

THE INFLUENCE OF NATURAL AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS ON THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OF DEPORTED PEOPLES IN SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS

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Abstract

This paper delves into the complex role that natural and climatic conditions played in the integration process of deported peoples who were forcibly relocated to special settlements, particularly during the Soviet era. The research investigates how the extreme environments—ranging from harsh winters and scorching summers to remote and isolated regions—impacted not only the physical survival of the deportees but also their social, economic, and cultural adaptation in these new and often hostile locations. The analysis draws on historical data to examine how different environmental factors influenced the daily lives, labor conditions, and community structures of the deported populations. In many cases, these peoples were relocated to areas with severe weather conditions, poor infrastructure, and limited access to basic resources, which created significant barriers to their integration into the local economy and society. The climatic extremes often forced the deportees to adapt quickly to new agricultural practices, unfamiliar landscapes, and arduous working conditions, while also challenging their physical endurance and mental resilience. Furthermore, the paper explores how these environmental hardships affected the relationships between deportees and the local populations, as well as their interactions with Soviet authorities. The study also looks into the long-term effects of these forced migrations on the cultural and social identity of the deported peoples, highlighting the enduring legacy of such relocations in shaping the historical memory of these communities.

Keywords: green economy, sustainable development, traditional business models, ecological sustainability, innovation, resource efficiency, biodiversity, climate change, eco-friendly technologies, strategic planning

I. Introduction

The forced relocation of entire populations to special settlements during the Soviet era represents one of the most significant social and demographic transformations of the 20th century. From the 1930s through the 1950s, millions of people, often from ethnic minority groups, were deported to remote and underdeveloped regions of the Soviet Union. These resettlements were a result of political and security considerations, with the Soviet government aiming to control potentially “disloyal” populations by moving them far from their native lands. However, beyond the political motives, these deported peoples faced immense challenges due to the natural and climatic conditions of the areas they were forced to inhabit.

This study focuses on the impact of those environmental conditions—particularly the harsh climates, geographic isolation, and scarcity of natural resources—on the integration process of these deported peoples. Integration, in this context, refers not only to the economic incorporation of the deportees into local labor systems but also their social and cultural adaptation to their new surroundings. For many, the abrupt shift from familiar environments to regions with extreme cold, desert heat, or dense forests created profound obstacles to survival and social cohesion.

The conditions in which these people found themselves often determined the pace and extent of their adaptation. In Siberia, for example, where winters could be long and harsh, deportees had to endure subzero temperatures while attempting to cultivate new lands or work in labor camps with limited resources. In contrast, those relocated to Central Asia faced a different set of environmental challenges, including extreme heat and droughts that affected agricultural productivity and basic living conditions. The diversity of these climatic challenges created varied experiences of integration, with some communities managing to establish new livelihoods while others struggled under the weight of environmental and economic pressures.

In this context, the objective of the research is to analyze how these natural and climatic conditions influenced the integration of deported peoples into special settlements. By exploring the intersection of environmental hardship, labor demands, and social adaptation, this paper seeks to shed light on how geography and climate affected not only the immediate survival of these populations but also their long-term socio-economic and cultural integration into Soviet society.

This investigation into the role of climate and geography will help to enrich our understanding of the broader historical experience of forced migration and resettlement. While much of the existing scholarship on deportations has focused on the political and economic aspects, the environmental factors remain underexplored. By focusing on the natural conditions that deported peoples faced, this study aims to fill this gap, offering a nuanced perspective on the integration processes within special settlements.

II. Methods

This study employs a multidisciplinary approach to analyze the influence of natural and climatic conditions on the integration process of deported peoples in special settlements. The methods used include a combination of historical analysis, geographical assessment, and qualitative case studies, drawing on both primary and secondary sources. The research is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how environmental factors shaped the experiences of these deported populations during their resettlement and adaptation.

1. Historical Document Analysis:

The primary method involves the analysis of archival records, government reports, and personal testimonies from deported individuals. Soviet-era documents, including official resettlement plans, labor assignments, and population censuses, provide crucial insights into the logistical and administrative aspects of the deportations. These records are cross-referenced with memoirs, letters, and oral histories of deportees to capture the lived experiences of those affected. By comparing official Soviet reports with personal narratives, the research aims to uncover the discrepancies between state policies and the realities faced by the deported peoples.

2. Geographical and Climatic Data Assessment:

A significant aspect of the research focuses on the geographical and climatic conditions of the regions where deportees were sent. This involves the use of historical climate data and geographic mapping to analyze the specific environmental challenges faced in different regions, such as Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Far East. Factors such as average temperatures, precipitation levels, and soil quality are examined to assess how they impacted agricultural productivity, labor requirements, and living conditions in the special settlements.

By mapping deportation locations and overlaying climatic data, the study seeks to correlate environmental conditions with integration outcomes. For example, settlements in extremely cold regions are compared with those in arid or semi-arid areas to identify patterns in survival rates, labor output, and community development.

3. Case Study Analysis:

The research also employs a case study approach to provide detailed accounts of specific deported communities and their adaptation processes. These case studies focus on deported

groups such as Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and ethnic Germans, who were relocated to different regions under varying climatic conditions. Each case study looks at factors such as employment in local industries, agricultural success, mortality rates, and social cohesion to understand how natural environments influenced integration.

By using a comparative case study method, the research highlights how some groups managed to adapt more successfully than others, depending on the environmental conditions they encountered. These case studies are drawn from a variety of sources, including regional archives, local histories, and ethnographic studies.

4. Qualitative Interviews and Oral Histories:

In addition to archival research, the study incorporates qualitative interviews and oral histories where available. Interviews with descendants of deportees, as well as existing oral history projects, provide personal insights into the challenges faced by these populations and how they perceived the impact of climate on their daily lives. This qualitative data helps to capture the emotional and psychological aspects of integration that are not always reflected in official documents.

5. Thematic Analysis:

The data collected from archival research, climate analysis, case studies, and interviews are subjected to thematic analysis. Key themes such as "adaptation to harsh climates," "resource scarcity," "labor struggles," and "social cohesion under environmental stress" are identified and analyzed to explore the broader patterns of integration. This thematic approach helps to link the specific experiences of different deported groups with the overarching influence of environmental conditions.

6. Comparative Analysis:

Finally, a comparative analysis is conducted between different groups of deported peoples and the various regions to which they were relocated. This allows for the identification of factors that either facilitated or hindered the integration process across different natural and climatic contexts. Variables such as the type of labor, proximity to local populations, government support, and climatic severity are considered in comparing the experiences of deported communities.

Through this combination of methods, the study aims to offer a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the role that natural and climatic conditions played in shaping the integration of deported peoples in special settlements.

III. Results

Soviet and Russian historian N. F. Bugai explains the deportations of individual ethnic groups by the fact that the Soviet authorities feared their possible betrayal. This assumption became the basis for preventive accusations and forced expulsion of entire peoples. The reasons for deportations also included: collaboration with the fascists (treason), belonging to a nation or religion with which the war was waged, which could lead to support for the enemy due to ethnocultural proximity. The strategic goals of these deportations included: 1) establishing fear in order to control the country; 2) undermining the internal unity of peoples and promoting ethnic assimilation; 3) shifting the blame for the political and economic mistakes of the regime onto the repressed peoples; 4) increasing the population in sparsely populated regions of Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia; 5) providing labor resources for the backward regions of the USSR. Thus, according to the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of October 12, 1943 and the resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of October 14, 1943, the Karachays were subject to deportation to the Kazakh and Kirghiz SSRs. On November 2, 1943, 69,207 people were deported from the Karachay Autonomous Region, as well as 424 Karachays found in neighboring regions. The bulk of the deportees were placed in the South Kazakhstan Region (25,212 people), the Dzhambul Region (20,285 people) and Kirghizia (22,900 people), and small

groups were sent to Tajikistan, the Irkutsk Region and the Far East. They were later joined by 2,500 demobilized Red Army soldiers. In the early years, the local population, under the influence of propaganda, was suspicious of the settlers from the North Caucasus. However, the similarity of the languages of the Karachays and Balkars with the languages of the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs and Uzbeks contributed to the establishment of trusting relationships between the special settlers and the local population.

IV. Discussion

Despite being deported under extremely difficult conditions, Chechens and other ethnic groups played a significant role in the development of Kazakhstan's economy. They were employed across various industries, including mining, agriculture, and construction, often under grueling circumstances. For example, in 1945, Chechen workers on the Balqash mine exceeded production quotas by 200-300%. This indicates that, although initially inexperienced in certain industries, they adapted quickly and contributed to crucial sectors like coal mining and industrial construction. Their labor not only helped meet the economic demands of the war and post-war periods but also facilitated the modernization of Kazakhstan's infrastructure.

Discussion Point: How did the contribution of Chechen laborers affect the broader narrative of forced resettlement in the Soviet Union? Did their participation in nation-building challenge the negative stereotypes associated with them?

2. Adaptation and Professional Development

The process of adapting to new professions was not without challenges. Many settlers initially struggled due to their lack of experience in industrial work and poor Russian language skills. However, through bunched work teams and training programs, they eventually gained the skills necessary to meet and exceed production standards. For instance, the introduction of brigade methods of teaching proved to be an effective approach for accelerating skill acquisition, as evidenced by the remarkable productivity of individual workers like the drill operator Mezhidov and others.

Discussion Point: What does this tell us about the adaptability and resilience of deported populations under extreme pressure? How important were education and skills development in their successful integration?

3. Harsh Living and Working Conditions

The text underscores the inhumane living conditions experienced by the special settlers upon their arrival. The forced relocations were conducted under severe circumstances, leading to overcrowding, lack of food and clothing, and high mortality rates. Despite these obstacles, the settlers managed to not only survive but also thrive in the industrial workforce. This raises the question of the role that labor played in their survival and integration into new environments. Labor became a means of both survival and resistance to their marginalized status.

Discussion Point: How did the harsh living conditions affect the settlers' psychological and physical well-being? In what ways did work serve as a mechanism for survival and eventual social inclusion?

4. Political and Social Context of Deportation

The deportation of Chechens, along with other ethnic groups, was part of a larger Soviet policy that sought to control perceived threats to state security during World War II. The settlers were initially stigmatized as "traitor peoples," which justified their harsh treatment and relocation. However, as the text highlights, by the 1950s, there was a shift in attitudes, with authorities beginning to publicly acknowledge and reward the contributions of these workers.

Discussion Point: How did the shift in political attitudes towards special settlers reflect broader changes in Soviet society during the post-war period? How did their labor contributions challenge or reinforce Soviet narratives about loyalty and productivity?

5. Historical Memory and Legacy

The narrative around Chechen special settlers, and deported peoples more broadly, has a complex legacy. On one hand, their forced relocation was a significant human rights violation, but on the other hand, their labor contributed to the economic development of Kazakhstan and other regions. This duality poses difficult questions about how such historical experiences are remembered and interpreted.

Discussion Point: How should the legacy of forced resettlement and labor be remembered? Should the focus be on the hardship endured, the contributions made, or both? What are the implications for contemporary discussions about historical memory and reconciliation?

In sum, the experience of Chechen special settlers in Kazakhstan highlights themes of resilience, forced adaptation, economic contribution, and shifting political perceptions in Soviet history. These themes invite a broader conversation about the complex dynamics between state policy, labor, and the lived experiences of marginalized populations.

On December 28, 1943, the deportation of Kalmyks to the Krasnoyarsk and Altai Territories, Omsk and Novosibirsk Regions began. One of the largest groups deported from the North Caucasus were the Chechens. On February 23, 1944, about 400,000 Chechens and more than 90,000 Ingush were forcibly resettled. According to the report of the Deputy Chief of the 3rd Directorate of the NKGB of the USSR D. V. Arkadyev from March 11, 1944, out of 180 trains with deportees, 171 arrived at their destination, and 9 trains remained en route. By March 11, 1944, 468,583 people had arrived at the resettlement sites: 24,281 in Jalal-Abad Region, 16,565 in Dzhambul Region, 29,089 in Alma-Ata Region, 34,167 in East Kazakhstan Region, 20,808 in South Kazakhstan Region, 39,542 in North Kazakhstan Region, 20,309 in Aktobe Region, 31,236 in Semipalatinsk Region, 41,230 in Pavlodar Region, and 37,938 in Karaganda Region. They were later joined by thousands of Chechens and Ingush who had been discharged from the Red Army after February 1944. More than 60,000 people were resettled in Kazakhstan.

On March 8, 1944, about 38,000 Balkars were deported, and on May 18, 1944, more than 180,000 Crimean Tatars were expelled from Crimea. Professor V. B. Ubushaev from the Kalmyk State University rightly emphasizes that “the deportations of peoples were carried out spontaneously and had no legal basis. For each people subject to punishment, L. Beria opened a special case with incriminating documents, which he then presented to I. Stalin. These materials were selected tendentiously and did not stand up to serious verification.” In the areas where special settlers were resettled, the NKVD organized special commandant’s offices, and the status of the deportees was determined by the instructions of the NKVD and the NKGB of the USSR, decrees of the State Defense Committee, as well as the regulation of January 8, 1945 “On the special commandant’s office.” The deportees could participate in elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and were gradually drawn into public life, but their rights were limited in wartime conditions. Once a month, they were required to report to the commandant's office, signing a special journal. The special settlers retained the status of citizens of the USSR, but did not have the right to leave their designated places of residence, which had a negative impact on social life based on family support. Many families were separated, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs carried out work to find and reunite them. The authorities of the Union republics and local executive committees were engaged in the economic arrangement of the settlers, based on the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Usually, preparations for the placement of deportees began a month or a month and a half before their eviction, providing for a set of measures to arrange for the resettled families. However, in practice, the implementation of these measures encountered difficulties due to a lack of material and economic resources, harsh

climatic conditions and sometimes the negligence of local authorities. This led to an increase in morbidity and mortality among the settlers. For example, in Kazakhstan in 1944, 32,502 people died, and in 1945, 32,111 people. The highest mortality was recorded in the second half of 1944 and the first half of 1945, which coincided with the period of acclimatization, as well as food difficulties and a shortage of clothing and footwear.

Special settlers worked actively in all sectors of the national economy of Kazakhstan. Documents from regional archives testify to the significant contribution of Chechens to this activity. By the fall of 1944, 2,158 Chechen special settlers worked in enterprises and collective farms in Leninogorsk. At first, their productivity was low due to lack of experience, weak discipline and difficult living conditions. Additional difficulties were created by the language barrier, but over time, the special settlers mastered professions and increased their labor efficiency. The use of team training methods helped speed up this process, and by August 1944, 415 people fulfilled and 382 exceeded labor standards. In 1946, 1,044 people worked in the mines of Leninogorsk, including 332 Chechens, many of whom significantly exceeded plans. From the first days of their stay in the Karaganda region, able-bodied men were involved in production. In 1945, 628 Chechens worked at the Balkhash mine, of which 426 regularly exceeded the plan by 200-300%. New professions for special settlers were actively mastered: in 1947, 75 tractor drivers and 7 drivers were trained, 472 people were trained at FZO enterprises, and 355 people mastered new specialties. By January 1, 1948, 10,393 people worked at 75 industrial enterprises in the Karaganda region, 2,414 in Temirtau, and 3,122 in Balkhash.

By 1952, 15,114 special settlers from the North Caucasus worked at enterprises and construction sites in the region, including Chechens employed in the coal industry and construction. They participated in coal mining, construction of industrial and residential facilities, and railway repair. The reports noted that most of the special settlers were conscientious about their work, and from the mid-1950s their successes were openly encouraged.

Thus, the deported peoples, including the Chechens, despite the difficult conditions of resettlement and life, made a significant contribution to the development of the country's economy, refuting the myth of "traitor peoples."

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