prince Devlatgeri Tavkeshev, Makhdev, Khoshchishev, and Prizenko.⁶⁶ Entering the territory of the republic together with the occupation forces was the so-called Mountain battalion, commanded by T. Oberlander, a German creation composed of Soviet prisoners of war from the Caucasus. This battalion was an odd mixture of types, varying from outright enemies of Soviet power to prisoners of war who joined under pressure, unable to bear the murderous conditions in the Nazi camps.⁶⁷

The occupation of Kabardino-Balkaria was relatively brief, from two to six months depending on the region. At its greatest extent, it lasted from August 12, 1942, to January 11, 1943. Wishing to ensure a stable rear area for its troops, the German command permitted the local administration, which it controlled, to open up the mosques and churches, hoping to win the support of part of the population in this way. On December 6, 1942, the occupation authorities issued instructions for a new system of land tenure, under which the dissolution of *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* was permitted in the upland cattle-raising areas (inhabited mainly by Balkars) and the dividing up of *kolkhoz* property; socialist property was abolished.⁶⁸ In an effort to demonstrate the supposed reciprocity of friendly feelings between the occupation forces and

the Balkar population, a celebration of the Muslim religious holiday of Kurman was organized in Nalchik on December 18, 1942. Instructions were given by the local "government" to the *Burgo-meister* of the village settlement of Lechinskaya to send festive national costumes to Nalchik for Kurman, as well as a horse in full ceremonial regalia (this was the one forwarded to Hitler as a gift), poultry, wine, fruit, sweets, and a select group of the most attractive male and female dancers.⁶⁹ At a later time this celebration of Kurman served as one of the bases for the charge of treason against the Balkars.

However, beneath this amicable exterior lay the cold and calculating policies of conquerors who saw in the peoples of the Caucasus merely an instrument for realizing their plans and an object of exploitation. The export of food and raw materials and the economic exploitation of the region was introduced on a wide scale with characteristic German efficiency and fascist ruthlessness.⁷⁰

During the brief period of occupation, the Germans and the punitive forces made up of Soviet citizens recruited to German service killed 2,053 prisoners of war and 2,188 civilians in the population as a whole.⁷¹ In the Balkar settlements alone, 500 people were killed, 150 of them children.⁷² In one of the Balkar settlements, 52 of the 125 homes were burned down and 63 of the 512 inhabitants shot or brutally tortured.⁷³

At the very beginning of the war, five thousand Balkars joined the Red Army and many of them died fighting for their country. More than six hundred men from the Balkar village of Gundelen, in Baksanskii district, fell on the various fronts of the Great Patriotic War.⁷⁴ A number of sources mention the participation of Balkars in the partisan movement, particularly in the United Partisan Detachment of the Republic. They also fought in the 115th Cavalry Division, formed in the fall of 1941.⁷⁵

At the same time, part of the population did collaborate with the Germans. There were plans to separate Balkaria from Kabarda and to unite with Karachai (on the basis of their common language and Islamic religion) under a Turkish protectorate—an echo of the

Pan-Turkist schemes.⁷⁶ Several Turkish emissaries visited Balkaria during the war.

On January 4, 1943, Nalchik was liberated by a Red Army regiment under a Major Okhman. On January 11, the last Nazi units abandoned the territory of Kabardino-Balkaria.

For fourteen months the population of the republic worked tirelessly to rebuild the economy and heal the wounds inflicted by the enemy invasion.

On January 4, 1944, the first anniversary of liberation from German occupation was triumphantly celebrated.⁷⁷ No one suspected that disaster was imminent.

But on March 8 the Balkar settlements were surrounded by troops, the Balkars driven away in trucks, then loaded onto cattle-cars and shipped off to Kazakhstan and Kirgizia.

Of course not a word of this appeared in print. Two days after the deportation of the Balkars, the newspaper of the republic published a telegram from Stalin in which the Leader sent "the fraternal greetings and thanks of the Red Army" for the 15,300,000 rubles collected in the republic to outfit the tank column called "Death to the German Invaders"!⁷⁸

A month after the deportation of the Balkars the CPSU Central Committee passed a resolution replacing the party leadership of Kabardino-Balkaria.⁷⁹ Z. D. Kumekhov, former secretary of the regional committee, was transferred to the position of chairman of the Council of Ministers of the ASSR.⁸⁰

On April 16, 1944, the newspaper of the republic, previously entitled *Socialist Kabardino-Balkaria*, began to come out under a new name, *Kabardinian Truth*. From then on the newspaper was referred to as the organ of the Kabardinian regional committee of the AUCP(B).⁸¹ Thus the inhabitants of the republic learned that they now lived under an autonomous state structure of a different name—the Kabardinian ASSR. After another three days the newspaper published what was supposed to be a "militant and timely" editorial with the headline "To Be Vigilant Is the Duty of Every Citizen." At that very time the freight trains carrying the

Balkar population were already on their way. The inhabitants of Kabarda were warned that the Germans had left their agents behind in the liberated zones and that the penetration of alien elements into leading positions in *kolkhozy* and factories were not merely isolated occurrences. The newspaper urged that the authors of false rumors be exposed and brought strictly to account, and it called for the intensification of explanatory propaganda work (on what subject, however, it did not say).⁸²

After another month, on May 20, 1944 (when the Balkars had already been settled in Central Asia) the newspaper appeared with an editorial entitled "Education of National Cadres." Kabarda had need of national cadres! In the entire republic there were only three Kabardinian doctors. Among agronomists there was not one Kabardinian with higher education; at the largest plant in Nalchik, the meat-packing complex, only one Kabardinian worker was employed.

In 1944 a total of only sixty-two Kabardinians completed secondary school. There were only twenty-six at the pedagogical institute, and the overwhelming majority of school-age children of this nationality were enrolled only up to the fifth or sixth grade.⁸³

But how could this be? Where had the national cadres disappeared to? Had there been any in the first place? Perhaps the national cadres had been thoroughly eliminated during the repression of the 1930s.

The call for the advancement of national cadres was accompanied by a savage purge of the party and government apparatus of the ASSR. In September 1944 the former leaders of the republic, Kumekhov and Akhokhov, were removed from their posts. The charge against them was that

at the moment when the republic needed the highest degree of responsibility—during the fighting against the German fascist forces on the territory of the Kabardinian ASSR and under the temporary occupation—they committed a number of serious political errors. After the Germans were driven out, instead of providing leadership in a Bolshevik way for

the struggle to successfully liquidate the consequences of the German fascist occupation, and to purge our ranks of alien elements and individuals unworthy of confidence, Comrades Kumekhov and Akhokhov took the non-party path of covering up for these people, and often promoted them to leading positions, including their own relatives who had committed crimes against the motherland.

The former leaders of the republic were also accused of selling state property.⁸⁴

There can be no doubt that this resolution—and the ensuing decree of the AUCP(B) Central Committee Orgburo, in November of that year, on the work of the Kabardinian regional committee of the party, which contained the demand for intensified work “in liquidating the consequences of lying fascist propaganda which had influenced the backward section of the population”⁸⁵—had only one purpose: to justify, after the fact, the total deportation of the Balkars as a people, and to shift the moral responsibility onto the former leaders of Kabardino-Balkaria.

IV

The Special Settlements

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of inhabitants of the Caucasus and the Crimea were sent into exile. For thousands of kilometers railroad cars jammed the main rail arteries heading east. At major junctions where engines were changed and water taken on, passengers in oncoming trains, railroad workers, and local residents who happened to be in the vicinity stared at the poor unfortunates in fear and surprise.

Dmitry Gulia, the great Abkhazian educator, and his wife, Yelena Andreyevna, were traveling toward Moscow at that time. At one of the railroad stations in the Northern Caucasus they saw

an unbelievable sight: an extremely long train, made up of heated freight cars, jammed full of people who looked like Caucasian Mountaineers. They were being taken off somewhere toward the east, women, children, old people, all. They looked terribly sad and woebegone. . . . These were the Chechens and Ingush, and they were not traveling of their own free will. They were being deported. They had committed "very serious crimes against the Motherland." . . .

“These children too?” [Gulia burst out].

“The children are going with their parents.”

“And the old men and women?”

“They’re going with their children.”

“But that sounds like the idea of the ‘criminal population’
 . . . it’s been sixty years since I heard that.”*

This meant the deportation of almost a million people! But for what crime? Nothing was said or written about that anywhere!¹

If you are a historian and are curious about this, take a look at the local newspapers *Groznenskii rabochii* (Grozny worker), *Sotsialisticheskaia Kabardino-Balkaria* (Socialist Kabardino-Balkaria), *Kalmystskaia pravda* (Kalmyk truth), *Stavropol'skaia pravda* (Stavropol truth), and *Krasnyi Krym* (Red Crimea) for 1943 and 1944. From the 1943 newspapers you will learn about the people’s joy on the occasion of their liberation from enemy occupation and the feats of arms of the sons of Checheno-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai, Cherkessia, and Kalmykia. You will read about the exploits of the Crimean partisans and such Red Army soldiers as the famed pilot Sultan-Khan, a Crimean Tatar who twice became a Hero of the Soviet Union; the Chechen sniper Khanashpe Nuradilov; the Hero of the Soviet Union Ibraikhan Beibulatov; the Balkar Konkoshev, also a Hero of the Soviet Union; and many, many others. Let us remember these names. They will appear again, but only fourteen years later, in the newspapers of 1957–58.

But from the newspapers of 1944 you will not learn much. And you will not find a single word there about the deportations—neither in the central press nor in the local press.

Nevertheless you can find out something from the newspapers. Thus, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR

* The reference is to the tsarist deportations of entire village populations after the Crimean War.

fell on February 25, 1944. But there were no greetings from Moscow.² That was undoubtedly a bad omen.

And sure enough, on March 3, 1944, *Groznenskii rabochii* appeared for the last time as the organ of the regional committee and Grozny municipal committee of the party and of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.³ On Saturday, March 4, 1944, the masthead of *Groznenskii rabochii* bore the sole designation "Organ of the Grozny Regional and Municipal Committees of the AUCP (B)."⁴

Where did the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR disappear to? Its deputies, along with the voters, were on their way to some rather distant places.

During those very days a session of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR was convening in Moscow. The Russian Federation, of course, included the autonomous areas of Checheno-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai, and Kalmykia. But none of the deputies to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet rose from their seats to ask what had happened to their colleagues, the deputies from the autonomous areas of the Northern Caucasus, or why such a massive relocation of voters had taken place, or for what reason, after all, the autonomous areas had been liquidated. The deputies in Moscow, the chosen representatives of the indestructible bloc of Communists and non-party people, remained silent.

In order to transport the people of the Northern Caucasus and the Crimea to their new places of settlement some 40,200 freight cars were needed. You don't have to be a military specialist to imagine the scale of Operation Deportation or to understand what the removal of a great quantity of transport equipment from military use implied under wartime conditions in the fall of 1943 and the first half of 1944, how it affected military operations. Any commandant in charge of a railway station who delayed a train with military cargo could be court-martialed and convicted of sabotage with the full severity of the law in time of war. What punishment then should be meted out to a commandant who delayed hundreds of trains for several months?

We do not know, and will never know for certain, what were

the consequences of the shortage of transport equipment for Soviet troops, what effect it had on the situation at the front, or how many military personnel perished because of military supplies that were not delivered in time, military equipment that was left stranded, and troops who were not redeployed in time.

S. M. Shtemenko, the former deputy chief of the General Staff of the Soviet army, in his memoirs, makes it fairly clear that there were difficulties, for example, in transferring troops from the Crimea to other fronts after its liberation, and that these difficulties arose in connection with the forced removal of the Crimean Tatars. Shtemenko was in the Crimea from May 14 to May 23, 1944, i.e., at the time the operation to remove the Crimean Tatars was being planned and carried out. This is what he writes: "The transfer of troops was especially complicated. There was not enough fuel for the use of motor transport to concentrate the troops at railroad stations. The distribution of railroad cars and other troop conveyances in the Crimea was wholly in the hands of General Serov, who was then the deputy people's commissar of internal affairs. The only way you could get them from him was with a fight. The main loading stations were in the Kherson and Snigirevka areas, to which the troops had to make their way, for the most part, on foot."⁵

The Russian word *spetsialny*, borrowed from the West, refers to something unique, different from anything else, some property inherent only in a given object or in a particular situation or set of circumstances.

During the civil war in Russia this word, like many others in the Russian language, began to be abbreviated. Right at the start there appeared the contraction *voyenspets*, from the Russian phrase *voyenny spetsialist* (military specialist); then a whole avalanche of names and terms came crashing down, with the word-element *spets* acquiring quite a unique and important meaning. Thus there appeared the word *spetsovka*, meaning work clothes, overalls; *spetsotdel*, referring to the Special Department, a secret body in charge of the cadres and system of functioning in a fac-

tory, etc.; and *spetspayok*, the special food allowance, sometimes for particular categories of workers, but most often for apparatus personnel. Such word formations containing the element *spets* are quite numerous. In fact, *spets* acquired an independent meaning all its own, designating a specialist—not just any specialist but one with an engineering or technical background trained in the old, prerevolutionary school.

Then the time came when it was necessary to give a name to places of internment and exile for Soviet citizens who had gone wrong.

Thus the world was given a new word, *spetsposeleniye*, i.e., “special settlement.” It was used for the places of penal exile or deportation where life went on, not in accordance with ordinary laws and customs, but under a special system governed by harsh regulations and instructions confirmed by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD).

The special settlement system began to take shape as early as the time of collectivization, when hundreds of thousands of “dekulakized” peasants were stripped of their property and civil rights and sent to Siberia.

The people deported from the Caucasus and the Crimea were also consigned to a life under *spetsposeleniye* regulations.

And there is something else to keep in mind—the deportation of a million people could not have been carried out if the state agencies involved had not accumulated a vast amount of experience in governing masses of people in the concentration camps, if they had not tested out the smallest details of people’s behavior hundreds of times in places of exile and internment, if they had not learned that the life of a deported person was worth nothing, and if they had not been sure that at every level of the repressive apparatus they would enjoy complete immunity.

What were the reasons for the forced resettlement of these populations? What was the motivation behind it?

These questions are not nearly so simple as they seem at first glance.

The official charge was that the overwhelming majority of the

deported people had collaborated with the enemy, the Nazi army and the German occupation regime.

But obviously we should also mention certain "theoretical" justifications for this and similar actions against entire nations put forward by the head of the Soviet state and the Communist Party, the central and infallible authority of the world Communist movement on the national question and every other question. Need I mention his name?

The documentation on this question is extremely limited. There are the officially published decrees and laws of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and RSFSR on the dissolution of the autonomous republics, and there are accounts of unpublished laws found in dissertations and history books on the respective republics or in histories of the party organizations in these republics. A significant amount of work in bringing such documents to light, systematizing them, and partially analyzing them has been done by Kh. I. Khutuyev and R. I. Muzafarov. In addition to the decrees, the instructions on the regime of the *spetsposeleniye* and the modification of that regime have even greater importance.

On June 25, 1946, retroactively, two years after the event, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR issued a decree entitled "On the Dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the Transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean Region." We cite the text of this decree in full.

During the Great Patriotic War, when the people of the USSR were heroically defending the honor and independence of the fatherland in the struggle against the German fascist invaders, many Chechens and Crimean Tatars, at the instigation of German agents, joined volunteer units organized by the Germans and, together with German troops, engaged in armed struggle against units of the Red Army; also at the bidding of the Germans they formed diversionary bands for the struggle against Soviet authority in the rear; meanwhile the main mass of the population of the Chechen-

Ingush and Crimean ASSRs took no counteraction against these betrayers of the fatherland.

In connection with this, the Chechens and the Crimean Tatars were resettled in other regions of the USSR, where they were given land, together with the necessary governmental assistance for their economic establishment. On the proposal of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished and the Crimean ASSR was changed into the Crimean region.

The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic resolves:

1. To confirm the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the changing of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean region.
2. To make the necessary alterations and additions to Article 14 of the Constitution of the RSFSR.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the
RSFSR I. Vlasov
Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the
RSFSR P. Bakhumurov
Moscow, The Kremlin, June 25, 1946⁶

The charges against the Balkars were presented in a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated April 8, 1944. The accusation was that during the occupation of the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR by the German fascist invaders the main mass of the Balkars had betrayed the fatherland, joined armed detachments organized by the Germans, engaged in subversive activities against Red Army units, assisted the Nazi occupation forces by serving them as guides in locating the mountain passes in the Caucasus, and, after the Germans had been driven out, joined bands organized by the Germans to combat the Soviet authorities.⁷

Ch. S. Kulayev reports similar accusations against the Karachai in his dissertation: "The charges against the Karachai people were

that during the occupation of their territory the bulk of them had allegedly betrayed the fatherland, joined detachments organized by the Germans, assisted the fascist forces by serving as guides to the Caucasian mountain passes, and, after the liberation of the Caucasus, joined armed bands organized by the Germans to combat the Soviet authorities."⁸

The allegations contained in the decree on the dissolution of the autonomous areas cannot withstand criticism. In the case of the Crimean Tatars, how can they be accused of participating in diversionist bands after the retreat of the Germans when every last Tatar was deported from the Crimea a week after it was liberated?

Also totally absurd is the charge that "the main mass of the population of the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean ASSRs took no counteraction against these betrayers of the fatherland." If that was so, it would mean that it was the Russian population of the Crimea, above all, and of Checheno-Ingushetia, that took no counteraction. The "main mass" of the population in the Crimea (approximately half) was Russian, the Tatars constituting only one-quarter. In Checheno-Ingushetia, on the other hand, about 35 percent were Russians, living alongside the 50 percent who were Chechens. But here too, Russians fall into the category of the "main mass of the population." Consequently, according to the logic of the authors of the decree, it is not only Chechens and Ingush (incidentally, there is not one word in the decree about the Ingush, but they were deported nevertheless; that is the level on which the law operates in the Soviet Union!), and not only Crimean Tatars, who should have been deported, but Russians too. Fortunately that did not happen.

Is it true that the Tatars, Chechens, and Ingush did not defend the "honor and independence of the Fatherland" during the war? Is it right to counterpose them to the "people of the USSR"? Don't they also belong to that category? The truth is that they were represented in the Red Army in as great a percentage as any of the other peoples in our country.

Finally, as N. S. Khrushchev acknowledged at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, there were absolutely no military consid-

erations necessitating the deportation of peoples, because the enemy was being rolled back everywhere under the blows of the Red Army.

These charges were not only absurd but grossly immoral and unjust. It is impermissible to spread public accusations of treason against every last member of a nationality, including nursing infants and their mothers and helpless old people.

Where did such accusations come from? After all, this type of thing could only reflect negatively upon the first multinational socialist state in the world, where, according to the constantly reiterated official doctrine, the ideology of internationalism, friendship, and brotherhood prevailed.

Perhaps Stalin's speeches will shed some light on this problem and help us probe the theoretical foundations of these arbitrary and lawless acts against entire peoples.

During the great purges of the 1930s the justification was advanced that the class struggle intensifies as the country advances toward socialism. This provided the rationale for the condemnation and elimination of individuals and even entire groups. In 1944 Stalin introduced a new element, providing the "basis" for possible repression against entire nations. He divided the nations of the world into "aggressive" and "peace-loving."⁹ (This served the purpose, simultaneously, of justifying the lack of Soviet preparedness for the war with Hitler's Germany in June 1941.)

In 1949, in connection with certain considerations of the moment, Stalin referred to the German and Soviet people as people who "possessed the greatest potential in Europe for carrying out major actions of worldwide importance."¹⁰ So much the worse for the other peoples of Europe!

Is there any need now to say that this way of dividing nations into different categories is totally indefensible? For if nations can be divided up this way, why not separate them into other categories, for example, revolutionary and nonrevolutionary, patriotic and unpatriotic, loyal and treacherous, etc., etc.?

Incidentally, Karl Marx during the 1848 revolutions (when he

did not yet suspect that all his writings would become "classics of Marxism"! wrote angrily more than once about nonrevolutionary nations (a category he applied, in particular, to the Czechs). Therefore, in principle, the possibility of classifying nations by categories relevant to one or another conjunctural consideration was always present in the arsenal of Marxism. For the sake of fairness and accuracy we should note that Lenin rejected such classifications and that his works in fact corrected the Marx of the pre-Marxist period.

On the other hand, charges of treason and betrayal, and the possibilities and ways of using such charges, fascinated Stalin throughout his long political career. During the civil war, he was never ashamed to bring such accusations against loyal military specialists. In the interwar period he sent hundreds of thousands of people off to a better world on charges of betrayal, and among these, political opponents constituted only a numerically insignificant minority. During the Great Patriotic War, in an effort to clear himself of responsibility for the setbacks in the initial phases, he applied the charge of treason to all Soviet soldiers and officers unfortunate enough to become prisoners-of-war. He simply wrote them off, refusing to recognize their existence. In replying to a toast by Churchill at the Teheran Conference (this happened on November 30, 1943, at a formal dinner in honor of the British prime minister's sixty-ninth birthday) Stalin said that in Russia even people of little courage, even cowards, had become heroes. And whoever did not become a hero was killed.¹¹

However, we should discard the primitive notion that decisions taken at the highest level occurred unexpectedly and were made only because Stalin or someone else wanted them. In a state like ours, where the historical experience of bureaucratic rule has deep roots going back to Byzantium, and where the Muscovite officials were well versed in the ways of dragging things out for years without ever making any decisions, an extremely important role is played by the official "case" or "dossier," or, to use the modern term, the system of informing and denunciation.

Such an important decision as the forced deportation of peoples

had to be, and in fact was, a kind of official endorsement of, or throwing of official weight behind, the great flood of reports about the situation in the various areas concerned. The reports were forwarded through various parallel channels—those of the party and government, of the military, the central headquarters of the partisan movement.

It is enough to read the documents published in collections dealing with Kalmykia and the Crimea during the war to see this. But thanks to the digging done by historians, we also have at our disposal unpublished documents of the party leadership in the Crimea and Kalmykia which show that the initial accusations came from party bodies in these autonomous republics. As we have said, the charge of treason against the entire Crimean Tatar people originated with the leadership of the partisan movement in the Crimea. But it is obvious that this information, which was sent to the Crimean regional committee of the party, was initially accepted by that committee as accurate and passed along as such. Only later, when it became clear that a goodly amount of misinformation was concealed in these reports, did the regional committee leadership try to correct its earlier point of view; but, alas, the "case" had already been started, and it moved along inexorably, following its own special bureaucratic laws, and heading toward the bureaucratically logical and inevitable culmination. The same thing happened in Kalmykia and, we must assume, in the other autonomous regions as well.

Thus, there are reports that the Astrakhan and Stalingrad regional committees insisted on the deportation of the Kalmyks and that the summary memorandum by P. F. Kasatkin, cadre secretary of the Kalmyk regional committee, lay at the heart of the "case" against the Kalmyks. There is very little information on the positions taken by higher bodies of the party in the other areas where autonomy was abolished.

One of the fundamental features of the phenomenon that is (not very precisely) called Stalinism is the provision and use of information organized on the principle of verisimilitude, true in part

but seasoned with a goodly share of misinformation—that is, legally sanctioned eyewash.

Toward the end, apparently, both the Crimean and Kalmyk regional committees tried to forestall the fatal outcome. But, alas, they proved powerless to prevent it. The leaders of the autonomous regions themselves were forced to take the long road—not all of them, of course; just the ones in the appropriate national category. However, owing to another peculiarity of the Soviet system, caste privilege, the leaders of Kalmykia traveled to the *areas of special settlement not in cattle cars but in first-class passenger coaches; some leaders in the Crimea were even allowed to travel to the railroad stations in their own official automobiles.*

We do not have any accurate information on the circumstances under which the final decisions were made at the highest level. There is only the testimony of Colonel Tokayev, an Ossetian defector to the West. His account was first published in 1951 in *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, a publication sharing the views of the Socialist International; since then it has been cited in a number of works by Western scholars, including the book by Robert Conquest.¹²

There are two points worth noting in Tokayev's assertions: first, the recommendation of the Soviet general staff, made as early as 1940, that the situation in the Northern Caucasus made it necessary to take "special measures" in good time; and second, that the final decision to deport the Chechens was not the result of Stalin's unilateral action but the outcome of a discussion on the question at a joint meeting of the Politburo and the Soviet High Command on February 11, 1943.

Tokayev reports that two main points of view were expressed at this meeting. One view, supported by Molotov, Zhdanov, Voznesensky, Andreyev, and others, favored the immediate and public dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. The other view, supported by Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Khrushchev, Kalinin, and Beria, and endorsed by Stalin, was to postpone the deportation until the Germans had been driven back. Only Mikoyan, who

agreed in principle that the Chechens should be punished, expressed the fear that such a deportation would hurt the Soviet Union's reputation abroad. According to other reports, when the idea of deporting the Chechens and Ingush came up in the Politburo, the question was raised whether this would hurt the oil industry in the area. A most reassuring answer was forthcoming—that the entire engineering and technical staff was Russian and that only an insignificant number of Chechens and Ingush were employed as oil workers, in low-skilled jobs. We are unable to verify these reports and therefore will refrain from commenting.

At the Twentieth Party Congress, three years after Stalin's death, it was officially stated that the deportations of the Caucasian peoples, the Kalmyks, the Crimean Tatars, and even the Volga Germans were arbitrary acts associated with the "Stalin personality cult." But it took eleven years (from 1956 to 1967) for this acknowledgment to find official, legal expression, and the wrongs that were committed have not been fully corrected even to this day.

We sometimes forget, however, that deportation became a standard method of official policy not in 1943 or 1944 but much earlier, during collectivization, when the kulaks, or, more precisely, the millions of peasants who were listed as "exploiters," were deported from the central regions of the country, and from the Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, to Siberia and Central Asia. Who can say exactly what a "kulak" was? No one. The victims of collectivization included not only the wealthier peasants who employed wage labor but also vast masses of other peasants, indiscriminately "de-kulakized" for a variety of reasons. This downtrodden mass of people, stripped of their possessions and all their rights, became the foundation on which the special settlements were built. The first instructions on special settlements appeared at that time. Simultaneously the first deportations along national lines began.

As far back as the early 1930s, Chinese and Koreans were resettled from the Far East and were also removed from the cen-

tral regions of Russia. Some of them were openly accused of being Japanese agents. Later, in 1939-41, trainloads of "hostile class elements" rolled eastward from the newly annexed Baltic countries, the Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia, Northern Bukovina, and Bessarabia. In the summer of 1941 German citizens of the USSR, the overwhelming majority of whom were from the liquidated Volga German ASSR, appeared in Central Asia. By the time of the war with Hitler Germany the regime of the special settlements had taken final shape, although this system continued to be modified in different ways—always in the direction of greater harshness.

In 1948 and 1949 a new wave of deportees from the Baltic and Moldavia reached Central Asia and Siberia. A campaign of wholesale collectivization, with "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" to accompany it, was then underway in those areas. These harsh measures might have resulted in what the authorities would regard as "a more homogeneous class society" in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, but they were not taking any chances; they also wanted to water down the indigenous national population.

We should note that this wave of deportees involved people inhabiting the border regions of the Soviet Union. To replace them, people from Central Russia and the Ukraine were resettled in these areas.

The colonizing of the localities depopulated by the 1943-44 deportations involved mainly Russians, although in part local nationalities considered loyal were also brought in.

If Koreans and Chinese had at one time been suspected or accused of being agents of Japan, why shouldn't the Kalmyk Buddhists be regarded as potential agents of China? Stalin himself, in one of his speeches at the Twelfth Party Congress in 1923, said, "All we have to do is make one small mistake in relation to the small territory of the Kalmyks, who have ties with Tibet and China, and that will affect our work in a far worse way than mistakes in regard to the Ukraine."¹³

Did this express an internationalist understanding of the connection between national relations and international relations—or

was this a Great Russian chauvinist speaking? Lenin gave a clear and unambiguous answer to that question in one of his last articles. * The leader of the Russian revolution regarded Stalin unqualifiedly as a Great Russian chauvinist.

It was precisely to Stalin, Ordzhonikidze's ally, that Lenin was referring when he wrote of a certain Georgian who "himself is a real and true 'nationalist-socialist,' and even a vulgar Great Russian bully."¹⁴ Lenin insisted on distinguishing between the nationalism of oppressor nations and the nationalism of oppressed nations, the nationalism of big nations and the nationalism of small nations. In regard to the nationalism of small nations, Lenin wrote, "we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty of an infinite number of cases of violence and insult."¹⁵ And further on Lenin wrote, "That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or great nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, great only as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality which obtains in actual practice. . . . In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate to the non-Russians for the lack of trust, the suspicion, and the insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them in the past."¹⁶

* V. I. Lenin, "K voprosu o natsional'nostiakh ili ob 'avtonimizatsii'" [On the question of nationalities or 'autonomization'], in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Collected works], 55 vols. (Moscow, 1958-65), vol. 45, pp. 356-62. This article, or rather series of notes, embodies Lenin's last commentaries on the national question. The notes were dictated on December 30 and 31, 1922. They were written in response to the conflict between the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee of the RCP(B), headed by G. K. Ordzhonikidze, and the leadership of the Communist Party of Georgia, headed by P. G. Mdivani, over the question of whether Georgia should join the USSR directly or by way of the Transcaucasian Federation. Ordzhonikidze, who held the second view, became so rude toward his opponents that he slapped one of them in the face. Lenin, indignant at Ordzhonikidze's action, and at the conduct of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, who gave de facto support to Ordzhonikidze, wrote this article, which later came into the hands of the Politburo. Lenin's letter was made known to the delegates at the Twelfth Party Congress, and Stalin was forced to include some of Lenin's points in the resolution of the Congress on the national question. But this was only for appearance's sake.

What was involved here of course was not Lenin's idealism or altruism, although such considerations should not be totally disregarded in evaluating his actions. Lenin was concerned about preserving the multinational state and about the influence its example could have in the future on the nations of Asia. A political realist and to a certain extent a pragmatist, the head of the Soviet state understood clearly that "crudity or injustice [these are Lenin's own words] toward our own *inorodtsy* [non-Russian nationalities]" would reflect negatively on the authority of the Soviet state among the peoples of Asia.¹⁷ Even Lenin, to the end of his days, used the term *inorodtsy* (literally, "outlanders"), which had a plainly chauvinist ring in political parlance. That was the term the tsarist government had always used for the non-Russian peoples of the Russian empire.

At the Twelfth Party Congress Stalin was forced to acknowledge Lenin's reproach, and he warned in one of his speeches against the danger of degeneration on the part of responsible officials in the party and government apparatus, the danger of falling into Great Russian chauvinism, which he called a "growing force," a "fundamental danger," and the "most dangerous enemy" which "must be overthrown."¹⁸ However, Stalin succeeded in including a point in the congress resolution on the need for a struggle against "local nationalism" as well. This phrase was widely used against any attempt to practice national self-determination on the local level. The danger of being accused of "local nationalism" always hung over the heads of party and government personnel like a sword of Damocles.

The history of the years that followed shows that Stalin's Great Russian chauvinist inclinations became firmly entrenched. The internationalism which he proclaimed in public served only as a cover for his "great-power" chauvinist policies.

At the same time, several generations of Soviet citizens had been raised on the ideology of internationalism, and it was precisely those whose views were formed in the 1920s and 1930s who felt this disparity between word and deed most painfully. The question arises whether the intensification of Great Russia chau-

vinism was not one of the consequences of the victory of the idea of building socialism in one country.

In the second half of the 1930s an avalanche of Russian super-patriotism swamped the cultural life of our society. The search for "great forefathers"; the wave of films praising Russian military leaders of the past, such as Aleksandr Nevsky, Suvorov, Kutuzov, and the Russian tsars Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible; the flood of literary works that glorified the deeds of Ivan III and Dmitry Donskoi, that praised everything "truly Russian" and ridiculed *inostranshchina* ("everything foreign"); and the turn toward themes from Russian history in music, the opera, and drama, to the exclusion of almost everything else—all this testified to the fact that the development of culture in our society from then on would be strictly limited to the needs of this policy of Great Russian conformism.

Our society suffered the consequences of this chauvinism for a long time—even after the war with Germany had ended in victory for the USSR and the defeat of fascism. There came the "great days" of the struggle against "cosmopolitanism," the bellicose campaigns against the cultures of other people under the pretext of combating local nationalism—for example, the campaigns against the Kirgiz and Kazakh epic poems *Dzhangar* and *Manas*—and the totally groundless denial of the progressive nature of the national liberation movements of non-Russian peoples against the tsarist autocracy, such as Shamil's movement and the Andizhan uprising.

The killing of Mikhoels and the so-called Doctors' Plot*

* Solomon M. Mikhoels, a famous Soviet actor and a chairman of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, was assassinated in January 1948 in Minsk, Byelorussia, by Soviet state security agents on the order of Stalin himself. This assassination was part of an anti-Semitic campaign in the USSR. The culmination of this campaign was the so-called Doctors' Plot in 1952-53, masterminded by the chiefs of Soviet state security. A group of prominent Soviet doctors, predominantly of Jewish origin, were arrested and accused of plotting against the lives of top Soviet leaders. During the investigation some of the defendants were tortured and died. Soon after Stalin's death in March 1953 the accusations against the doctors were officially withdrawn.

showed that the process of moral decay in our society had reached its limit. The "most dangerous enemy," far from being overthrown, had triumphed, at least for the time being.

Thus we must view the deportation of the people of the Caucasus and the Crimea, the Kalmyks, and, in part, the Baltic peoples not only as an expression of the arbitrary lawlessness of the Stalin regime, which of course it was, but also, and more importantly, as an inseparable part of the history of the Soviet state and of Soviet society and its intellectual culture.

The resettlement of nationalities also had a pragmatic purpose—to colonize border regions with a "reliable" Russian population. This aim by no means represented something new or unusual. From time immemorial the Russian state had sought to establish reliable buffer zones along its borders made up of "loyal" people and settlers who would block any possible enemy invasion.

Although times had changed, in principle the motivation remained the same. The deportation of the Muslims of the Caucasus and of the Crimean Tatars was undoubtedly related to the tensions that existed between the USSR and Turkey during World War II and to the pan-Turkist schemes of the Turkish chauvinists, which enjoyed the approval of Nazi Germany for a certain period. The overwhelming majority of the Muslim population, of course, had no knowledge of, or interest in, pan-Turkism or the ambitions for a Greater Germany. However, several Turkish emissaries did visit the Crimea and the Caucasus during the German occupation, and several thousand members of the peoples later deported did betray the Soviet government during the war by serving in German military formations. This proved to be sufficient grounds for accusing these entire peoples of high treason and charging them with collaboration on a massive scale.

If the Koreans and Chinese could be considered potentially dangerous in relation to Japan, and the Kalmyks in regard to China, then collaboration between the Muslim people of the Caucasus and Muslim Turkey could also be regarded as a potential danger, and was so viewed. The irrefutable proof that the repres-

sion was aimed against the Muslim people is that approximately eighty thousand Georgian Muslims were deported from Georgia to Central Asia in 1947. Some particularly zealous Soviet propagandists of the 1940s referred to the Crimean Tatars as "Crimean Turks," thereby unwittingly agreeing with the viewpoint of the émigré Tatar nationalists. That is how far one could go to "prove" the necessity of clearing the border regions of all "hostile populations."

How can we explain the deportation of the Greeks from the Black Sea coastal region in 1944? They certainly had nothing to do with pan-Turkist schemes. Their historical homeland, of course, was Greece. But what was Greece? A capitalist state with a monarchical form of government which maintained an alliance with imperialist England. In view of that, how could the Greeks be left in the coastal districts of our state?

And the Kurds—that nomadic people who did nothing but wander, crossing the state borders of the USSR whenever they had a mind to. What a golden opportunity for spies! But what about those Kurds who had adopted a settled way of life? Well, what about them—Kurds are Kurds, aren't they? And so the Kurds were sent off to Central Asia. And the Khemshins went with them. These are a settled people, to be sure, but most of them live in Turkey. And in general they are rootless cosmopolitans. But excuse us; that was later, and it referred not to the Khemshins but to the Jews!

We conclude that the deportation of peoples was regarded by the state as a preventive measure serving military needs (Volga Germans, Kurds, Turks, Khemshins, and Greeks), as a punitive measure (Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Karachai, Crimean Tatars), but also as a measure with strategic implications, to create a more "reliable" border population. There is every reason to regard the deportations of 1943 and 1944 as a component part of Soviet foreign policy at the time. No sooner had the war ended than the Soviet government demanded of Turkey that it return Kars, Ardagan, and other areas that had gone to Turkey after World War I.

This border zone had already been cleared of "disloyal" Muslim peoples—against the possibility of armed conflict.

The wartime deportations were not isolated actions carried out under emergency conditions. There were deportations both before and after the war.

In the late 1940s and the early 1950s preparations were begun to deport all Jews from the main industrial and political centers of the country and send them to Siberia. As a propaganda convenience the Jews were referred to as "cosmopolitans." And the "cosmopolitans" were depicted as agents of American and "Zionist" imperialism. The political, ideological, and material preliminaries for such deportations had already been made. (But Stalin's death in 1953 put an end to this danger.)

In the Baltic region there was another mass expulsion of the native population along class lines, connected with the wholesale collectivization in those areas. Also, Greeks from other parts of the country were resettled in Central Asia. Several tens of thousands of repatriated Armenians were also expelled from Armenia.* And preparations were made to deport the Abkhazians from their Black Sea coastal region.

Thus the tragic policy followed toward the small nations of the Caucasus and the Crimea was in fact a continuation of a process begun long before the war and not ended to this day.

The deportation of entire peoples was made an essential component of nationalities policy in the final years of Stalin's rule. And it was one of the most important symptoms of the profound political and moral crisis that Soviet society and the Soviet state were passing through.

At the same time, deportation was not a completely new phenomenon in Russian history, although it had never before attained such massive proportions.

Shortly after the Crimean War (1854–55) tsarist officials

* Many repatriated Armenians who arrived in Soviet Armenia were settled in a town with the name—Beria! History often plays such nasty tricks.

brought wholesale charges against the Crimean Tatars for allegedly having helped Turkey. These charges were meant to divert attention from the inept performance of the tsarist government itself, and of its bureaucrats, during the war. They chose the Crimean Tatars as their scapegoat. Consequently, 100,000 Tatars were expelled from the Crimea at that time.

All of progressive public opinion condemned that brutal act of great-power chauvinism. On December 22, 1861, Herzen's *Kolo-kol* published an article entitled "The Persecution of the Crimean Tatars." It said in part: "And so the government has driven the loyal Tatar population from the Crimea in order to settle Russians there—and only when the 100,000 Tatars were no longer there did the government realize that Russians would not go to the Crimea. . . . The bloodiest battles and universal famine or plague could hardly have depopulated and devastated the territory in so short a time as the departure of the Tatars, speeded along by the administration."¹⁹

A well-known Russian historian of the late nineteenth century, Ye. Markov, decisively refuted the lie leveled against the entire Crimean Tatar population that they had betrayed Russia and supported the Turkish side during the Crimean War. This is what he wrote:

How strange! Instead of driving out the thieving bureaucrats and shooting them on the spot, the most honorable of the Crimean tribes, the Tatars, were driven out and shot. No one was hurt more by the war than this quiet and industrious people. It was dishonored by treachery. It was forced to leave its ancient homeland, where only a Tatar would be able to live happily without want. Anyone who has spent even a month in the Crimea can understand that the Crimea has perished since the Tatars were expelled. They alone could endure this hot, dry steppeland, knowing the secrets of how to find and bring up water, successfully breeding their cattle and cultivating their orchards. . . .

But perhaps it is true that the Tatars committed treason and

that their departure was necessary, no matter how pitiable it was? That is what I thought when I went to the Crimea. . . . But I have not met a single long-time resident there who does not have the utmost contempt for all the vile allegations against the Tatars—which resulted in such a disaster for the entire region. They agree unanimously that without the Tatars we would have lost the Crimean War—all the means of local transport and vital necessities were entirely in their hands.²⁰

Soon after the Crimean War a movement in favor of resettlement in Turkey began among the Causasian Mountaineers, partly instigated by the local feudal lords and Muslim clergy who were linked with Turkey. The tsarist government not only did not try to prevent this movement but even encouraged it, hoping to use the Mountaineers' lands as endowments for the Cossack villages the government was establishing in the region. From 1858 to 1865 some 500,000 Mountaineers resettled in Turkey. Half of them died from various diseases along the way, and a third of them, women and children, were sold into slavery.²¹ Realizing that they had been cruelly deceived, the survivors sought to return to Russia as quickly as possible. The Chechens were particularly determined to return; many of them were even willing to accept the Orthodox faith as long as they could live in their homeland. The tsarist government tried to discourage the return of the Mountaineers in every possible way, although it could never break their indomitable will to regain their homeland. The bulk of the Chechens did return from Turkey after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78. From then on, the tsarist administration promoted the image of the Chechens not only as "savages" (something constantly reiterated even earlier by General Yermolov, the "conqueror of the Caucasus") but also as traitors who had sold themselves to Turkey. For the Mountaineers, the years in Turkey were remembered as a time of sorrow. Nevertheless, this stubborn stereotype of the Caucasian Mountaineer, as someone who was only waiting for a chance to defect to the enemies of Russia, still influ-

enced those who in 1942-43 provided information to the highest authorities and those who decided these peoples' fate.

Historical experience suggests that decision-making is influenced to a certain extent by stereotyped ideas about events, people, and nations. The personal inner world, the cultural background and mentality of the decision-maker are of considerable importance. There can be no doubt that when the fate of the Chechens and Crimean Tatars was decided, the historical experience of the relations between these people and the Russian state played no little role.

Thus, for the second time in a century, the Chechens, Ingush, and other Mountaineer people and the Crimean Tatars faced the danger of physical annihilation.

The overall direction of the deportation of all these people was in the hands of L. P. Beria, member of the Politburo and the State Defense Committee, and people's commissar of internal affairs of the USSR. His deputies, B. Kobulov and I. Serov, had the direct responsibility for the compulsory resettlement operations.*

The preparations for the deportation operations were made with great care. The fundamental principle was surprise. Perhaps Hitler's surprise attack on the Soviet Union served as a model. Troops were brought in, the means of transport collected, and the routes for the truck columns established—all well in advance. The

* Kobulov and Serov accumulated quite a bit of experience in deporting people not only in the Crimea and the Caucasus but also in Bessarabia, the western parts of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and the Baltic. For his outstanding "services" in the deportation effort, and, one must suppose, for his great "skill as a military leader" demonstrated in Operation Deportation, Serov was awarded the highest award for generalship, the Order of Suvorov, First Class. This order was generally presented to military leaders for the successful direction of operations on a scale no smaller than an entire front.

Kobulov was shot along with Beria in 1953. Serov, however—thanks to the part he played in the arrest of Beria, and to Khrushchev's patronage—became, for a time, the head of the state security agency, the KGB, and later was appointed deputy chief of the general staff. He rose to the rank of general of the army and became a Hero of the Soviet Union. Later he was reduced in rank and retired; today he lives happily on his pension.

operations were carried out by NKVD troops, convoy guards, and border guards. During the war, despite the colossal losses and the extreme need for people at the front, quite a few "special-purpose" troops remained in the rear.

In addition to the NKVD troops, however, three armies, one of them a tank army, were deployed to Checheno-Ingushetia a few months before the deportations.

The intention was to carry out the operations in the shortest possible time. The troops were trained to forestall resistance or to suppress it immediately if it broke out. The fulfillment of these aims was made easier by the fact that the bulk of the male population was absent from the territory, serving in the ranks of the Red Army and in partisan units, or languishing in German captivity. These people, of course, never suspected what fate was being prepared for their families and for themselves, that is, if they survived the war and the German camps.

In resettling these peoples no exceptions were allowed. Shortly before the deportation operations, members of the party apparatus in responsible positions were sent to the localities to assist in the deportation of their fellow tribespeople. They were warned that if they gave away the secret of the coming operations they would be severely punished under the law.

In Chechnia the men were taken directly from celebrations of Red Army day, where demonstrations of skill in horseback riding were given. The women and children were taken directly from the villages. In the Crimea all the men were called to the military enlistment offices, where they were held until their families had been transported to loading stations. Then they themselves were sent to construction battalions. In Kabardino-Balkaria, Russian, Ukrainian, and Georgian women married to Balkar men were offered the choice of breaking their marital ties and remaining in their homes or sharing the fate of their husbands and children. Not all were able to withstand this test—in some cases children were left without their mothers and husbands without their wives.

What tests people are forced to face, and what sufferings they are forced to bear, by others just like them!

The following incident occurred in Yevpatoria during the Nazi reprisals against the population after the unsuccessful Soviet landing of January 1942. On the outskirts of the town thousands of people were being shot and thrown into ditches. The land was soaked in blood. Sometimes the graves, hastily covered by the Nazi butchers, would stir—some were still alive when they were thrown into the ditches. The earth itself seemed to groan from the unbearable suffering. One man who had been shot—badly wounded but still alive—managed to reach the porch of his home at dawn. His wife opened the door and saw her husband, the father of their children. Bloody but unbowed, he had crawled back to their doorstep. What did the woman do? She called a *Polizei* and he finished off the poor unfortunate before her eyes.

But let us return to those who were being deported or perhaps already had been.

Tenzila Ibrahimova, a Crimean Tatar woman who now lives in the city of Chirchik in Tashkent region, gives the following account:

We were deported from the village of Adzhiatman in Freidorfskii district on May 18, 1944. The deportation was carried out with great brutality. At 3:00 in the morning, when the children were fast asleep, the soldiers came in and demanded that we gather ourselves together and leave in five minutes. We were not allowed to take any food or other things with us. We were treated so rudely that we thought we were going to be taken out and shot. Having been driven out of the village we were held for twenty-four hours without food; we were starving but were not allowed to go fetch something to eat from home. The crying of the hungry children became continuous. My husband was fighting at the front, and I had the three children.

Finally we were put in trucks and driven to Yevpatoria. There we were crowded like cattle into freight cars full to overflowing. The trains carried us for twenty-four days until we reached the station of Zerabulak in Samarkand

region, from which we were shipped to the Pravda *kolkhoz* in Khatyrchinskii district.²²

The following is the account given by a well-known Crimean Tatar writer, Shamil Aliadin, a veteran of the Great Patriotic War, at a hearing before the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1957:

And now allow us to present a true picture of the deportation of the Tatars from the Crimea, which, in our view, may not as yet be completely clear to the members of the Presidium.

At 2:00 in the morning of May 17, 1944, Tatar homes were suddenly broken into by NKVD agents and NKVD troops armed with automatics. They dragged sleeping women, children, and old people from their beds and, shoving automatics in their ribs, ordered them to be out of their homes within ten minutes. Without giving them a chance to collect themselves, they forced these residents out into the street, where trucks picked them up and drove them to railroad stations. They were loaded into cattle cars and shipped off to remote regions of Siberia, the Urals, and Central Asia.

People were not allowed to get dressed properly. They were forbidden to take clothes, money, or other things with them. The agents and armed troops swept through these homes, taking these people's valuables, money, and anything they liked, all the while calling the Tatars "swine," "scum," "damned traitors," and so on.

These people left their homes naked and hungry and traveled that way for a month; in the locked, stifling freight cars, people began to die from hunger and illness. The NKVD troops would seize the corpses and throw them out of the freight car windows.

There was no order or discipline in the journey. Trains destined for Uzbekistan were sent to Siberia or the Altai region. But the bulk of the population ended up in Uzbekistan.²³

The deportation of the other peoples was carried out in a similar way.

How many of the deportees died along the way? In all likelihood, there are statistics on this in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but none have been published.

In the "Appeal of the Crimean Tatar People" quoted above it is said that the Tatars who perished constituted 46 percent of the population. This figure is apparently exaggerated. What exact information do we have? On May 17-18, 1944, 194,111 Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimea.²⁴ Later it became known—through the court case brought by the Procuracy of the Uzbek SSR in 1968 against participants in the Crimean Tatar movement, E. Mametov, Yu. Osmanov, and others—that the procurator disputed the assertion, contained in a number of the documents of the Crimean Tatar movement, that 46 percent of the Crimean Tatars had perished during the deportation. The prosecution presented two very important documents on this question to the court.* Both of these documents were first published in *samizdat*, and then in New York in 1974.²⁵ We reproduce them in full.

SECRET

Uzbek SSR Ministry for
the Preservation of Public
Order
Tashkent

Copy no. _____
Investigations Department
of the KGB of the Council
of Ministers of the Uzbek
SSR

No. 7/3-2026 February 15, 1968

Here

Reference No. 3/184 of February 14, 1968.

There is no analytical data on changes in the composition

* Case no. 103 of the Procuracy of the Uzbek SSR, vol. 17, pp. 101, 102. In connection with this case the former Soviet army general P. G. Grigorenko, one of the most remarkable people of our time—a much-decorated military man, commander of a division during the Second World War, and subsequently a chief of department at the Frunze Military Academy—was summoned to Tashkent and then held by the KGB and forcibly subjected to "treatment" in a "special" psychiatric hospital of the prison type. After nearly six years in this "special" hospital Grigorenko was freed, not least because of the pressure of world public opinion.

of the people deported from the Crimea in the period from May–June 1944 to January 1, 1945, in the archive materials of the Ninth Section of the KGB and the Fourth Special Section of the NKVD of the Uzbek SSR.

One of the reports on the economic and domestic arrangements for special settlers from the Crimea dated April 9, 1945, mentions that from the moment of deportation of the special settlers from the Crimea to the Uzbek SSR, i.e., from May 1944 up to January 1, 1945, 13,592 persons, or 9.1 percent, died.

Head of First Special Section of the Ministry for the Preservation of Public Order of the Uzbek SSR, Colonel Kravchenko

Head of Third Department, Stokova
Received February 20, 1968

SECRET

Uzbek SSR Ministry for
the Preservation of Public
Order
Tashkent

To the Chairman of the KGB
of the Council of Ministers
of the Uzbek SSR, Lt.-Gen.
S. I. Kiselev

No. 7/3-373 February 8, 1968

Here

Reference No. 3/99 of January 29, 1968

This is to inform you that the arrival in the Uzbek SSR of specially deported Tatars from the Crimea began on May 29, 1944, and was completed in the main by July 8, 1944. In the archive documents of the Ninth Section of the KGB and the Fourth Special Section of the MVD of the Uzbek SSR, the first data on the number of Crimean Tatars arriving at special settlements are for July 1, 1944. By that date 35,750 families had arrived, a total of 151,424 persons.

On January 1, 1945, the number of specially deported Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan was 137,742, consisting of 36,568 families—21,619 men, 47,537 women, and 65,586 children under sixteen.

The situation on January 1, 1946, was: 34,946 families,

constituting 120,129 persons, of which 21,332 were men, 42,071 women, and 56,726 children under 16.

In the period from January 1, 1945, to January 1, 1946, 13,183 persons died, of whom 2,562 were men, 4,525 women, and 6,096 children under sixteen. The change in the number of specially deported Crimean Tatars is also to be explained by departures from the republic, removals from the register, escapes from places of settlement, and arrests for crimes.

First Deputy Minister for the Preservation of Public Order,
Uzbek SSR, General, Internal Service, rank III, M. Beglov

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From these documents it seems that the number of Crimean Tatars who died in Uzbekistan from July 1944 to January 1, 1946, amounted to 17.7 percent of all who had arrived there. The fate of the remaining twenty thousand is referred to rather vaguely here. But according to the information of the Crimean Tatar movement, the number of those who fled or were jailed was one thousand women and two thousand seven hundred children. Apparently many also moved, with the permission of the authorities, in order to be reunited with their families. Kh. I. Khutuyev reports the following, for example: "In the first two years after the war, as a result of long and painstaking efforts," approximately forty thousand people won permission to move from Kazakhstan to Kirgizia to be reunited with their families, and more than thirty thousand from Kirgizia to Kazakhstan.²⁶ We have no information on the other areas of resettlement, but apparently there were many similar cases in Siberia, Uzbekistan, and the Urals.

The bulk of the Crimean Tatars were settled in Uzbekistan, but some also ended up in Kirgizia, Kazakhstan, and the Urals. There are more precise details about where the Kalmyks were settled—in the Krasnoyarsk and Altai territories and in the Novosibirsk, Omsk, Tiumen, Kemerovo, and Khakas regions, while a small number were sent to Sakhalin region, Central Asia, and Kazakhstan.

The known number of Kalmyks in particular areas in May–June

1944 were as follows: Novosibirsk region, 17,100; Tiumen region, 14,174 (4,700 families); Khanty-Mansiisk, Yamalo-Nenets, and Tobolsk districts 8,587 (2,878 families). During the whole of 1944, 5,891 Kalmyks were brought to Khanty-Mansiisk district alone. The number of Kalmyks sent to Omsk region was 18,718; to Krasnoyarsk district, at first 3,000 and then another 21,000 families (the number of individuals is not known); and to Taimyr, 900 families.²⁷

Thus, the Kalmyk people were dispersed over a vast territory, and it is rather to be marveled at that despite great human losses (about which more below), this people returned to its native land after fourteen years, having preserved its distinct character and inner sense of itself.

How many were deported altogether in 1943-44? Kh. I. Khutuyev gives analytical data on the number of *spetsposelentsyy* (special-settlement inhabitants) in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia, drawn from the archives of the Ministry for the Preservation of Public Order of each republic. In Kazakhstan there were 507,480 and in Kirgizia 137,298.²⁸ Of the Crimean Tatars, it is known that 151,424 arrived in Uzbekistan. There are no general figures for the number of *spetsposelentsyy* in Uzbekistan and the RSFSR. However, since we know the statistics of the 1939 census, and if we allow for the fact that the number of special settlers increased over time with the arrival of demobilized military personnel sharing the fate of their relatives, we can assume with a fair degree of certainty that the overall figure of those deported in 1943-44 was somewhat more than one million.

Half of them, if not more, were children under sixteen.

Among the Crimean Tatars in the special settlements of Uzbekistan, 15 percent were men, 32 percent women, and 53 percent children. Among the Balkars living in Kirgizia, men constituted 18 percent, women 29 percent, and children 52 percent.²⁹ The information on the percentages among the Karachai are similar.³⁰ In the Oh region in the Kirgiz SSR, Balkar women and children constituted more than 70 percent, and in Frunze region they were 80 percent of all special-settlement residents.³¹

And so the wrath of the state descended primarily on women

and children. Can it be that they were "traitors" and "betrayers"? Or was this system of punishment for entire peoples simply an expression of the vindictiveness of authority and the complacency of power toward the weak and defenseless?

These are not just rhetorical questions. The Twentieth Party Congress, which condemned the deportation of peoples as an arbitrary and lawless act, did not make a profound analysis of what had happened or of its causes and consequences for the entire system of relations between nations within our country. Nor was that done at the Twenty-second Party Congress. Until a strict analysis, without any favoritism, is carried through and practical conclusions drawn from such an analysis (sooner or later this is inevitable), we cannot say that justice has triumphed. After all, it is not accidental that the Crimean Tatars still live far from their homeland and that the problems of the German population in our country have not been resolved.

In the deportation no exceptions were allowed. As Kh. I. Khutuyev wrote, "Everyone was subjected to these repressive measures—active participants in the civil war and Great Patriotic War, including injured veterans, men who had become invalids as a result of injuries on the job, the wives and children of those fighting at the front, Communists and Komsomols, leaders of party and government organizations and deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the USSR, the RSFSR, and the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR."³² This was equally true of the other people whose autonomy was abolished.

The first years of life in the new locations were the most difficult for the residents of the special settlements. Hunger and disease swept down upon them, carrying thousands and thousands to their graves.

Here is how Tenzila Ibraimova describes life in the Tatar special settlements:

We were forced to repair our own individual tents. We worked and we starved. Many were so weak from hunger they could not stay on their feet. From our village they de-

ported thirty families, and of these only five families, themselves stricken with losses, survived. In the surviving families only one or two remained, the rest having perished from hunger and disease.

My cousin Manube Sheikislamova and her eight children were deported with us, but her husband had been in the Soviet Army from the very first days of the war and was lost. And the family of this fallen soldier perished in penal exile in Uzbekistan from starvation; only one daughter, named Pera, survived, crippled by the horrors and hunger she had experienced.

Our men were at the front and there was no one who could bury the dead. Sometimes the bodies lay among us for several days.

Adzhigulsum Adzhimambetova's husband had been seized by the fascists. She was left with three children, one girl and two boys. Her family starved just as ours did. No one gave them either material or moral support. As a result the daughter died of starvation to begin with, and then the two sons, both on the same day. The mother was so weak with hunger she could not move. Then the owner of the house threw the two little infant corpses out onto the street, on the edge of an irrigation canal. Some Crimean Tatar children dug little graves and buried the unfortunate little ones. How can I speak of this? I can hardly even bear to remember it. Tell me, why were such horrors permitted?³³

Shamil Aliadin gives this testimony: "Upon arrival in the town of Begovate, for example, fifty to one hundred people were shoved into dugouts where, before the Tatars, German prisoners had lived. Under these frightful conditions the Tatars began to die off. . . ." ³⁴

Kh. I. Kutuyev gives this testimony: "In Kazakhstan and Kirgizia, as a result of the unsatisfactory living conditions, exhaustion and emaciation, the abrupt change of climate, the inability to adapt to local conditions and the spread of epidemics,

mainly typhus, a large number of those who had been resettled died. . . ."³⁵

A. Dudayev asserts the following: "The most fearful and irremediable blow to the Chechen-Ingush people was struck in the first two or three years, when starvation and the most dreadful diseases obliged them to bury tens and hundreds of thousands of their fellow tribespeople in the steppes of Central Asia."³⁶

Should the mortality rate among the Crimean Tatars for the first year and a half of deportation, i.e., 17.7 percent, be applied to the other people inhabiting the special settlements? That is doubtful because some suffered from this special settlement regime more than others. We will try to determine the numerical losses that these people suffered later on in this chapter.

The people of the special settlements lost not only their possessions and the roofs over their heads but also their fundamental civil rights as guaranteed by the Soviet constitution. They were even denied the right to an education. They did not have the opportunity to read in their own language, nor to publish or obtain literary works or periodicals in their language. Their intellectual life came to a standstill.

The iron regime of the special settlements bound them hand and foot.

On November 26, 1948, four years after the deportations, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree (it was not published) which explained that all of these people had been deported permanently, without the right to return to their previous places of residence. For violations of the rules established for the special settlements, or of travel procedures, they were threatened with imprisonment, or hard labor for up to twenty-five years. Sentences were handed down by the MVD Special Board (Osoboye Soveshchaniye). Aiding and abetting or harboring an offender was punishable by five years at hard labor.³⁷

According to the rules governing the special settlements, everyone, from nursing infants on up, was subjected to so-called special accounting. Residents of the special settlements had to regis-

ter their addresses once a month with the special registration office of the MVD. No residents of special settlements could leave their places of residence without the knowledge and permission of the MVD commandant. For example, Chechens and Ingush could not travel beyond a radius of three kilometers from their places of residence.³⁸ A curious fact is that *spetsposeleanty* were brought to party meetings (a few of them were allowed to remain in the party) in trucks accompanied by armed guards. After each meeting the guards would deliver them to their homes. The settlements in which the *spetsposeleanty* lived were divided into groups of ten houses each, with chiefs placed in charge of each group. Every ten days they reported to the commandant on the state of affairs in the group assigned to them.³⁹

Between the settlements, districts, and regions in which *spetsposeleanty* lived, roadblocks were set up, and commandant's offices and sentry posts for internal-security troops were established. At the boundaries between republics and territories, on the other hand, "their own special Chinese walls were erected."⁴⁰

A system of passes was introduced, especially for *spetsposeleanty* who did not work where they lived but had to travel to other locations. These passes had to be shown the instant they were asked for. Failure to have one's pass with one could entail serious difficulties for the offender, ranging from fines to arrest and imprisonment.

"If a commandant, after stopping a bus at a roadblock and asking, 'Any aliens here?' (meaning deportees) received a negative answer, then all passengers would be checked for their passes without exception."⁴¹

In 1948 the rules were made more severe. Even officers of the Soviet Army, who earlier had reported to military registration offices, were placed on the special register for deportees."⁴²

The "local authorities," namely the MVD commandants, interpreted the rules governing the special settlements according to their individual inclinations and flights of fancy. The petty tyr-

anny and arbitrariness of the old tsarist town governors (*gradonachalniki*), immortalized by Saltykov-Shchedrin, were resurrected here with Asiatic refinement and purely Russian verve.

The commandant of the village of Karkunduz in Dzhabul region, Kazakh SSR, arrested citizen Kenetat Kharunovna Shevayeva in the middle of her wedding because she was marrying citizen Anuar Mesostovich Elbayev without his, the commandant's, knowledge.⁴³

During a family picnic in the Karadagovskaya Woods in Kazakhstan on May 2, 1948, an MVD special squad led by a captain came up and checked the documents of all present. When the documents proved to be in order, the captain announced that it was forbidden to play and dance the lezginka (!), calling it "bandit music."⁴⁴

Not all *spetsposelentsy*, of course, submitted to such humiliating conditions. Some tried to protest; others ran away, hoping to reach their native grounds and hide out in the mountains. They would be caught and thrown into prison camps, and again would escape.

In the spring of 1945 the Ingush in Borovoye revolted. Chechens took an active part in the celebrated prison uprising of October 1954 known as the "rebellion at site 521." And the Crimean Tatar demonstration in Chirchik is well known.*

But the most commonly chosen form of protest was the letter to Stalin, for everyone knew he was the "Best Friend of All the Peoples" as well as their "Father." The newspapers never tired of

* Here is what the late writer A. E. Kosterin, a prominent figure in the Soviet civil-rights movement, wrote about that demonstration: "In Chirchik, in Uzbekistan, the Crimean Tatars wished to observe Lenin's birthday in their own way. They had good reason to show this man a special regard. He had given them autonomy and restored and strengthened their national dignity, language, and culture. And what happened? Our agencies of law and order turned upon these peacefully gathered Tatars with police clubs and streams of putrid water from fire pumps. As many as three hundred people were arrested." ("Razdum'ia na bol'nichnoi koike" [Reflections from a hospital bed], manuscript [Moscow, 1968], p. 13.)

printing statements by workers addressed to the Leader with reports on labor accomplished, pledges to undertake new labors, and patriotic effusions. Thus, a statement addressed to Stalin was also the most natural form for a complaint to take. However, it was one thing to send greetings and something else to ask for justice and to complain about injuries or offenses committed by persons in authority. This kind of thing could easily be interpreted as slander against the Soviet state and social system. (And everyone knows what you get for slander.)

When a letter of complaint was sent to Stalin, the result was, in the best of cases, some "explanatory work" by agents of the government that is, a little "brainwashing" for the author of the letter. Thus in response to a letter by the Balkar writer Kerim Otarov, a wounded veteran of the war who had asked that the injustice done to the Balkars be reversed, an agent of the MVD of Kirgizia reported the following resolution of the problem: "I discussed a similar statement in person with Otarov. The correspondence is attached to his dossier."⁴⁵

But there could be even worse variants—prison or a labor camp. The much-decorated Balkar combat officer A. Sottayev addressed a complaint to Stalin asking only an end to the rude and insulting treatment of special settlers (nothing more!) For this they gave him twenty-five years in the camps. A second Balkar, Bashiyev by name, likewise landed in prison for writing a complaint; he ended his days in confinement. And a third, named Karayev, spent six months in prison for a similar "crime."⁴⁶ There were quite a few such cases.

How did the local authorities and the local inhabitants receive the special settlers? And how did the life of the new arrivals develop?

Of course the local authorities were not prepared for such a huge influx of people. There were already many evacuees in Central Asia, Siberia, and the Urals who had arrived together with their factories and offices, or simply in a private capacity. There was a shortage of housing. All available living space was oc-

cupied. It is no wonder, then, that the newcomers found themselves in dreadful conditions, conditions which—it must be said—were absolutely unfit for human life.

In Kirgizia as of September 1, 1944, only 5,000 out of 31,000 special-settler families had been provided with housing. In Frunze region only 1,675 rooms could be found for 8,950 families, that is, one room for every five families.⁴⁷ In Kameninskii district eighteen apartments had been prepared for nine hundred families, that is, fifty families to an apartment! In Talas region 116 families had to live simply under the open sky. In Leninopolskii district, and also in Talas region, only 163 rooms were found for 625 families.⁴⁸ In Kurshabskii district two and three families lived in rooms of six to twelve square meters in size, with up to ten persons per family, that is, from twenty to thirty persons to a room.⁴⁹

One would have to have a truly exceptional imagination to picture the full horror of the everyday life of the special settlers, who in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia alone numbered some 645,000. They were assigned to 4,036 *kolkhozy*, 254 *sovkhozy*, and 167 towns and workers' settlements, where they found work at 2,500 industrial enterprises.⁵⁰ Only after fourteen years, in 1958, had 93.8 percent of all the families forcibly deported to Kazakhstan and Kirgizia been provided with permanent quarters.⁵¹ But by then it was time for them to leave again.

The work which special settlers obtained was, more often than not, heavy labor. The Kalmyks, for example, were sent to commercial fishing districts in Omsk region; in Krasnoyarsk territory, where they also did logging work; in Khanty-Mansiisk district; and in the Taimyr. In those areas the climate was cold and severe, quite different from the baking hot climate of the Caspian region. And the Kalmyks died in droves.

The special settlers employed in various kinds of jobs died from malnutrition and other diseases, from cold, and simply from homesickness.

The war was on, and everywhere a shortage of workers was felt. The local authorities were instructed to make maximum use of the new arrivals in industrial plants and in agriculture. Officials

in the Central Asian republics, the Kazakh SSR, and the north and northeast of the RSFSR were allocated funds to build housing and provide minimal food and clothing allowances for the special settlers.

The average earnings of resettled persons were 20 to 30 percent less than those of skilled workers at the same factories. The newcomers often did not have the necessary skills and were not accustomed to the work. The same was true in the *kolkhozy*. In 1945 the average number of workday units (*trudodni*) completed by each special settler in the *kolkhozy* of Kazakhstan was 133.3, whereas for the local inhabitants the average was between 220 and 240. The reasons were everywhere the same—abnormal living conditions, work that was unfamiliar to most of the special settlers, and a climate they were not accustomed to.⁵²

Nevertheless, those who were given steady jobs were lucky. In Uzbekistan, for example, it was often the case that Crimean Tatars simply would not be hired if their nationality became known, and if they nevertheless succeeded in finding work, it was not long before they were ousted from their jobs.⁵³

Among the able-bodied population it was hardest for intellectuals who did menial labor. The Tatar writer Dzhavtobeli became a bricklayer. Another well-known Crimean writer, A. Dzhermendzhi, became a warehouse worker at a *sovkhos* in Guryev. Constantly persecuted because of his nationality, Dzhermendzhi finally could bear it no longer and hanged himself.*⁵⁴

There was a war on.

The special settlers were ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-housed. Were the material losses they suffered as a result of the deportation cov-

* This was also the fate of a Russian poet, our pride and joy, Marina Tsvetayeva. Unable to endure life's cruelties, the hunger and the humiliations, she too laid hands upon herself during the war, in Yelabug. And she did not live under the special-settlement regime; she had simply been evacuated. There were well-known writers in her circle and their wives as well. Did any of them offer her a helping hand or try to ease her burden? Which of them on that accursed night sensed with their inner writers' intuition that a human being of rare, even divine gifts was about to die?

ered by the allotments for their support and material assistance? Left behind in the homeland from which they were forcibly expelled were their homes, farmsteads, cattle, farm equipment, home furnishings, libraries, personal belongings, money, and clothing. In fact, in 1943 and 1944 a million people were subjected not so much to expropriation as to pauperization. During the first years in the special settlements they were reduced to the status of disenfranchised and persecuted beggars. The homes of the deportees were taken over by new settlers. Their property was plundered. Their personal belongings were appropriated by those who carried out the deportation—Beria's MVD agents and the soldiers assigned to the deportation operation. Of the socialized property that was dissolved by the deportation, the state was able to make use of only half, and the other half was irretrievably lost. At a time of severe food shortages in the country, the livestock in the depopulated areas was left without any care or tending and a great many of these animals died.⁵⁵

In Kazakhstan and Kirgizia the material difficulties of the first months prevented the special settlers from taking any active part in production. In 1944, out of the 219,665 able-bodied persons in the resettled population registered in Kazakhstan, 85,000 did not work. In Kirgizia, 14,216 persons counted as able-bodied did not work.⁵⁶

The central committees of the union republic Communist parties, along with the regional committees and even the regional executive committees, were supposed to report regularly to the Central Committee of the party on the working and living arrangements for the relocated populations.

During the long years of forced exile, local and party bodies were sent quite a few official resolutions on economic and labor arrangements for the special settlers.

For example, a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirgizia of September 11, 1944, entitled "The Situation in Regard to Economic and Labor Arrangements for Special Settlers," condemned

those leaders of local party and government bodies who had failed to disperse to the special settlers the food allowances earmarked for them out of funds on the republic level and local level. The resolution gave this as the reason for the increasing frequency of deaths from undernourishment and infectious diseases among the resettled population.⁵⁷

In a resolution dated October 12, 1945, i.e., a year later, the leadership of Kirgizia was still calling for more intensive measures to combat the massive epidemics that were causing a high mortality rate.⁵⁸ A decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of Kirgizia dated November 21, 1946, commented on the way in which the Bystrovskii district committee of the party had carried out the resolution of September 11. While it was acknowledged that the deportees had been fully provided with work, it was also noted that the funds allotted to bring their living conditions up to normal—specifically, to provide food, clothing, and housing, and to combat the epidemics—had obviously been insufficient.

In December 1945 the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan appealed personally to Molotov to provide aid to the republic in completing the economic and labor arrangements for the deportees in the territory of Kazakhstan. But Molotov did not even consider this request. And a similar request from the Kirgiz leadership was treated in exactly the same way by the Central Committee secretary, Malenkov.⁵⁹

Even four years after the deportations there were 118,259 special settlers counted as being in extreme need in regard to food in the following regions of the Kazakh SSR: Akmolinsk, Aktiubinsk, Kokchetav, Kustanai, North Kazakhstan, and Semipalatinsk. Among these 2,590 were suffering from dystrophy as a result of malnutrition and emaciation.⁶⁰

Children! They constituted half the total category of special settlers. Thousands of them died. Those who survived had to be educated. But the school situation was rather complicated.

In Kazakhstan in 1944 only 16,000 out of the 50,323 school-age children of special settlers attended school, and in Kirgizia in 1945 the figure was 6,643 out of 21,015.⁶¹

Schools with instruction in the native language of the settlers did not exist. Publication of textbooks and supplementary materials was suspended. Most of the children knew no other language. And there were other obstacles. One of the party documents of that time stated: "The situation in regard to the schooling of children of the special settlers has improved somewhat by comparison with the initial phase; however even now it remains unsatisfactory. There are several reasons for this. Most of the children do not know the languages in which instruction is given in the location where they are settled; there are isolated cases of parents opposed to their children attending school; and because of inadequate shoes and clothing, the majority of the children attending school are forced to discontinue their attendance during the winter."⁶² In Novosibirsk region, for example, as many as 30 percent of the children of Kalmyk nationality did not attend school.⁶³ But even the children who were fortunate enough to complete their primary school education (at most a seven-year course) could not count on continuing their education, because travel by special settlers was restricted and secondary schools with a full number of grades did not exist everywhere. This was not the only obstacle. There were others: for example, school directors who feared they might bring the anger of higher authorities down upon themselves if they accepted children from the oppressed nationalities; housing problems; and the problem of earning a living while in school.

And those who overcame all obstacles and entered specialized secondary schools or higher educational institutions were often denied stipends, not provided with dormitory rooms, and otherwise persecuted because of their nationality. Thus, M. Babayev, a student at the Kirgiz Pedagogical Institute, was expelled from his dormitory because he was a Balkar. The teacher Sh. Chechenov (later the minister of education of the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR) was arrested during classes at school and held for five days be-

cause he had overstayed the time limit on his pass, having been delayed longer than he had anticipated at an examination session at the Pedagogical Institute in the city of Frunze.⁶⁴

D. Nominkhanov has tried to show in his dissertation and in a number of his published works that the Kalmyks were given the opportunity of studying in higher educational institutions even under special-settlement conditions. However, his works contain devastating statistics indicating exactly the opposite. For those who graduated from the Abakan State Teachers and Pedagogical Institute in 1947 he gives four names and adds "etc." During the years from 1948 to 1953 another four graduated from higher educational institutions "etc."⁶⁵

At the Scientific Research Institute of Language, Literature, and History of Khakassia there was one Kalmyk working in the capacity of senior research fellow. At the above-mentioned Abakan Institute, one Kalmyk, a holder of a candidate's degree, worked as a senior lecturer. One Kalmyk defended his candidate's dissertation at Omsk. And at the Kazan State University one Kalmyk, the writer, Aksen Suseyev, defended his candidate's dissertation in philology.⁶⁶

Essays in the History of the Kalmyk ASSR gives a list of the Kalmyks who graduated from higher educational institutions in the years of exile—essentially no more than one from each institution.⁶⁷

After such "encouraging" statistics, Nominkhanov draws a conclusion that is far from optimistic: "Unquestionably, resettlement brought the cultural development of the Kalmyk people to a standstill."⁶⁸ Such a conclusion is justified in relation to the other repressed peoples as well.

Whatever the regime, one still had to work, to provide for oneself and one's family, in order to live, or rather to survive.

The desire to survive, to preserve the existence not only of oneself and one's dear ones, but of one's nation, so that someday it might be possible to return to one's native parts—this was both an unconscious instinct and a fully conscious aim.

People are made in such a way that even under the dreadful conditions of overcrowding, poverty, hunger, and spiritual oppression, they do not lose their human traits. So it was with the special settlers. For them, as for the people whose lives were relatively free, life went on not only with sorrows but with joys as well. They not only buried their dead and mourned them; they also started new families and raised children. They manufactured machinery and dug coal in the mines. And such labor, heavy as it was, helped them to survive—whether mountain people or steppe-dwellers.

The overwhelming majority of settlers remained obedient to the authorities who had torn them away from the land of their forebears and subjected them to unending insults and humiliations. Despite that, if anything was uppermost in their thoughts it was the desire for justice, which they were sure would be forthcoming from those same authorities.

In a sense these special settlers remained patriots. They did not rebel, there were only rare outbursts; they worked hard, they became shockworkers and exemplary workers and victors in socialist competition.* Gradually the local people got used to them, began to regard them as their comrades, gave them awards for work well done, held them up as examples to others, and (Allah be praised!) even wrote about their patriotic achievements in the realm of labor not only in wall newspapers and factory newspapers but also in the district and regional press.

A new generation was growing up that had never seen the Caucasus mountains nor the Caspian steppes nor the sea. This generation bore within itself such strong love and devotion to the land of its mothers and fathers that even if a thousand or even two thousand years went by, this longing, like the force of gravity, would continue, no matter what, and all obstacles on the road home from the Diaspora would be overcome.

Meanwhile the authorities on the whole were content—the special settlers were gradually becoming part of the labor force, mak-

* All terms for workers who overfulfilled their quotas.

ing themselves at home in their new locations, and becoming reconciled and accustomed to the new situation.

From Alma-Ata, Frunze, Tashkent, and remote Siberian territorial, regional, and district centers, regular reports flowed in to Moscow on the material conditions and the political and moral state of mind of the special settler population.

One of the documents sent from Kazakhstan to Moscow wrote about the special settlers as follows: "Most of them, both those employed in industry and those in agriculture, take a conscientious attitude toward their duties, participate in socialist competition, and are increasingly numerous among the ranks of shock-workers and Stakhanovites."⁶⁹ The *History of the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR* states: "The Balkars were resettled in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. But in spite of this injustice, the Balkars demonstrated a high sense of patriotism. They joined in actively in the labor process, and the overwhelming majority of them worked honestly and conscientiously."⁷⁰ Another official publication comments: "The Balkars labored patriotically in Kirgizia and Kazakhstan."⁷¹

After the death of Stalin and the removal of Beria, a year passed before the situation of the special settlers was affected. In July 1954 the USSR Council of Ministers passed a resolution "On the Lifting of Certain Restrictions on the Legal Status of Resettled Persons." Those employed in socially useful labor were allowed to live freely in the region, territory, or republic where they were located. They received the right to travel freely on business (but not for personal reasons!) within the entire territory of the country under ordinary regulations. Registering with the appropriate MVD bodies was now made an annual rather than a monthly requirement.

The authorities made a demonstration of humaneness unheard of until then—they permitted all children under ten years of age to be dropped from the register for special settlers. At last, children in their younger years were freed of administrative surveillance and restrictions!

Young men and women over sixteen (i.e., those who would be

given an internal passport under the law) were also taken off the register if they were enrolled in educational institutions. They were allowed to travel to places of study anywhere in the country.

Fines and arrest for violation of special-settlement regulations were abolished.

Simultaneously, instructions were issued to bring special settlers into the trade unions and the Komsomol, to offer them incentives on the same basis as other workers, and to employ them according to education and profession.⁷² There is no question that this resolution substantially improved the situation. But at the same time it gives evidence of the legalized arbitrariness applied to the special settlers in the years preceding. The very fact that a resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had to make a special point about removing children under ten from the special register speaks for itself.

The authorities felt it was important at that time to ease the bitterness and agonies of those who had been forcibly uprooted from their normal lives. It was necessary to help heal these deep and still-bleeding wounds as quickly as possible. What was proposed to accomplish that? Intensify educational work among the special settlers!

Yes, that is exactly how the question was posed even two years after the death of Stalin: not the immediate return of the injured people to their homeland but "the intensification of mass agitational and cultural-educational work among resettled persons"—that was the title of the new decree of the USSR Council of Ministers on June 26, 1955.⁷³ The question of whether or not there was to be a return to the homeland was still being debated at the top. Preparations were being made for a party congress that presumably would decide whether the USSR would move forward still carrying the old and dreadful weight of Stalin's heritage or discard this burden and step forward into the future. This was a time when, at sessions of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee, fierce clashes again and again broke out between the loyal comrades-in-arms of the deceased and those who supported N. S. Khrushchev in his desire to have done with the crimes of the

past. This struggle, as Khrushchev himself relates, reached its peak while the Twentieth Party Congress was in session.⁷⁴

Around this time there were more and more frequent cases in which Mountaineers would leave Central Asia and appear in the Caucasus without permission, asserting their rights to their own homes. However, the necessary preparations had to precede a general return to the homeland. It was also not at all clear who should be allowed to return. At that time, the idea of including the Chechens, Ingush, and Crimean Tatars was not even being considered. However, the decree of the Council of Ministers did affect all the deported nations. After the decree there began to appear posters, newspapers, and finally even books in the national languages; works of literature by the national writers and translations of Russian and world classics in the local languages were returned from the warehouses to the bookshelves. Many members of the younger generation of the resettled people held books in their native language for the first time in their lives.

There was a recommendation to promote resettled persons to local government bodies, not to very high posts, but at least to promote them.⁷⁵

During the period of intensive preparations for the Twentieth Party Congress a new decree of the USSR Council of Ministers was handed down, a product of the unceasing and ever-growing pressure from the special settlers. Many of them had in the past been party workers, partisans, and participants in the Great Patriotic War and even the civil war. They demanded full correction of the injustice, that is, the right to return to their homeland and the restoration of their autonomous state structures. The unauthorized return of Chechens, Ingush, and Karachai increased in frequency, and nothing could force the returnees to leave. In a number of cases incidents involving bloodshed and violence occurred. Within the party leadership Khrushchev's course began to demarcate itself more and more sharply. The overwhelming majority of the party ranks supported this policy line. Only an uncompromising repudiation of the Stalin heritage and a public condemnation of Stalinist methods and practices could strengthen the position of

the Khrushchev group and provide a moral justification for its aspirations to power.

Yet another decree of the USSR Council of Ministers, dated November 20, 1955, reflected the struggle inside the party leadership and the fear of making a complete break with the past on the part of an influential section of that leadership; and for that reason the decree had the features of a compromise.

The following were removed from the special register: veterans of the Second World War who had been decorated with awards and medals; the families of those who had died at the front; teachers in educational institutions; resettled women who had legally married local inhabitants; women of nationalities that had not been deported but who had followed their husbands into exile on the basis of marital ties which had ceased to exist at the time this decree was published (i.e., widows and divorcees); and invalids and chronically ill persons living alone and unable to ensure their livelihood by themselves.⁷⁶

One might have thought that people in these categories would automatically have been granted the right to return to their former places of residence. But, as they say, "it didn't work out quite that way."

With time, new forces and new factors came into play. On the one hand, the mass departure of the resettled people from Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and Siberia was bound to affect the economic life of those regions unfavorably. On the other hand, a massive return to their former localities bore within it the danger of a worsening of relations between nationalities as well as an aggravation of the economic situation. For the homes, farms, and jobs of the deportees had long since been taken over by new settlers from other republics. Therefore the Council of Ministers of the USSR was at first inclined to forbid repatriation.⁷⁷

As is evident from this decree, removal of some categories of deportees from the special register did not apply to their families. There was seething discontent over this among the special settlers. It seemed absolutely impossible to postpone the decision on this problem any further under those particular conditions. It had to be solved, if only partially. And that is what was done.

In Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, well known even though it was never published in the USSR, he referred to the deportation of the Karachai, Balkars, and Kalmyks as "rude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policies of the Soviet Union." He emphasized the mass character of the deportations involving entire nations. Characteristically, Khrushchev did not refer to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the deportees were women and children, but he did not forget to stress the fact that there were Communists and Komsomols among them. He rejected the argument that the deportations were prompted by military considerations, since at that time the fortunes of war had shifted decisively in favor of the USSR. Khrushchev also referred to Stalin's intention to deport the Ukrainians. It turned out, however, that "there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise he would have deported them also." In concluding, Khrushchev did refer to women and children, but in his own special way: "Not only a Marxist-Leninist but also no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists, and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them; and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons."⁷⁸

It is easy to see that Khrushchev's indignation for some reason did not extend to the three most numerous of the oppressed nations—the Germans, the Chechen-Ingush, and the Crimean Tatars. He did not say a single word about the fate of the Turks, Kurds, Greeks, Khemshils, the many tens of thousands of Armenians, the deported Balts, and the inhabitants of the Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia, Moldavia, and Bukovina. Thus, the greater part of the deported populations remained outside the field of vision of the party leadership.

Nevertheless the public condemnations of the mass repressions against the people of the Caucasus and Kalmykia at the Twentieth Party Congress was of tremendous importance in principle for the future of all the deported nationalities. It also testifies to the sincere desire of the new leadership, or at any rate to leading ele-

ments within it, to correct the distortions in nationalities policy and to defuse the mounting crisis in this area.

This marked a good beginning and was a harbinger of important changes in the life of the Soviet Union's mutinational society.

A month after the congress, on March 13, 1956, another decree of the USSR Council of Ministers was issued by which the families of the special settlers covered in the previous decree were also removed from special registration status, and invalids were allowed to return to their former places of residence. Ten days later a prestigious constitutional obligation was restored to the special settlers—to be available for military service. Special settlers of draft age were removed from special registration and placed on military registration.⁷⁹ And events did not stop there.

On April 28, 1956, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree entitled "On the Lifting of Special-Settlement Restrictions from Crimean Tatars, Balkars, Turkish Citizens of the USSR, Khemshils, and Members of Their Families Deported During the Great Patriotic War."⁸⁰

The ice had truly broken if such an experienced and cautious government figure as A. I. Mikoyan began to receive representatives of the Chechens and the Ingush in the summer of 1956. Likewise, L. I. Brezhnev, who at that time was first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, had a friendly meeting with a delegation of Balkars. Officials in responsible positions in the central apparatus in Moscow were sent out to the localities where the special settlers lived to address public assemblies of special settlers and closed party meetings. The question of repatriation was openly discussed at the public meetings.

Within the top leadership a bitter dispute broke out over the question of repatriating the Chechens and Ingush. At first an attempt was made to organize mass recruitment of Chechens and Ingush for work in other parts of the country. But the Chechens and Ingush solidly ignored this proposal. The leaders of the Grozny region were consulted as to their opinions—the first secretary of the regional party committee, A. I. Yakovlev, and the

chairman of the regional government executive committee, Kovalenko. Their opinions differed. Yakovlev expressed his opposition to the repatriation, while Kovalenko strongly favored the return of the Chechens and Ingush and the restoration of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.* Party activists were mobilized to try to persuade the Chechens and Ingush to agree to the establishment of an autonomous republic in Uzbekistan with its capital at the city of Chimkent. When this plan also fell through, a new one was proposed: to let the Chechens and Ingush return to the Caucasus, but to have the capital of their republic be not Grozny but Kizlyar.

Meanwhile, as early as 1954 the Chechens and Ingush deported to Central Asia began to "force their way" back into Chechnia. They would be removed and arrested, but others would come and everything would start over again. In 1955 the number of those unauthorized returnees increased, and after the Twentieth Congress tens of thousands of Chechens and Ingush headed for home. Alarmed by Khrushchev's failure to refer to them in his speech at the Twentieth Congress, the Chechens and Ingush sent a delegation to Moscow. Thousands of Chechen families gathered at railroad stations, but an order was issued categorically forbidding the sale of train tickets to them. Despite all appeals and warnings, twenty-five to thirty thousand Chechens and Ingush returned in 1956. When they were not allowed into the homes that had belonged to them before deportation, they made dugouts alongside them and settled in. But, above all, those who returned restored the cemeteries where their ancestors had been buried, putting up fences, cleaning up the monuments, and burying the dead they had brought back from Central Asia with them. When

* Dzhebrail Kartoyev, a chemical engineer and a veteran of the Great Patriotic War, was officially authorized to assist in organizing the return of Chechens and Ingush from Kazakhstan to their homeland. He was a participant in the following incident: Yakovlev, in order to make a visual demonstration that the return of the Chechens and Ingush was impossible, filled a pitcher of water to the brim and said, "Can you pour any more water into this pitcher?" Kartoyev took the pitcher, poured out half of it, and then refilled the pitcher cup by cup. "There, you see," he said. "It can be done."

the Russian population saw that the cemeteries were being restored they realized that the Chechens had returned for good.

The determination shown by the Chechens and Ingush achieved results. They could not be ignored. Moreover, they numbered some five hundred thousand altogether. Thus the Chechens and Ingush won inclusion in the decree of the CPSU Central Committee of November 24, 1956, "On the Restoration of the National Autonomy of the Kalmyk, Karachai, Balkar, Chechen, and Ingush Peoples." The decree noted that the measures taken earlier to restore the rights of the deported peoples had been insufficient. The deportation itself was condemned as an arbitrary and lawless act. It was also noted that the measures already taken did not solve the problem of full rehabilitation and restoration of the deported peoples to equality with the other nations of the Soviet Union. Dispersed over a large territory and lacking their own autonomous structure, they did not have the necessary conditions for full development of their economy and culture. The Central Committee found it necessary to restore their national autonomy and to permit their return to their former homelands, but only on a voluntary basis; those who so wished could remain in their new places of habitation. It was proposed that repatriation be carried out in an organized fashion in order not to create difficulties in arranging for jobs and housing. A time period of two years, 1957-58, was set for the Kalmyks, Karachai, and Balkars (i.e., for the smaller nationalities) and a four-year period, 1957-60, for the Chechens and Ingush.⁸¹

On January 9, 1957, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued four decrees: "On the Reorganization of the Kabardinian ASSR to Form the Karbardino-Balkar ASSR," "On the Restoration of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR as Part of the RSFSR," "On the Formation of the Kalmyk Autonomous Region as Part of the RSFSR," and "On the Reorganization of the Cherkess Autonomous Region to Form the Karachai-Cherkess Autonomous Region." On February 11, 1957, these decrees acquired the force of law.⁸²

But about the Crimean Tatars and the Volga Germans there was not one word. They might just as well not have existed.