

“It Cannot Be That Our Graves Will Be Here:”

Chechen and Ingush Deportees in Kazakstan, 1944-1957

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This article explores the experiences of Chechen and Ingush deportees in one region of northern Kazakhstan, Akmola *oblast'*. The Akmola region is a very large steppe territory (97,000 km² in its present borders, a little smaller than South Korea) that served as a site of exile already during the last decades of the Romanov empire. The exiles of that era were not very numerous and had little impact on the region. Under Stalin, however, Akmola came to function as a major “prison of nations,” and the southern areas of the region, adjacent to the Karaganda region, served as sites for agricultural labor camps.ⁱ The first of many groups to be forcibly relocated to the region were the victims of dekulakization and collectivization (1929-31), followed by Poles and Koreans (1936-37), and many other, smaller groups of people. The two largest groups deported to Akmola were Soviet Germans (1941 and 1945) and North Caucasians, primarily Chechens and Ingush (1944). In 1946 exiles made up about one-quarter of the regional population, 136,625 out of a total of 508,000.ⁱⁱ It is especially revealing to study the exiles in this region because so many different people were deported to it and lived in close proximity to each other.

Until recently, the fate of the so-called “special settlers” (*spetsposelentsy*) in the years after their deportation has received little attention. With some exceptions, few publications on this topic have gone beyond the events of the deportation itself. This was also a noticeable trend in Kazakhstan. In Akmola, a public discussion of the deportations began in 1989, but many publications focused only on the most traumatic part of the deportees’ lives, that is, on the deportation, transport to Kazakhstan, and the period immediately afterwards. Reflections on life in Kazakhstan *after* the first few months were often limited to certain stock phrases, such as “then gradually things became better.” Biographical sketches of former special settlers often focused on work achievements in a distinctly Soviet style, praising their contributions to the Soviet and local economy.ⁱⁱⁱ I found a comparable pattern in some of the interviews that I conducted with former deportees (Germans, Ukrainians, Ingush, and Chechens) in the region between 1994 and 2000. A number of interviewees remembered the deportation and transport to Kazakhstan in great detail. They clearly saw this as *the* story worth telling, and found it difficult to find much to say about their lives afterwards. Some, especially German deportees, showed me decorations and awards received at work, or they pointed to the careers of well-known regional administrators and farm bosses, former exiles, as evidence that their group had rejoined “normal” Soviet society after the mid-1950s. A similar emphasis on a gradual “normalization” of life in exile, primarily through labor, has been put forward by the Russian scholar Nikolai Bugai, in his recently published monograph on the Caucasian nations in exile.^{iv} Without minimizing in any way the brutality and injustice of deportation itself, Bugai argues that on site the special settlers were successfully mobilized into the labor force,

and that this enabled them to improve their situation. In Kazakhstan, for instance, over 15,000 special settlers had received medals and awards for their labor by 1953.^v

Other writers have presented a completely different picture of life in exile, one that is more familiar to western readers, dominated by hunger, cold, deprivations, and humiliations. Already in 1978 the •migr• historian Alexander Nekrich cited evidence from memoirs and unpublished dissertations that testified to extremely harsh conditions, numerous deaths from hunger, disease, and the hardest work assignments, and an unrelenting “special regime” made worse by corrupt and cruel local officials. Nekrich also notes that the exiles worked hard and showed signs of patriotism, but he emphasizes their suffering and concludes that their cultural development was arrested due to the deportations.^{vi} A very strong indictment of the deportations was recently published by J. Otto Pohl, in the pages of this journal. Pohl argues that the deportations “constituted acts of ethnically motivated murder,” because the exiles were deported to areas known to have “de adly living conditions,” and that “the Stalin regime deliberately imposed conditions upon the ‘Repressed Peoples’ that it knew would result in a large number of excess deaths and greatly reduce live births.”^{vii}

My article seeks to contribute to further discussion of this issue by focusing on the experiences of the deported Chechens and Ingush and their survival strategies in one region. I will examine primarily on two kinds of relationships, those between the settlers and the Soviet regime in the form of Communist Party and police authorities, and those between settlers and others living in the region (including comparisons to other special settlers). Shifting from the suffering of the deportees to the actions that they took to survive reveals that the deported people had some options, of which they availed themselves to differing degrees, and that changes in official policies brought powerful responses from the affected people. Akmola was an important site of special settler culture. As the article will show, the region became a center of religious culture, home to several dozen Islamic movements, and it became a hotbed of grass roots political activity in the 1950s, during the period of Khrushchev’s reforms. The exiles exercised more agency than was previously known, and they engaged in individual and collective activities that made an impact. In the case of the Chechens, this ultimately contributed to achieving their goal, returning home to the Caucasus.

The First Years in Exile, 1944-1949

In February 1944, the NKVD officers responsible for organizing the reception and distribution of the special settlers in Kazakhstan, Central Committee representative Bogdanov, and Kazakhstan’s Gulag boss, Nasedkin,

scheduled Akmola *oblast'* to receive the highest number of Caucasians of any region in Kazakstan, altogether 60,000 men, women and children.^{viii} They informed local officials of the impending arrival of deportees a little less than one month before the first trains arrived, at a joint session of the *oblast'* party committee and the regional soviet, on February 11, 1944.^{ix} In preparation for the arrival twenty-eight NKVD officers went out to the districts to supervise the distribution of the special settlers. They were mostly concerned with the availability of transport and the impact that heavy snowfalls would have on the rapid distribution of people, but they also reported that local officials were worried about provisions: "The district committee secretaries and chairmen of local soviets primarily wanted to know if some funds would be made available for bread, flour, salt, vegetables, soap, and matches, which are necessary to ensure the proper reception of the special settlers."^x Telegrams and reports sent to NKVD chief Lavrentii Beria from Bogdanov and Nasedkin show that the operation was essentially concluded by March 20, 1944, and that "no negative reactions from either special settlers or the [local] population" disrupted it. A total of 60,312 Chechens, Ingush, and Balkardians were transported to Akmola by March 20. This figure includes 262 individuals who, according to transport lists, either died during the journey or fell so ill that they were removed from the train.^{xi} The latter number undoubtedly records only deaths from the last stop to the final destination, as the overwhelming majority of memoirs and oral accounts of transport testify to the forcible removal of bodies from the trains during the journey.^{xii}

One recurring and spontaneous element in the oral testimonies of former exiles in Akmola is an account about the behavior of young women during the journey to Kazakstan. I recorded several similar versions of this, both from eyewitnesses and from their children. One 63-year old former deportee described the wooden cattle car that was used to transport his family into exile.

In the middle of the rail car stood an iron stove with a pipe, and on the sides were planks. In one corner stood a bucket. These cars had been modified for the transport of settlers. Up to ten families were put into one rail car. In such conditions they hauled us, for eighteen days. In the cars men and women were together, boys and girls. This was too cruel, considering our traditions. The girls found it impossible to go relieve themselves. Many of them died...They, a girl could not relieve herself in front of a young man who was to be her husband. She became afflicted with a disease, she felt ashamed and insulted, she just could not, never, go to this place [the bucket]. This was very merciless.^{xiii}

According to a similar account published in an Akmola newspaper, the young women died of a rupture of their bladder.^{xiv} American doctors whom I consulted regarding this matter assured me that "spontaneous incontinence" would have occurred before bladder rupture, and that the young women probably died of other causes.^{xv} Much of what the Chechen exiles said about the train journey was similar to accounts by German and other

deportees, but this aspect of their testimony is unique. Whatever the actual cause of death, former deportees clearly valued this memory and referred to it often, not only when describing the terrible hardship of transport, but when asked about the upbringing of young people more generally, and to emphasize the strength of their traditions even during the worst circumstances.

After a grueling journey of about three weeks in cattle cars the exiles arrived in a weakened condition. A Kazak collective farmer, who as a youth of age sixteen was detailed to stand guard over a transport destined for the village Zhangys-Kuduk, described this moment: “There was great noise, screams. People didn’t recognize each other and got lost, family members had been sent in a different car. They looked terrible, like prisoners. They had nothing with them, except for their clothes.”^{xvi} At the railroad stations NKVD troops and local helpers divided the exiles and sent them to the districts in groups of 2-30 families. Like the journey itself, this humiliating and frightening selection process has been frequently described in memoirs and in fiction.^{xvii} Collective farm chairmen and agricultural specialists first chose those people who were in the best physical condition, while obviously weak and sick individuals remained in the snow, in front of the trains until all others had left. Those who were seriously ill were placed in quarantine at the stations, or hospitalized, but the documents do not say what happened to them afterwards.^{xviii}

Most important, the deportees were widely dispersed. Several interviewees noted that this aspect of their exile was especially bitter, the breaking up of their nation into many small and weak groups without the ability to communicate with each other. NKVD maps and location tables for the Akmola region show that no more than a few dozen families were concentrated in each place. The exiles were sent to small district towns, villages, farms, and remote farm outposts. The NKVD set up over 100 special police offices (*spetskomendatory*) in the region, responsible for maintaining the “special regime” under which the deportees lived (more on this below).^{xix}

In the months immediately after the deportation and before the end of the war the situation of the special settlers was so desperate that the Kazak party leaders and the Soviet of Ministers repeatedly applied to the leadership in Moscow for help in the form of additional assignments of food, seed grain, and textiles. They were alarmed by the settlers’ “physical depletion” and by the spread of dystrophy and other infectious diseases, especially typhus. Special allotments authorized in December 1944 amounted to a daily ration of 100 grams of wheat flour and 25 grams of semolina flour. It is unclear how much of this actually reached the deportees. Even if some of it did, Kazak government officials argued that “in the absence of any additional sources of food products whatsoever, this is

obviously insufficient to ensure the survival and support of completely exhausted people.”^{xxx} Although the Chechen and Ingush arrived in Kazakstan in March and April 1944, regional authorities made no systematic attempt to sign them up for work and for land allotments until *after* the spring field work period, that is, sometime in June 1944. As a result, they were excluded from receiving allotments from the harvest of 1944, and dependent on direct government aid until the harvest of 1945 came in.

Oral testimonies reveal that hunger and famine conditions were constant until about 1948 or 1949.^{xxi} Entire families went about pale and with swollen bellies, searching for animal carcasses in the steppe, and once the snow melted, for wild onions and garlic and various grasses to sustain themselves. Many of the grasses were indigestible and caused diarrhea and dehydration. Very few people resorted to begging (children, especially orphans, attempted to survive in this way), but some stole sheep and chickens to survive.^{xxii} Getting any kind of job in the collective farms could mean the difference between life and death. Not only did such employment bring with it the allotment of a garden plot and of provisions by the farm administration, it meant that one had direct and unsupervised access to vegetable gardens, cow’s milk, and occasionally meat. One Chechen informant in Akmola recalled that when he was employed as a cow herd he regularly drank milk directly from the cows’ udder, always in mortal fear of being discovered by the farm’s milkmaid, who herself was under pressure to deliver a certain amount of milk each day.^{xxiii} Only individuals who were healthy and who had the requisite minimal clothing were able to find employment quickly. This situation was depicted especially vividly in a January 1945 report to Anastasii Mikoian, the assistant chairman of the Council of Peoples’ Commissars:

[T]he situation with clothing and shoes for the special settlers has deteriorated sharply. Even without taking into account the great majority of special settlers who are incapable of working, the children especially are literally naked, and as a result colds and influenza-type diseases with a high percentage of mortality are widely spread among them. A great number of able-bodied special settlers cannot be used in agriculture due to the absence of clothing and shoes.^{xxiv}

People who did work often supported dozens of others who were too weak to go outside, despite the threat of harsh punishments when suspected of even the smallest theft. On several occasions young men who were sent to work in remote outposts returned to the village to find that their entire family had died, or that barracks which had been overcrowded with deportees when they left, stood empty, and that a new, Muslim cemetery had appeared near the settlement.^{xxv}

Many informants emphasized that local people and especially Kazaks treated the exiles with great compassion and kindness, and that they saved them from starvation when no one else would help.

There were many weak families, those that contained many individuals and few workers, and many died of hunger. In some families only one person remained, in others everyone died. The local people, especially those of Kazak nationality, people of the Muslim faith, shared each piece of bread with us, although, it's true, they were extremely poor themselves. I will never forget the Ismuldinovs, husband and wife, Khasein and Nazam. In 1946 and 1947 I herded horses on the outlying pastures, and lived in their family. The mother, Nazam, always put a larger piece of bread in front of me than in front of her own sons. They always spoke with me very affectionately, and they felt sorry for me, knowing that I was in a strange land.^{xxvi}

Only rarely did Chechen deportees testify to the obvious difficulties of living with strangers in cramped surroundings, and the feelings of humiliation at being reduced to the position of a supplicant. "Some of us were housed in families. If they took you in, you had to sit there quietly, at the door, towards the exit, and you couldn't go out anywhere."^{xxvii} In addition, the relationships of Chechens and Ingush to their neighbors were complicated by the widely spread perception that they were indeed "enemies of the people," "traitors," "cut throats," "bandits," or even "cannibals." Some oral and printed testimonies suggest that these rumors were spread purposely by the NKVD before their arrival.^{xxviii} One Kazak informant who was sent to pick up special settlers from the rail road station testified that he went trembling in fear, believing that he was about to meet "devils."^{xxix} The result was that local people feared these new arrivals and spread rumors about them, to a far greater extent than was the case with Germans or other special settlers.

One of the most striking aspects of the history of the special settlers in Akmola is that the various groups of deportees adapted to the local conditions very differently. Many of the Caucasians were not only physically but spiritually exhausted, and they fell into apathy, refusing or unable to work. One Chechen informant explained that in this initial period "we were like blind people, we did not understand anything."^{xxx} This clearly set them apart from other special settlers, especially the Germans. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who was exiled to Dzhambul oblast' in the 1950s, described the exiled nations very differently. In a frequently cited passage he argued that the Germans as a group were the most diligent people in exile, becoming prosperous again only a few years after the war. "They did not fall into despondency, and even in this place set to work as methodically and sensibly as ever."^{xxxi} An unpublished memoir by Louise Trenkle, a former deportee who was exiled to the railroad town Dzhaksy in Akmola, also supports this notion, and shows that some of the deportees made a conscious decision to work as hard as they could to survive. She described a woman who lost the energy to take care of her children and added: "It was a sad picture, because many died of starvation through their own fault - they said to themselves, we won't work for these people here [in Kazakstan], but they themselves had the disadvantage from this."^{xxxii}

The most compelling evidence for the terrible hardships of the first years in exile and for the variance between the special settler groups are the death rates reported by the police, which were very high, and very different. In Kazakstan, according to an NKVD report on excess deaths, 16.5 percent of all special settlers perished between 1944 and 1949, a total of 125,564 out of a special settler population of 760,642 individuals. 101,036 Chechens, Ingush, Balkardians, and Karachaevtsy died in this period (23.3 percent of the deportees), 485 Kalmycks (20.7 percent), 443 Crimean Tatars (10.1 percent), and 19,501 Germans, representing 8.9 percent of the German exiles. The police cited two primary reasons for the extremely high death rates of the Caucasian peoples. The first was “the unsuitability of a significant number of Chechens and Ingush, especially the former inhabitants of mountain districts, for labor in industry, on collective and state farms (before resettlement they had been engaged in animal husbandry).”^{xxxiii} Because of this, they were not assigned supplies and provisions from enterprises and farms. The second reason was that a deadly typhus epidemic broke out in Kazakstan in April-May 1944. This typhus epidemic was also mentioned in many oral accounts.^{xxxiv} While it affected not only the Caucasians, it spread just as they were least able to resist the disease.

The number of deaths in Akmola can be approximated using the results of a special settler census that was carried out in 1949. The local death rates appear to be far higher than the averages reported for Kazakstan as a whole. As noted above, 60,312 North Caucasian settlers were delivered to the region in 1944, including at least 5,300 Balkardians.^{xxxv} According to the 1949 census, 14,647 Chechens, 20,592 Ingush, and 2,641 Balkardians remained in Akmola, a total of 37,970 individuals from the North Caucasus (including family members of other nationalities, and several dozen Dagestanis, Kalmycks, and Tatars). Taking into account the departure of several thousand special settlers from the region for various reasons, it appears that approximately 23,700 Caucasians perished in Akmola in 1944-1949. The local death rate between 1944 and 1949 was about 49 percent for the Balkardians, and that of Chechens and Ingush was about 35 percent.^{xxxvi}

In the years after 1949 the birth rate of Caucasian special settlers in Kazakstan rose sharply, until it was nearly triple the death rate.^{xxxvii} Many informants also testified that their material situation improved after 1950. In demographic terms, however, the Chechens and Ingush never completely recovered. Ten years after more than 55,000 Chechens and Ingush arrived in Akmola, their number grew back from a low of 35,239 in 1949 to 45,331 in 1954, a figure that includes 15,401 children.^{xxxviii}

The deportees and the “special regime”

In 1994 the local writer Leonid Bil' described the period after the worst was over, in a rather "old-fashioned," Soviet style. "After the famine years, the surviving Chechens gained a little weight, towards summer, and gradually they got used to life in this steppe village. They made friends with the locals, and together with them they worked in the fields and with the cattle, from dawn to dusk."^{xix} Needless to say, this fictionalized account raises many more questions than it answers: How successful was the state after 1949 in mobilizing the special settlers into the labor force, how many of the deportees worked, where and how "enthusiastically" did they work? What relationships evolved with their neighbors, and who were they? How did local farm bosses treat them? And, of course, how were the deportees affected by the "special regime?" Did none of the exiles resist, or try to escape?

The "special regime" was primarily designed to prevent escapes and population movement within the republics of exile. Its most odious provision was that the exiles were forbidden to leave their villages beyond a radius of three kilometers.^{xi} A special police force, the "4th Special Section of the NKVD" was responsible for maintaining the regime, and to run a monthly process of registration, a much-hated procedure. In January 1945, the functions of the 4th Special Section were specified in a "Statute on the *spetskomendatory* of the NKVD." They included maintenance of the special settler registration rolls, supervision of special settler labor and of housing questions, prevention and investigation of escapes, and of anti-Soviet and criminal activities, and, more generally, the supervision of public order in the places of exile. In addition to carrying out the monthly registration, the *spetskomendanty* were empowered to issue permission slips for temporary absences, and to issue administrative punishments. They could order offenders to appear for registration more frequently, every five or ten days, impose arrests of up to five days, and fines up to ten rubles.^{xii} After 1948, special settlers who were convicted of trying to escape received a prison sentence of twenty years of hard labor.^{xiii}

Special settlers also had to go through the *spetskomendatory* to register any kind of paperwork, most often involving changes in vital statistics, including marriages, births, and deaths. The *spetskomendanty* could make life miserable with harrassment of various kinds, including bureaucratic obstacles to marriages, beatings, arrests, and being held without food. Several curious cases of abuse were cited already by Nekrich in 1978. In one, a *spetskomendant* arrested a bride during the wedding, because she had failed to clear the paperwork through him. In another case, a police officer forbade the playing of a famous Caucasian dance, the "Lezginka," calling it "bandi t music."^{xiiii} In interviews, Germans, Poles, and Russians felt free to describe their former *komendanty* and their human foibles, occasionally telling anecdotes, or singing satirical songs about them, composed by the village youth. One of

the songs went like this: ‘Oi, comrade Mikhailichenko, you should let us go home! Your dark barracks are a prison to us.’^{xliiv} A Polish settler deported in the 1930s remembered: ‘There were different kinds of commanders. Some enjoyed their power and humiliated us...but there were also humane ones, who attempted everything in their power to ease our lot.’^{xli v} Local Chechens, however, were silent when I asked them about the former *spetskomendanty*, except to note their names.

Most of the special settlers lived in existing settlements or their remote outposts. Each *spetskomendant* was responsible for supervising several of these settlements, about four to five. Due to the vast size of the territory, they were often widely separated from each other. The image of special settlers confined as in labor camps, behind barbed wire, is incorrect. At least in Akmola, it was not feasible to set up posts or permanent guard stations at hundreds of tiny and remote hamlets.^{xli vi} In most cases (unless one lived in a larger village or district center), the *spetskomendant* appeared in each settlement only once each month, to register the exiles, and it was at this time that individuals could approach him for permission slips to leave the village. The distances involved made it difficult to exert closer supervision: as late as 1950, 45 of 109 *spetskomendatury* did not even have their own vehicles.^{xli vii}

To facilitate control of special settler movement, a system of collective responsibility (*krugovaia poruka*) was implemented. Ten households were placed under the supervision of one individual personally responsible for their physical presence, the so-called *desiatidvornik*. In 1946 there were 7,366 such *desiatidvorniki* in Kazakstan, and by 1950 their number had grown to 26,254.^{xli viii} These individuals had to account for ‘their’ families every ten days. They were usually either men with some authority (but not too old to walk long distances to the *spetskomendatura*), individuals who knew some Russian, and who also functioned as translators, and those among the exiles who were members of the Communist Party or of the Komsomol.^{xli ix} In return, they received material goods, food provisions, and special permissions to visit their relatives in other regions. The police occasionally claimed that these men were very helpful in preventing flight and in locating fugitives, by denouncing people who were preparing to leave or in hiding, and identifying individuals who needed to be brought to the stations for a ‘talk’ (usually a brutal dressing-down), but they also complained that they did not have enough means to reward ‘outstanding’ *desiatidvorniki*. In Akmola, specifically, one report noted, the *spetskomendanty* neglected working with these helpers, and as a result, received ‘absolutely no information’ from them. ¹

The 4th Special Section also used a network of informers and spies to prevent flight and to stay abreast of anti-Soviet talk and activities. These were recruited from among the Caucasians (3,544 in October 1946) and from

the “surrounding local population” (199 in October 1946).ⁱⁱ Here is an example of the type of information they provided:

On [October 12, 1946] the Stalinskoe district office of the Akmola MVD received a denunciation from special operative “Sultanov” about the plans of special settler Iusup [K.] to flee from his site of settlement to the Kustanai region, to his remote relatives’ site of settlement. In order to prevent the escape, [K.] was ordered to appear at the district office, where the procedures for receiving permission for family reunions were explained to him, and he was informed of the legal consequences for leaving the site of settlement of his own will.ⁱⁱⁱ

The authorities were especially interested in recruiting religious leaders from among the special settlers for this kind of work, and police reports contain several descriptions of mullahs who organized meetings and gave talks to prevent flights under the auspices of the 4th Special Section.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In the draft of a 1946 report to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, and Malenkov, the Commissar of Internal Affairs, Kruglov, claims that 24 “loyal” mullahs and 7 other religious authorities, including several well known Sufi sheikhs, were on the payroll of the NKVD.^{lv} However, local police reports of a later date describe several of the same people (their names appear in the documents) as dangerous anti-Soviet agitators, who organized religious meetings and encouraged believers to maintain their hopes for returning to the Caucasus, so it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of this approach.^{lv}

Chechen *desiatidvorniki* were hesitant to talk about the ambiguities of their role in interviews. One emphasized his role as translator, and answered questions about his role in enforcing the regime by expressing the bitterness many felt about the regime.

I was designated as a *desiatidvornik* because I knew a little Russian. If they ordered someone to the district office, I worked as a translator. I worked as a cattle herder for twenty-five years. In all this time I never once humiliated my animals like they humiliated us. The *komendantsy* and collective farm chairmen told us straight out that we were to be the lowest of the low, without rights. You didn’t have the right to complain about anything to the chairman, they told you to sit, shut up, do what we tell you. Brigade leaders and chairmen would hit us, and there was nowhere to complain about it.^{lvi}

Farm bosses and local party secretaries, backed up by the special regime, indeed treated the special settlers with contempt and occasionally outright hatred. The frequency with which such cases appear in the documents makes it clear that Chechens and Ingush suffered far more in this respect than Germans or members of other national groups. Many bosses refused to release food products, to hire them as workers, or even (initially) to sign them up as collective farm members. Bosses publicly shamed the Caucasians, using the slurs “thieves” and “bandits,” sent them to the worst work assignments, and some routinely resorted to physical violence and beatings.^{lvii} The chairman of a collective farm in the Vishnevka district of Akmola, Kasenov, reacted in this way to a humble request from

Caucasian special settlers to be allotted land for gardening: “Our Kazaks don’t plant gardens, and they’re alive, so the special settlers can do without them, too.”^{lxviii} Another farm boss motivated his refusal to build housing for Chechens by saying: “I don’t need the special settlers, I won’t build houses for them, and no one is going to force me to do so.”^{lxix} In Akmola, a unique and extremely brutal case of incitement of violence against Chechens by a collective farm chairman took place in the summer of 1946. This chairman, Ivan Shonin, publicly accused the deported Chechens of having “defiled” the collective farm, and threatened them with punishment to be carried out by demobilized soldiers. As a result, an angry crowd, incited by the chairman, surrounded one of the Chechen houses and set it on fire. Two Chechens perished in this incident.^{lx} Cases of crowd violence were exceptional in the 1940s, but they took place with greater frequency after 1954, as I will discuss below. Were brutal farm bosses punished for their behavior? District and regional party committees occasionally issued “warnings” to them, or they pronounced the rather weak threat (and occasionally carried it out) that the special settlers would be “transferred to other organizations,” that is, precisely what many of the bosses may have desired.^{lxi}

How did the Chechens and Ingush react to the special regime and to the atmosphere of hostility and distrust that surrounded them? Escape was one option, but it was fraught with dangers and the threat of being sent to a labor camp. Despite this, 609 deportees of all nationalities successfully fled the Akmola region by 1949.^{lxii} The available documents do not break this figure down by national group, and they do not show how many tried to flee, but the number of attempts was probably far greater. Police reports from Akmola show that controlling the movements of special settlers even within the districts was extremely difficult, despite the help of informants and special police brigades (many of which existed only on paper). “Mass departures beyond the limits of the *komendatury*” continually took place, and the police clearly distinguished these, often trips to the district market, from attempts to escape exile.^{lxiii} At least 18,629 Caucasians attempted to flee from Kazakstan during the first four years of exile, a total of 4.1 percent of the total population.^{lxiv} Even if the majority of fugitives were returned (all but 2,637) and this figure may include many who knowingly or unknowingly broke the rules of the “special regime” (often in an attempt to be reunited with their families) without really attempting to leave the republic, this is significant evidence of insubordination. Fewer Germans attempted to flee, about 2.9 percent of the special settlers.^{lxv}

The most frequently noted defiant response of Chechens and Ingush to their predicament was that many refused to work, or to work as hard as the bosses desired. This was pointed out already by Solzhenitsyn, who characterized the Chechens as the only *spetsposelentsy* with the spirit of resistance. In a famous and eloquent

passage he wrote that the Chechens did not believe in “slaving in the kolkhoz fields” and that they “never sought to please, to ingratiate themselves with the bosses; their attitude was always haughty and indeed openly hostile.”^{lxvi} The documentary evidence from Akmola supports Solzhenitsyn’s analysis. Here is what the Akmola party chief, Nikolai Zhurin, reported in 1952.

It must be noted that the special settlers have very different attitudes to labor. The local Germans and Poles for instance...are all working, almost all of them have their own houses, private plots, and cattle. They have a good attitude to work and to socialist property. Hostile and criminal tendencies among them are insignificant. [...] The Chechens and Ingush, both in industry and agriculture, work significantly worse than the Germans. Many of them try to get work in trade or supply organizations as stock clerks, sales clerks, expeditors, guards, etc., from with a variety of dishonest machinations they then proceed to plunder state and cooperative property.^{lxvii}

Other observers also frequently noted this less than enthusiastic attitude to labor on the part of the Chechens in Akmola (and of course, in other regions of Kazakstan). Police reports described the Chechens’ “negative attitude,” or their work as suffering from “low productivity,”^{lxviii} they noted individuals who “systematically refused to work,”^{lxix} and they pointed to small towns like Dzhaksy and Esil’ where up to one quarter of able-bodied males did not participate in labor (according to the police, until unspecified “measures” were taken to force them to work).^{lxx} Police observers, however, were also not blind to some of the causes for this phenomenon, and pointed out that farm bosses routinely treated the Chechens with contempt, and acted with complete disregard for their material needs.

The total adult population of special settlers in Akmola in 1952 was 71,517 (people over age 16), including 21,860 Chechens and Ingush, 1,685 Balkardians, 43,533 Germans, and 4,171 Poles. Although all special settlers in the region were described as “employed,” Chechens made up only a small minority at the few industrial enterprises in the region, far less than their percentage of the total special settler population. They were as well represented in the Communist Party as Germans, but significantly underrepresented in the Komsomol, the communist youth organization. The total number of special settler communist party members in the region was 194, and the breakdown was as follows: 109 Germans, 34 Ingush, 23 Chechens, 28 Balkardians. Membership in the Komsomol stood at 1,908 special settlers, including 1,530 Germans, 224 Ingush, and 124 Chechens. These figures did not include a single Chechen girl or woman (but sixteen Ingush women). The local party boss mentioned dozens of outstanding German “agitators” (people who organized meetings, read lectures on prepared topics) but he found only one Chechen agitator worth mentioning, the teacher Sembaev. Caucasians rarely went to watch films, and they

almost never came to lectures, although the young men did go to local clubhouses to socialize. One area in which they participated in a livelier manner was sports. The Ingush in particular were proud of their boxing champion Aziev, who won first place in the republican competition in 1952.^{lxxi}

The hostility of Chechens and Ingush to the regime and their bitterness in exile is documented in testimonies that were collected by the secret police just before the election campaign for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1946. It is unclear how many of the Caucasians actually ended up voting, but the authorities were very worried that they would refuse to participate *en masse*. The commissar of the Interior, Kruglov, reported to Stalin that the most “reactionary among the Muslim spiritual leaders” were openly hostile to the elections, and that they were calling on believers to boycott the elections all over Kazakstan, primarily for the simple reason that no Chechen or Ingush representatives were among the candidates. The police increased its “operative work” among the deportees (that is, it sent more agents to spy on them) in order to prevent “banditry, various excesses and provocations, and the spread of anti-Soviet leaflets and slogans,” and arrested at least forty individuals in Kazakstan for actively engaging in such anti-election activities.^{lxxii} A few special settlers interpreted the official call for their participation in the elections as a sign that their civil rights would be restored, while others asked their fellow deportees to ignore the elections precisely because they would soon go home. Many regarded the process with more negative feelings, and had the expectation that the restoration of their autonomy would be aided by the Western powers, which was very alarming to the party leadership.

I won't participate in the polling, because the Soviet government did not send us to Kazakstan to live, but to die. I would vote for an Anglo-American government with pleasure, because it would be better than the Soviet (Muskhadzhi Khaidiev, Chechen, Alma-Ata).

After the elections we will return to the Caucasus, because England and America will help us restore our state. That is why we will not vote for Soviet candidates, we are going to vote in the Caucasus, for our candidates. (Akhmet Dadaev, Chechen, Alma-Ata).^{lxxiii}

Chechens and Ingush in Akmola largely refused to attempt integration into a Soviet society that defined and treated them as second-class citizens and as a “special contingent.” They used a variety of strategies to avoid contact with the authorities. The most common was to neglect the registration of newborn children, to avoid their being registered as special settlers, and to avoid having to send these children to school. Local school authorities found it difficult to enforce the laws on universal primary education, because in many cases they did not even know how many children of school age were living among the Caucasian special settlers.^{lxxiv} Estimates on illiteracy or

near-illiteracy among special settlers collected in 1952 support this as well: of a total of 13,000 illiterate adults and young adults in the region, 3,840 were Chechens, 3,400 were Ingush, and 1,600 were Germans.^{lxxv} This strategy may have resulted in the weakening of the Chechen-Ingush intelligentsia, but it facilitated the upbringing of children according to cultural traditions and prevented their assimilation into Soviet culture. Until well into the 1990s, practically all Chechens and Ingush who remained in Akmola spoke their own native languages, in contrast to Germans, whose children grew up speaking Russian.

In interviews, Chechens repeatedly emphasized that the upbringing of children and youth was a crucial aspect of their cultural survival in exile. Chechen youth were brought up according to the strict regulations of *adat* or traditional pre-Islamic law, which requires obedience to parents and older siblings, reverence for elders, preservation of family honor, and showing hospitality to guests. The most important values that parents strove to impart, according to my conversations, were honor, honesty, courage, and moral purity. Young people were taught traditional handicrafts: ‘Our women know how to sew, to stitch, and to embroider. In addition, they are famous for their modesty. The only thing that matters to them is the well-being and honor of their family...Our men have their positive sides as well – they can work leather and make shoes. They are truthful and passionate in friendship, and honor their word.’^{lxxvi}

The party paid special attention to the Chechens’ hostile attitude to the officially propagated emancipation of women. In connection with the absence of Chechen girls from the communist youth organizations, the local party boss wrote that ‘the girls of these nationalities [the Caucasians] are still being held hostage by feudal-religious attitudes, their parents observe old customs and do not allow the girls to take part in public life.’^{lxxvii} The only special settler women who took part in official activities for women (lectures on childcare, hygiene and on the role of women in Soviet society) were Germans and Poles. In some cases, Caucasian women who attempted to break out of prescribed gender roles were harassed and threatened, as in the case of three Ingush girls employed at the Karaganda railroad, who were sent to work in a collective farm in Shortandy district in Akmola. According to the report of a local party secretary, several Chechen men accosted them, accusing them of sleeping with Russians and Kazaks and threatening them with rape until the young women left the farm.^{lxxviii} Chechen and Ingush men carefully guarded young women from contact with non-Caucasians, and were known to take revenge if outsiders did not respect their customs.^{lxxix} The records of the 4th Special Section contain an emotional letter from a Russian Komsomol worker in Akmolinsk, G. Solodovnikov, who ran away with his bride, a young Ingush woman named Raisa Marshani, also a

member of the Komsomol, after being threatened by her brothers. The letter, written in January 1955, is an appeal to the police in Akmolinsk to release Marshani from the special settler rolls and to allow them to leave Kazakhstan.

We urgently ask you to help us resolve the following question. We work at the *Kazakhstansel'mash* factory [an agricultural machine building factory in Akmolinsk] and have known each other for five years. We are very attached to each other, but her parents, and especially her older brothers are following the old customs and supposedly they have already engaged her and received a bride price [*kalym*]. On January 2, her brother attacked us both, and since then we have been hiding in places around town. He is threatening our life. [...] They [her family] are looking for us day and night, and they are threatening our acquaintances, promising one thousand [rubles] just for telling them what district we are in. We are now deserters from work; money and documents are in the hands of her brother. [...] We are Komsomols, and we are ashamed of our mistakes, but we love each other and can make for this by labor that is useful to society...Here on site however the mistakes can no longer be corrected. Please help us leave the area, we don't want to be criminals or victims.^{lxxx}

The police did help the young couple. The assistant chief of the 4th Special Section in Akmolinsk reported that "in order to prevent possible incidents, we were forced to hide Solodovnikov and his bride Marshani. In consultation with local party and Soviet organs we released them from their work assignments and allowed them to leave the republic."^{lxxxi} The Communist Party was especially concerned with the most visible evidence of what it perceived as the bondage of women: cases of bride abduction and of polygamy – both customs were practiced not only among deported Caucasians, but among the Kazaks of the region as well. Several elderly Chechen men told me that they "stole" their wives and proudly recounted how they were chased and threatened by relatives, not on horses, as in the old days, but in automobiles (in the 1960s) – only to add at the end that these "abductions" were essentially prearranged.^{lxxxii} Not all abductions took place in this spirit. When they involved minors (especially students) and possibly rape, the authorities stepped in with arrests and prison sentences. Each year, up to a dozen men were held criminally responsible for abductions and polygamy, but it is unclear what sentences they received.^{lxxxiii} Undoubtedly most of these cases did not come to the authorities' attention. This was especially the case with polygamy, as party officials trying to root out this practice were met with a wall of silence in the villages.

Religious life in exile

One of the most important aspects of survival in exile was the maintenance of religious beliefs. Despite the scattering of people over a large territory, and the conditions imposed by the special regime, the Caucasian nations, especially the Chechens, did not only hold on to their beliefs, but strengthened them in Kazakhstan. In turn religious belief and practice empowered them, and it helped them unite and maintain hope in the face of humiliations and threats to their culture and survival.

Many Chechens are Sufis, followers of one of two mystical traditions or tariqats (orders), the Naqshbandi, originating in the north of Chechnya, and the Quadiri, based primarily in the southern mountain areas. The spread of Naqshbandi Sufism among the Chechens began in the 1830s, when Chechens and Dagestanis united under the leadership of Imam Shamil to fight Russian colonial expansion in the Caucasus.^{lxxxiv} After the defeat of Shamil in 1859, a new order appeared, which followed the teachings of a Sufi leader called Kunta Hadj Kishiev. Both tariqats were able to draw in followers who were attracted by the secretive nature of these orders, their mystical practices, their pursuit of moral and spiritual purity, and the cohesiveness they provided in the face of Russian expansionism. One of the most important rituals was the practice of *zikr*, the repeated chanting of the sacred names of Allah in order to achieve a personal and ecstatic union with God. The *zikr* could be “silent” (Naqshbandi) or “loud” (Quadiri) accompanied by drums, violins, and by ecstatic dancing in a circle.^{lxxxv} The role of the Naqshbandi and Quadiri orders in inspiring resistance to Russian and Soviet domination has long been recognized, and so has the role of Sufism in empowering the nation during the period of exile. Soviet anti-religious activists and scholars of “scientific atheism” who observed religious practice in the Chechen-Ingush Republic during the 1960s and 1970s were especially vexed by the “extraordinary” power of the *zikr* to attract followers.^{lxxxvi} In 1975 Soviet sociologists identified more than half of the Muslim believers in the republic as Sufis, and they explained this resurrection by the revival of Sufi orders in exile.^{lxxxvii}

Akmola was one of the main centers of this religious revival. By 1955, more than twenty Sufi groups were active in the region, including both Naqshbandi and Quadiri tariqats. One of the most visible Naqshbandi groups was based in Atbasar, a railroad town in the north of the region, led by Sheikh Bagautdin Deni Arsanov. In the mid-1950s the Sheikh moved to Alma-Ata, but the movement continued to flourish and the “*Arsanovtsy*” maintained connections and traveled throughout Kazakstan, sending mullahs to conduct services in the district centers of Akmola, advising believers in spiritual and practical questions, and collecting money. The police was especially disturbed by Arsanov’s exhortations to believers to devote all their prayers to the impending return to the Caucasus.^{lxxxviii} The great majority of Sufi brotherhoods in Akmola belonged to the Quadiri tariqat, or Kunta-Hadj movement. Three Chechen Kunta-Hadj sects were active in the village Timofeevka (Erkenshilik district), led by Suleiman Saltamuradov, Vismurat Mutalinov, and Dzhabrail Magamaev. A group of twenty-five Kunta-Hadj followers was located in the mining town Bestiube (Stalin district), led by Babul Iliev, and a smaller group was active in Novo-Georgievka (Vishnevka district), led by Iskhab Misirbulatov. Other sects were located in

Preobrazhenka (Molotov district), in the KazTsIK state farm near Akmolinsk and in other farms in the Shortandy district, and in the city of Akmolinsk. All of the groups organized Koran studies, practiced the *zikr*, sent mullahs to conduct burials and to hold wakes, and actively sought to proselytize new members. As in the case of the “*Arsanovtsy*,” the police were primarily worried about “anti-Soviet” phenomena, and they closely monitored these groups’ activities, their mail, and their travels. They recorded rumors about an imminent war between the USSR and the Western powers that were spread by Sufi followers. A typical example is a statement made by Khadzhi Murat Khamkhoev, the teacher of a Kunta-Hadj group in Shortandy district: “The Soviet government will stay in power only one more year, then the Americans and Turks will take over.”^{xxxix}

The most important religious order in the region was a new tariqat, the Vis Hadj movement, or sect of “White Hats” (*beloshaposhniki*). This movement was founded in the village Krasnaia Poliana, located about 40 kilometers north of Atbasar. The “White Hats,” named after the caps followers wear during *zikr*, are widely credited with inspiring the largest expansion of Sufism in exile. After the 1950s the sect spread from Kazakstan to Chechnya, and some writers consider it to be “anti-Russian” and “anti-Soviet” and describe it as “fiercely xenophobic.”^{xc} Very little has been written about the origins of this movement. I was able to visit Krasnaia Poliana in the summer of 2000 and recorded some new information about this group, in conversations with the current elder, with several members of the group, and with outsiders, living in neighboring villages. The “White Hats” movement was founded in 1947 - 1948, by Uveis Vis Hadj Dzagiev. Vis Hadj was widely viewed as extraordinary and credited with having visions and being able to speak with angels and the deceased. The adherents of the sect in Krasnaia Poliana avoided using his name and speaking about this aspect of his teaching. His student, the current elder (teacher, or *ustaz*) of the sect in Krasnaia Poliana, told me that he recognized that his teacher was unique from the first meeting. From 1944 to 1947 the two men worked and lived together in a Russian field work brigade. His future teacher’s discipline and modesty impressed the student.

He never asked for a second helping of food. He always lived poorly and never looked for riches, he never took money. I began to love him and stayed close to him, not wishing to miss a single of his words....He preached the demand to live purely, to live with your heart, and this teaching spread all over Kazakstan, all over Ingushetia, Chechnya. This was a major teaching. And for this the state persecuted him. But he considered this Allah’s business. He preached and taught cleansing, and for this people came to see him from all over...He called people to work and to live joyfully.^{xi}

Followers of the Vis Hadj movement avoided contact with non-initiates, and the use of the Russian language. This may explain their reputation as “xenophobic.” In addition to white or gray hats, they wore (and wear)

special homemade shirts, without buttons, which they consider a symbol of domination. The founder of the movement refused to have his voice recorded on tape, or to be photographed (nowadays, members of the movement preserve recordings of *zikr* and of the singing of spiritual songs, or *nazym*, on video tape). This movement held a special attraction to women, because it allowed female participation in *zikr* and prayer. Outsiders told me that the founder of the movement had “many wives” (variously 18, 25, and even 40). The current *ustaz* explained that young women came from all over the region, “they stayed day and night, and wouldn’t leave. He did not look for them. Young girls considered it a great happiness to get married to him. The women who loved him were strict believers; they wanted to marry him to feel closer to God. They were not looking for a husband, they cast off all desire.”^{xcii}

The movement largely avoided conflicts with Soviet authorities, although it was closely observed, and members recalled that “they did not love us, because we openly prayed to God.” In addition to practicing *zikr* and singing *nazym*, all members of this movement strictly observed the daily rite of *namaz* (five prayers) and they observed the fasting period, *uraza* (Ramadan), which ended with a celebration, the *uraza – bairam*. The founder of this movement was called to special Islamic courts (*kkhel*) to settle disputes and punish offenders against customary and religious law. The current *ustaz* recalled that other Sufi sects organized these courts as well, but that Vis Hadj was unique because he refused to accept money in payment. In 1977 local police and KGB forces carried out a major raid on the village, looking for weapons and evidence of polygamy, but they only found a hunting rifle and arrested one man for having two wives. Vis Hadj preached obedience and non-resistance to the powers that be, and one strategy that was successful in minimizing the potential for confrontation was to conscientiously mobilize all members of the movement for agricultural labor, especially during spring sowing and harvest times. In the 1960s and 1970s, several thousand Chechen men and women who sought to become followers of this movement moved to Krasnaia Poliana and to two neighboring villages. Eventually nearly all outsiders left this area, and today the three villages are inhabited entirely by members of the sect. Vis Hadj died in 1973. He is considered a saint, and his tomb, located near Krasnaia Poliana, has become a sacred shrine.

One of my Chechen informants had in his possession a small notebook containing the texts of several *nazym*, or spiritual songs, dealing with the topic of exile. Here is one example, recorded in Akmola in 1954. The song is an appeal to God, but the singers also directly turn to the Kazaks of the region, asking them for help:

With the rising sun
With the rising moon
We ask

How is it possible
That we are not born in our native land?
It cannot be that our graves will be here!
We ask you
We ask you, brother Muslims
That they will return us to our homeland!

They exiled us to such a land
For us it is strange and wild
Where the water turns to ice, such frosts!
This far off place
It cannot be that we will find our graves here!
Give us patience
Give our hearts patience o great Allah!^{xciii}

The song illustrates a small part of how practices like *zikr* and *nazym* contributed to the spiritual survival of the exiles. Religious belief and communal practices enabled ordinary people to articulate and share their feelings, they enhanced discipline and cohesion, and most important, they helped the exiles hold fast to their hope that they would return home.

The Virgin Lands opening and the special settler reforms

The lives of the exiles were significantly changed by Stalin's death and by the period of reforms that followed it, an era of great transitions and reforms affecting all of Soviet society. Several Chechen informants emphasized that, unlike many other Soviet citizens, they did not cry when "that hangman" Stalin died, and that they were especially pleased when Lavrenty Beria was killed (he had been in charge of the deportations from the Caucasus).^{xciv} In Kazakstan, two major projects were enacted simultaneously, with surprising results and interactions, the so-called Virgin Lands opening, and gradual reform of the exile system.

Beginning in March 1954, the Akmola region became one of the central sites for the opening of the Virgin Lands, Khrushchev's massive project to increase the grain growing areas of the Soviet Union. This was a very important period of development and growth for the region. Over 100 new grain state farms were founded, investments and new machinery poured in, and about 300,000 new settlers, primarily young Russians and Ukrainians, came to the region during the first five years. Many of these workers also suffered difficulties and deprivations, and the working conditions were very harsh. The result of this was a pattern of seasonal migration. Each year tens of thousands of workers came in the spring, and two-thirds of them and more left again with the

onset of winter. Although the Virgin Landers endured very poor conditions, some on the surface not unlike those initially endured by the deported people, their status was obviously very different. They were not forced to migrate (even if some signed up under peer pressure, and others as part of an amnesty agreement), and they did not endure humiliations like the deportees. On the contrary, the press constantly praised them as "patriots" and "heroes," the special "Virgin Lands passport" of a volunteer gave them the right to travel all over the Soviet Union, and Virgin Landers on leave received special treatment and privileges.^{xcv}

When the Virgin Lands settlers started pouring into Akmola, local people received few or no explanations of what was happening, and the settlers came expecting "empty" steppe lands. The entire production of the Virgin Lands in propaganda and in media prepared them to expect and see Kazakstan as empty of culture or people, except for a few "native herders." They were astonished and dismayed to find thousands of people whom they had been taught to think of as "traitors" already living there, scattered in all the villages and small towns. It was easy to blame the deported people for problems. Some Virgin Lands "patriots" claimed that locals, especially special settlers, acted like "kulaks" and "parasites." As soon as the Virgin Landers began to arrive in Kazakstan, the militia and the special settler police force reported a great number of incidents of unrest, violent confrontations, beatings, mass fights, and riots. The Virgin Landers, or "hooligans" among them, fought violently with each other and with locals, attempting to incite and insult local men and women, primarily special settlers, with shouted obscenities and humiliations. Such confrontations typically took place on the street, at rural stores, lunchrooms, and at public events like dances and movie showings. The most brutal among the new settlers carried out systematic beatings and attacks, accompanied by a flood of insults. The deported people did not only adapt to their exile differently, they also reacted differently to this violence. German and Slavic deportees rarely became involved in fights. The Caucasians fought back.

The largest and most violent incidents took place between Russian or Ukrainian Virgin Lands settlers and Chechen or Ingush deportees, including dozens involving between 50 and 100 people, and a few mass riots with several hundred participants. Some confrontations ended in pogrom-type violence against Caucasians, including the burning of houses. Altogether I have collected evidence on over 80 such incidents involving Virgin Landers and special settlers that took place in Akmola between 1953 and 1957.^{xcvi} The police placed the blame for the majority of these incidents on the Virgin Landers, not the special settlers. Of 718 men arrested for instigating fights and ethnic violence in Kazakstan in 1954, 465 or 66% were Virgin Lands settlers, and 142 were special settlers, the great majority of them Chechen and Ingush.^{xcvii}

Many police reports present these incidents very tersely, giving few insights into the causes or impact of these fights on the wider community, as in the following example: “On December 18, 1954, twenty mechanizer students who were consuming alcoholic drinks in the lunch room of the Atbasar railroad station...insulted, and then beat up two Ingush men...After two hours, up to fifty mechanizers forced their way into the railroad club, where they searched out individuals of Ingush nationality and beat them with boards, spades, and other objects.”^{xviii} The few cases in which the records permit closer study, based on interrogation protocols, reveal that all of the larger riots had long pre-histories of smaller fights and insults, which spiraled into greater violence when neither party or police took action to punish the worst offenders.

In interviews, most people, regardless of nationality, avoided answering questions about these fights. However, the few who were willing to talk about them made some revealing statements. One informant, a well-known Virgin Lands veteran, explained that the Chechen and Ingush were not part of the Soviet “collective,” and added:

It came to fights, and moreover very violent fights...They're pretty fiery, I mean they're Caucasians, sort of fiery, by nature. And what's more, they're considering themselves the bosses around there. But we hadn't come for a visit, either! You understand? We had come to live there, too. So we started, like they say, to set up our order. Well, I mean we have our way of getting along, our laws, and they had theirs, and it came to the point where we couldn't find a common language.^{xix}

A group discussion with Ingush and Kazak men (in 1996, in the courtyard of a village mosque) yielded similar evidence as the police reports, with close descriptions of how Virgin Landers provoked fights. One man described how a specific fight near a grain elevator got started:

He [a Virgin Lands settler] comes into the club, 40 more standing on the street, and he says: ‘Who here is Ingush? Or Chechen? Or Kazak? Who wants to fight? Who doesn't, leave now! Russians leave, other nations, stay! [...] Then the club supervisor comes up: ‘Come on, comrades, don't fight here.’ And that one says: ‘I am an *ataman!*’ The Russian says it. The *khokhol!* [Ukrainian] or whatever, the Belorussian. ‘What do you want? I will kill you!’ [Then] with pieces of iron, they gathered iron, and ‘Let's go beat them!’^c

This particular fight ended with the shooting of a Virgin Lander by an Ingush man, and in response to this, a rampage through the village by Virgin Landers, pulling Ingush from their houses and beating them with irons and axes, including elderly people and women. The main reasons for such fights, according to the members of this group, included the consumption of alcohol, the lack of respect on the part of the Russians for “small nations” and the officially sponsored rumor that branded Chechen and Ingush as “enemies of the people.”

Police and party officials at the local, republican, and national levels were very concerned about these incidents at first. But after a few years the local police stopped recording smaller incidents and concentrated on breaking up and arresting large groups of "hooligans." The party organizations passed a few resolutions "On Group Fights," but took little action beyond firing farm directors and party secretaries *after* major fights had occurred.^{ci}

Major reforms of the exile system started in 1954. They were initially proposed not by Khrushchev but by highly placed officers in the Fourth Special Section of the MVD. The reason that they supported changing the status of the special settlers was that the number of people requiring special supervision and registration grew each year as their children were added to the registers, and this made the work of the police more difficult. Some documents also show that MVD officers believed that the deportees were not guilty of anything. According to their observations, they were good Soviet citizens and should be released for that reason.^{cii} In 1949, 2.3 million special settlers were registered in the Soviet Union, but by 1953 their number had grown to 2.7 million. Initially the police only proposed modifications in the regime of the special settlers, but during the next three years, over 2.5 million people were taken off the registers in piecemeal fashion.^{ciii} Khrushchev had no clear commitment to free all special settlers at the outset, and the reforms were carried out hesitantly and intermittently. Because of this, special settler activism and responses from below played a significant role in shaping them.

On July 5, 1954 the USSR Soviet of Ministers passed a decree which reduced the number of special settlers by one-third at one stroke by releasing all children and youth under age 16 and all students, regardless of their age, from their "special" status. In August 1954 some categories of Germans ("local" Germans) and all former "kulaks" were released. Between May and November 1955 members of the Communist Party, teachers, people with decorations and medals, women who had married non-deportees or who were on special register because of their husbands, and invalids were taken off the register. A number of commissions began to remove people from the

special registers who were on them "by mistake."^{civ} Along with these measures to reduce the numbers of special settlers came new regulations in July 1954 that eased the restrictions that the remaining deportees lived under. It was made easier to travel and to change one's residence within the republic of exile. Fugitives' sentences were reduced from 20 to 5 years of hard labor, and the numbers of convictions for fleeing from exile were reduced to nearly none, from over 8,000 in 1949 to 25 in 1954.^{cv}

As soon as these new provisions were announced in late 1954, special settlers, the great majority of them Ingush and Chechen, began to leave the Virgin Lands areas and to move to the south of Kazakstan. This phenomenon worried the MVD and party leaders in Kazakstan and their superiors in Moscow.

After the lifting of certain restrictions in the legal status of the special settlers, we are observing a significant dislocation of persons leaving the northern regions of Kazakstan, which are engaged in the opening of the Virgin Lands, for the southern regions, and from rural areas into towns and industrial centers of the republic. [...] Many special settlers, primarily Chechen and Ingush, break their regime by not signing off the register when they leave, nor registering at their new place. Completely ignoring any laws they build various mud huts or use existing sheds to settle in. Our investigations revealed that with the onset of warm weather the movement of the special settlers will grow even further and undoubtedly take on a mass character.^{cvi}

By February 1955 about 19,000 persons had left the northern regions of Kazakstan. The most important motivation cited by Chechen men interviewed by the police was the harsh climate and unfamiliar nature of northern Kazakstan, while the south had mountains and was warm. The violence in the Virgin Lands regions also played a role. At the highest levels, in the Central Committee, the Interior Ministry and the 4th special section of the MVD, out-migration and the violent clashes were being observed with concern, as a key document reveals, a memorandum from Karamyshev, the Deputy Chief of the 4th special section of the Soviet MVD, to S.N. Kruglov, the head of the MVD, on February 16, 1955. Karamyshev headed a brigade from the Central Committee that was sent to study the mass dislocation of people and the occurrence of crime and violence in the region. Karamyshev emphasized that the fights with Virgin Landers could *not* be

blamed on the Caucasians and that they did not commit nearly as many crimes as people commonly believed. Only about 5,000 of the 300,000 Chechen and Ingush living in Kazakstan had been arrested and tried.

During 1953-54 the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Soviet of Ministers, the MVD and the Prosecutor of the USSR received numerous complaints and statements from the local inhabitants of Kazakstan and from *spetsposelentsy*, including a number of anonymous ones, claiming that certain categories of special settlers, especially Chechen and Ingush resettled from the North Caucasus, terrorize the local population, and engage in killings, robberies, theft and other crimes. The analysis of statistical data and other materials shows that such statements do not reflect reality in the majority of cases.^{cvii}

The Karamyshev investigation also showed that 18,000 of the 19,000 people who had left the north had received separation papers from collective farms and workplaces and signed off legally, being issued travel papers [*marshrutnye listy*] from their local MVD post. The bosses of enterprises, collective farms, and state farms were only too ready to let the troublesome Caucasians go, at a time when the party was making a vast effort to attract thousands of volunteers to the region. The party was unable to stop the migration flows. The Caucasian population of Akmola was reduced nearly by half between 1954 and 1956. Chechens and Ingush also used the new regulations to undo the dispersion into which the exile system had forced them, bringing together families and reorganizing according to clan [*teip*] within the region. Of 17,032 adults remaining in July 1956, over 7,000 managed to move to towns and district centers, and about 10,000 remained in rural locations.^{cviii}

The first significant change in the legal status of one the deported national groups came with a Supreme Soviet decree of December 13, 1955, lifting the special regulations from the deported Germans. They received no compensation for their confiscated properties and did not receive the right to return to their former republics. The timing of this reform was linked to the

visit of German chancellor Adenauer in Moscow in September 1955.^{cxix} This change in the status of the Germans caused great unrest and resentment among the remaining special settlers. The Akmola police reported that freeing the Germans had a "negative effect on the mood" of the Chechen and Ingush. One former Chechen policeman, Magomet Kostoev, refused to appear for his monthly registration and stated: "There are no equal rights in the USSR: some get freedom, others enserfment." The Akmola police also reported that a few deportees blamed themselves, saying that if only they worked and lived "as do the Germans," they would be freed as well.^{cx}

To calm the remaining special settlers, in mid-1955 the Kazak Central Committee issued instructions to ease job restrictions, to improve access to education for the children of the remaining special settlers, and to foster cultural activities using their native languages. However, an inspection group consisting of party and education ministry officials from Moscow and Almaty found that this resolution was routinely ignored in rural areas, including Akmola *oblast'*, and that the authorities continued to treat special settlers as "second-class people." While there was some improvement in employment, special settlers were not promoted, and common views recorded by the inspectors were that the Caucasians were "lazy" or that "all Chechens are thieves." Many people were just waiting: "Soon there' ll be a new decree, and you' ll all be driven back to the Caucasuŝ.^{cx} Most of the new regulations remained on paper, but one concrete result was the publication of a Chechen weekly newspaper, "*Kinkhegaman bairakh*" [The Banner of Labor] in Alma-Ata.^{cxii}

On July 16, 1956, Chechens, Ingush, and Karachaevttsy were finally released from the special regime, by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.^{cxiii} Their joy and the hope that they would be allowed to go home soon turned to dismay, as they were ordered to sign a release document stating that they waived all rights to their former property, and that they were aware that returning to their former home was forbidden.^{cxiv} In response to this, community and

religious leaders organized a movement to prevent the signing of this paper. The Ingush of the town of Makinsk sent a delegation to Moscow, headed by Idris Bazorkin, to attempt a meeting with Central Committee members, and not one of them signed the document. In Akmolinsk the resistance to signing was organized by mullahs, for instance Dzhabrail Bekmurziev, who held meetings and gave speeches at the kolkhoz market, warning Chechens and Ingush that by signing they would release the state from its obligation to pay for their future return to the Caucasus. Emen Israilov, a Chechen collective farmer, announced: “There was a time when we showed up at the *spetskomendatura* in an orderly fashion. This period has ended and we will demand that they send us back to the Caucasus, just like they sent us here to Kazakstan.” Others, instead of signing, wrote messages on the release document, to the effect that they accepted the loss of their property, but would continue to demand to go home.^{cxv} A representative from the Kazak Central Committee, who organized official meetings of Chechens and Ingush in the town of Makinsk to discuss the release, was surprised to find that he could find “not one Chechen or Ingush” to speak in support of signing the release paper. Instead speakers denounced the procedure as undemocratic, and the dissolution of their autonomous republic and confiscation of their property as illegal, and all demanded to be sent home.^{cxvi} Dozens of people began to travel to the Caucasus spontaneously, and altogether more than 7,000 Chechens and Ingush (of 17,032 adults remaining in the region) refused to sign in Akmola.^{cxvii}

The fall and winter of 1956-57 was an uncertain and tense period in Akmola. 1956 was the year of a record harvest in the Virgin Lands, meaning that tens of thousands of additional workers were mobilized and brought to the region to help bring it in, adding to the general unrest. Violent attacks on the Caucasians continued during this period, and even became worse, as the Caucasians were beginning to organize their return home. According to the police, a party or gang of 85

Ukrainian construction workers “systematically terrorized” the Ingush and Chechens living in Akmolinsk all through 1956, always acting in large groups. Their goal was to “kill no less than five people,” to “gain the proper respect.” Several large riots took place in the center of the city, at dance halls set up in parks, in which up to two hundred people participated.^{cxviii} One outsider from the south of Kazakstan, the editor of the Chechen newspaper “Banner of Labor,” Abazatov, was stunned by what he found in Akmola during the winter of 1956-57. Despite the efforts of the Akmola party organization to fight “unhealthy phenomena,” he wrote:

In Akmolinsk and in the districts of this region murders of Chechen and Ingush frequently take place, committed by bandits and hooligan elements. This has created somewhat strained relations between the Chechens and a certain part of the rest of the population...Just before we arrived several Ingush were killed, others beaten half to death, and wounded. In the evening, the latter are afraid to go out on the streets of Akmolinsk and of the Virgin Lands settlements alone.^{cxix}

Simultaneously, Akmolinsk and the district towns became hotbeds of activity among the special settlers, as both Germans and Caucasians agitated to be allowed to go home, using similar methods. The Chechens and Ingush engaged in organized letter writing campaigns, and sent a flood of letters and complaints, primarily to Khrushchev and the Central Committee, and to members of the Soviet government. The arguments used in these letters varied. Some individuals emphasized their record of honest labor and sought permission to return home for health reasons, others promised that they would return and live quietly, “without scandals,” but the great majority simply demanded the restoration of their autonomy. Hundreds of these letters were returned to the local party committee, with notes to “investigate.”^{cxx} Local authorities needed no reminders of the situation, which was becoming unmanageable and alarming. Chechen and Ingush men started showing up at the regional party committee building each day, asking for personal appointments with members of the local committee. Even in the countryside, collective farmers organized demonstrations and work stoppages in protest of their treatment, and demanding to be sent home. In

one such case, at the Molotov farm in Vishnevka district, the district party secretary ordered several strikers to be placed back on the special regime, in response to the silence that met him when attempting to convince the striking workers to return to work.^{cxxi}

During the months that followed, many Caucasians refused to work, sold their properties, and flocked to the train stations and towns of the region in great crowds. Periodically rumors spread about a "special train" that would take all of them home. Dozens of groups began to travel to the Caucasus spontaneously. By October-November 1956 up to 80-100 tickets were sold to Caucasians each day, and hundreds of containers with their property were being shipped, obviously not without some cooperation from local authorities, who were glad to see the troublesome deportees go.^{cxxii} A Chechen journalist who was interviewed in Chechnya in 1995 remembered what it was like in Akmolinsk in 1956:

In 1956, when they opened the camps, there was a big push to return - some families assembled in Akmolinsk by arrangement, just bought tickets and went - thirteen wagons full, with five or seven families in each...Of course it wasn't that simple we'd planned it carefully, collected money from the whole Chechen community, and we paid huge bribes to the police, to the KGB and the railway authorities. We were acting as an advance guard for the rest of the nation. They didn't finally stop us until we got to Mozdok [in North Ossetia]. They held us there for several weeks, then by order of Khrushchev, they let us go, and the next year the rest of the people followed. You have to grant it to Khrushchev, he didn't follow the old Russian policy of force, there was a real move at that time to get rid of the memory of Stalin, and we exploited that.^{cxxiii}

In December 1956, giving in to the pressure from below, the Central Committee passed a resolution that prepared the "orderly" and "gradual" repatriation of the Caucasians. Although this resolution was not published in the press, it was distributed to the volatile population in North Kazakhstan without a delay, to calm the unrest. The Chechens, Kalmycks, and other small groups of people had autonomous regions and republics restored to them in January 1957. Many Ingush ended up staying in Akmola, because their home region was split between the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and North Ossetia.^{cxxiv} The story of the Chechen return home is relatively well known. It

did not proceed in an "orderly" fashion. In Akmola, train stations and railroad towns were swamped with streams of people for months. Republican and local authorities attempted to ease the pressure by announcing temporary stops on outmigration. This only brought more intense activity from the former deportees, including at least one "large demonstration" in June 1957 by Chechens and Ingush in front of the regional party committee building, on the central square of Akmolinsk. In response to this, special representatives of the party leadership in Moscow, Alma-Ata, and Grozny (from the newly restored autonomous region) held a series of mass meetings in June 1957, in Akmolinsk, Makinsk, and Atbasar to discuss the situation.^{cxv} In Grozny clashes erupted between returnees and Russians who had moved there after war. In the villages of Chechnya, Russians, Ossetians, and wartime evacuees who had taken over Chechen houses were afraid of the returning mountaineers, and moved out quickly, within a few weeks.^{cxvi} Migration or relocation "planners" failed to implement even the most elementary preparations for the return of the deported people or anything that might have eased some of these problems, but the return of the deported mountain people was a policy that satisfied their most ardent wish.

Things developed very differently for the Germans, who largely accommodated Soviet power, and who were praised so often by the bosses. Although they also wrote letters and sent delegations to Moscow, they were not allowed to go home. At least economically, staying in Kazakstan may not have been to the disadvantage of the Germans. They built up prosperous communities and were highly valued and respected as organizers and administrators. By the 1970s they had considerable influence in local party organizations, and Akmolinsk (Tselinograd) became a major German cultural center, with a lively religious life, several officially registered churches, and a German newspaper.^{cxvii} The usual explanation for the decision to keep them in Kazakstan is that their attempted repatriation would have caused great confusion and conflicts in

the Volga region, the site of their former autonomous republic. The Medvedev brothers, the only scholars to point out that the Virgin Lands campaign took place in areas with special settler populations, have argued that the difference in treatment was simple expediency related to the Virgin Lands opening. This explanation seems more convincing, although there is no direct documentary evidence to support it. Germans (and Tatars, in other regions) had to stay because they were needed as the basic permanent rural workforce, especially considering the substantial seasonal migration of Virgin Lands workers. Chechen, Ingush, and Kalmycks were allowed to leave because they were considered "half-wild" and "more trouble than they were worth."^{cxviii}

Conclusion

One of the Chechen men who refused to participate in the 1946 election campaign explained his defiance by saying "The Soviet Government did not send us to Kazakstan to live, but to die."^{cxix} It is undeniable that the Chechens and Ingush were singled out by a state policy of "slander and genocide....accompanied by forced deportation, abolition of national-state formations, redrawing of national-territorial borders, and establishment of a regime of terror and violence in special settlement areas," as in the language of the 1991 Russian Federation Law on the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples.^{cxx} Over one third of the Chechens and Ingush exiled to Akmola perished. And yet an exclusive emphasis on the genocidal aspects of the disaster that befell them does not help us understand fully what happened to the deported nations in exile, because it reduces them to victims who were decimated and whose culture was destroyed or damaged. Clearly the experiences of the various deported groups were very different, and state policy was not the only determining factor in this. Both Chechens and Ingush refused to accommodate the regime, finding a variety of effective means to remain separate. And they managed to preserve their unique cultures, even if this required strict discipline and obedience

and came at a high cost to many individuals. Their behavior was unique. Even today, Chechens celebrate the strict moral codes that, as they believe, caused the demise of young women during transport, because they preferred death to dishonor. The Chechens and Ingush responded to their deportation with unwavering resistance and they never gave up hope of returning home.

Between seven and eight thousand Chechens and Ingush remained in the Akmola region after the 1950s, for a variety of reasons.^{cxxxii} The members of the original Vis Hadj movement remained because their saint is buried in Krasnaia Poliana, while their movement spread to Chechnya and Ingushetia. Others stayed because they could not afford to move back, and many Ingush remained because their homeland was never restored. The conflicts of the 1950s eased up in later years, and some of my interviewees explained that Kazakstan became a second homeland to them. Sadly, the number of Chechens living in the region has increased in the 1990s because of a return migration of refugees from two wars in Chechnya, in 1994-96, and from the ongoing conflict that started in December of 1999. About 200 of the 2000 inhabitants of Krasnaia Poliana are refugees, and Atbasar and other regional towns have experienced an influx of several thousand re-migrants. Many come to Kazakstan because they still have relatives there, and because it is better than going to Russia. The Kazaks always treated them with compassion. Still, it is a bitter irony that many are now forced to return to the land to which they were once exiled.

- ⁱ The Akmolinsk Camp for the Wives of Enemies of the People (ALZhIR), an outpost of the Karaganda Labor Camp system (KarLag), was located west of Akmolinsk. Valerii Komarov, ‘Pravda ALZhIRa,’ *Leninskaia smena* (Alma-Ata), June 2, 1988, p 2.
- ⁱⁱ Nurtai Agubaev, ‘Zdes’ nashi korni, ili o tom, kak Akmolinskaia oblast’ stala mnogonatsional’noi,” *Info-Tses*, February 11, 1994, p 7.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See, for instance, Leonid Bil’, ‘Obretaia budushchee,” *Tselinogradskaia pravda*, July 4, 1989, p 3; L. Iashnaia, ‘Rassvety roda Visaitu,” *Tselinogradskaia pravda*, June 23, 1989, p 3; S. Nesterenko, ‘Ot ‘Edinstva’ k ‘Vozrozhdeniiu,” *Tselinogradskaia pravda*, December 21, 1989, p 3; L. Iashnaia, ‘A nazyvalas’ armiiia trudovoi,” *Tselinogradskaia pravda*, March 29, 1990; V. Kochenov, ‘Velikii altruist sotsialisticheskoi epokhi,” *Azamat Times*, August 4, 1995, p 3.
- ^{iv} Nikolai Bugai, *Kavkaz: Narody v eshelonakh (20-60-e gody)* (Moscow: Inspan, 1998).
- ^v Bugai, op cit, p 255.
- ^{vi} Aleksandr Nekrich, *Nakazannye narody* (New York: Khronika, 1978), pp 100-109.
- ^{vii} J. Otto Pohl, ‘Stalin’s Genocide against the ‘Repressed Peoples’,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 2, No 2, 2000, pp 267-293, 268, 271-272.
- ^{viii} Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), fond (f.) 9479, opis’ (op.) 1, delo (d.) 182, list (l.) 59. The other regions were to receive between 20,000 and 50,000 people.
- ^{ix} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 18, ll. 111-114, February 12, 1944, ‘Nachal’niku GULAGa NKVD SSSR, t. Nasedkinu, g. Alma-Ata.”
- ^x Ibid, ll. 113-114.
- ^{xi} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 182, ll. 277-279, ob., ‘Svedeniia o postupaiushchikh eshelonakh i razmeshchenii spetspereselentsev po Akmolinskoi oblasti Kaz. SSR.” This figure includes at least 5,300 Balkardians, but no exact breakdown is available for Chechens and Ingush.
- ^{xii} See, for instance, stories and memoirs in S. U. Alieva, *Tak eto bylo: Natsional’nye repressii v SSSR*. Vol 2 (Moscow: Inspan, 1993), pp 88, 112, 222.
- ^{xiii} Anonymous interview, village Krasnaia Poliana, Akmol region, July 22, 2000. Tape 00-15.
- ^{xiv} E. Akmurzin, ‘I vse zhe gazavat – eto ne put’ , *Vechernyi Tselinograd*, October 30, 1991, p 2.
- ^{xv} See, for instance, the response by Dr. Martin Resnick, Chairman and Professor, Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine, Department of Urology, to my question ‘Bladder ruptures of Chechen deportees in 1944’, at <http://netwellness.org/>.
- ^{xvi} Anonymous interview, village Zhangys-Kuduk, July 14, 2000. Tape 00-2.
- ^{xvii} See, for instance, Alieva, op cit, pp 221-226.
- ^{xviii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 182, ll. 240-272.
- ^{xix} The *spetskomendaturny* in Akmol oblast’ bore the numbers 50-156. GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 767, ll. 7-19, ob, 1949, ‘Kolichestvo vyselentsev -spetsposelentsev, rasselennykh v nasselennykh punktakh.”
- ^{xx} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 153, ll. 18-19, December 1945, ‘Po voprosu okazaniia prodovol’stvennoi pomoshchi spetspereselentsam s Severnogo Kavkaza i Gruzinskoi SSR.”
- ^{xxi} Interviews in Akmol region, June-July 2000, Tapes 00-1, 00-5, 00-9, 00-11, 00-15, and others; fieldnotes.
- ^{xxii} Aza Bazorkina, ‘Terpenie,” in Alieva, op cit, pp 114 -115.
- ^{xxiii} Anonymous interview, village Krasnaia Poliana, July 21, 2000, Tape 00-11.
- ^{xxiv} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 153, l. 20, January 10, 1945, Mikoianu, ‘Po voprosu realizatsiia pasporiazheniia Sovnarkoma SSSR ob otgruzke Kazakhstanu khlopchato-bumazhnykh tkanei dlia okazaniia pomoshchi spetspereselentsam.”
- ^{xxv} Anonymous interviews, Tapes 00-9, 00-11.
- ^{xxvi} Tape 00-15.
- ^{xxvii} Tape 00-11.
- ^{xxviii} See, for instance, Alieva, op cit, pp 113, 226; Akmurzin, op cit, p 2; Bil’, ‘Chechentsy,” op cit, p 6; Tape 00 -11.
- ^{xxix} Anonymous interview, district center Kurgaldzhino, July 7, 1994, fieldnotes.
- ^{xxx} Anonymous interview, village Krasnaia Poliana, July 21, 2000, Tape 00-9.
- ^{xxxi} Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: 1918-1956. An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. Vol V-VIII (New York, 1992, pp 400-401.
- ^{xxxii} Louise Trenkle, *Tagebuch von 1927, das Jahr 1992* (unpublished manuscript, Lahr, Germany, 1992), p 44.

- ^{xxxiii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 925, ll. 137-138, "Spravka o kolichestve umers hchikh sredi vyselentsev i spetsposelentsev, rasselennykh na territori Kazakhskoi SSR, 1944 - 01.07.1949."
- ^{xxxiv} Interviews in Akmola region, 1996, Tapes 96-1, 96-38, and others; in July 2000, Tape 00-11.
- ^{xxxv} See above, note 18.
- ^{xxxvi} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 482, ll. 29-35, March 20, 1949, "Statisticheskie svedeniia o rezul'tatakh perepisi vyselentsev-spetsposelentsev na territorii Kazakhskoi SSR, Akmolinskoi oblasti." To arrive at the difference, one must take into account that the census also shows that 4,136 people of all nationalities had been taken off the special settler rolls in this region between 1944 and 1949, including 609 who fled exile, 838 who were sentenced to prison terms, and 1,419 who left for various legitimate reasons, including family reunions (l. 35). No breakdown by nationality is available for these 4,136 individuals. The Chechens, Ingush, and Balkardians remaining in 1949 made up 35.4 percent of the region's total exile population (107,231). Using the same percentage of 4,136, i. e., 1,448 to adjust the total, the difference between 60,312 and 37,970 comes out to 23,790.
- ^{xxxvii} Bugai, op cit, p 257.
- ^{xxxviii} Otdelenie partiinoi dokumentatsii Akmolinskoi oblasti (OPDAO), f. 1, op. 1, d. 2050, ll. 68-70. Not included in this figure are the Balkardians, whose numbers rose even more slowly in this period, from 2,641 in 1949 to 2,916 in 1954.
- ^{xxxix} Leonid Bil', "Chechentsy," *Azamat Times*, March 18, 1994, p 6.
- ^{xl} Tapes 00-11 and 00-15, op cit., see also Nekrich, op cit, p 101.
- ^{xli} Bugai, op cit, p 232; GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 298, ll. 1-5, December 9, 1946, "Dokladnaia zapiska o provedennoi rabote po bor'be s pobegami spetspereselentsev, rasselennykh na territorii Kazakhskoi SSR."
- ^{xlii} Bugai, op cit, p 236.
- ^{xliii} Nekrich, op cit, p 102. See also Bugai, op cit, p 231, 243.
- ^{xliv} Akmolinskii oblastnoi Istoriko-Kraevedcheskii Musei, No. NVF KP 14-11924, l. 5.
- ^{xlv} Leonid Bil', "Obretaia budushchee," op cit, p 3.
- ^{xlvi} See, for instance, Nekrich, op cit, p 102.
- ^{xlvii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 539, l. 26.
- ^{xlviii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 252, l. 22, and *ibid*, d. 532, l. 9.
- ^{xlix} Tapes 00-11 and 00-15.
- ^l GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 532, ll. 1-34, 9-11, April 28, 1950, "Doklad o rezultatakh raboty po vyselentsam i spetsposelentsam v MVD Kazakhskoi SSR."
- ^{li} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 298, l. 2.
- ^{lii} *Ibid*, l. 3.
- ^{liii} *Ibid*, l. 4.
- ^{liv} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 176, ll. 148-151, December 1946, from Kruglov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, and Malenkov (draft of an untitled memorandum).
- ^{lv} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2139, l. 58.
- ^{lvi} Tape 00-11.
- ^{lvii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 532, l. 7.
- ^{lviii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 292, l. 17.
- ^{lix} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 295, l. 45.
- ^{lx} Akmurzian, op cit, p 2.
- ^{lxi} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 295, l. 48.
- ^{lxii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 482, l. 35.
- ^{lxiii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 532, l. 12.
- ^{lxiv} Bugai, op cit, p 241.
- ^{lxv} *Ibid*.
- ^{lxvi} Solzhenitsyn, op cit, p 401-402.
- ^{lxvii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 1915, ll. 40-161, 157, December 20, 1952, Zhurin to Shaiakhmetov, "O rabote sredi spetsposelentsev v Akmolinskoi oblasti."
- ^{lxviii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 292, l. 12.
- ^{lxix} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 298, l. 4.
- ^{lxx} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 295, l. 41.
- ^{lxxi} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 1915, ll. 40-150.
- ^{lxxii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 248, l. 151.

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- ^{lxxiii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 248, ll. 264-267, 265, January 9, 1946, "O nastroeniakh spetspereselentsev, rasselennykh v Kazakhskoi SSR v sviazi s vyborami v Verkhovnyi Soviet SSSR."
- ^{lxxiv} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2470, ll. 48-49.
- ^{lxxv} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 1915, l. 151.
- ^{lxxvi} N. Strel'tsova, "Ne ostanavlivat'sia na perevale," *Tselinogradskaia pravda*, May 23, 1990, p 3.
- ^{lxxvii} OPDAO, f.1, op. 1, d. 1915, l. 150.
- ^{lxxviii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2050, l. 73.
- ^{lxxix} Bil', "Chechentsy," op cit, p 6.
- ^{lxxx} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 903, ll. 43-44, 43, January 19, 1955, Seitmukhambetov, "Spravka."
- ^{lxxxi} Ibid, l. 44.
- ^{lxxxii} Anonymous interviews, Sorokovaia, July 17, 2000, Tapes 00-6, 00-7.
- ^{lxxxiii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 1915, l. 153. In 1952, for instance, 8 men were arrested for polygamy.
- ^{lxxxiv} Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejay, "L' 'Islam Parallèle' en Union Soviétique: Les organisations soufies dans la République tchétchène -ingouche," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, Vol 21, No 1, 1980, pp 49-63, 50.
- ^{lxxxv} See ibid; and David Damrel, "The Religious Roots of Conflict: Russia and Chechnya," *Religious Studies News*, Vol 10, No 3, p 10; Yavus Z. Akhmadov, "Kunta Hadji and the Kunta Hadji istis: The Kunta Hadji Chechen Religious Movement," in *Religious Brotherhoods in Chechnya* (William R. Nelson Institute, 2000), at <http://www.jmu.edu/orgs/wrni>.
- ^{lxxxvi} Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quellejay, op cit, p 57.
- ^{lxxxvii} Ibid., p 53, and see Fanny E. Bryan, "Anti-Religious Activity in the Chechen-Ingush Republic of the USSR and the Survival of Islam," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 3, no 2, 1984, pp 99-115; see also Damrel, op cit, p 10.
- ^{lxxxviii} OPDAO, f. 1, op 1, d. 2139, ll. 46-59, 58, September 19, 1955, "Spetssoobshchenie."
- ^{lxxxix} Ibid.
- ^{xc} Damrel, op cit, p 10, and see Akhmadov, op cit, p 6; Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quellejay, op cit, p 53.
- ^{xci} Anonymous interview, July 23, 2000, Tape 00-14.
- ^{xcii} Ibid.
- ^{xciii} Anonymous interview and fieldnotes, July 26, 2000, Rozhdestvenka, Tape 00-18.
- ^{xciv} Anonymous interviews, July 22-23, 2000, Krasnaia poliana, Tapes 00-9 and 00-11.
- ^{xcv} Michaela Pohl, "The Virgin Lands Between Memory and Forgetting: People and Transformation in the Soviet Union, 1954-1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1999), pp 176-187.
- ^{xcvi} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 903, ll. 50-51, January 20, 1955, "O faktakh ugovolnykh proiavlennii mezhdub pribyvshimi kontingentami na osvoenie tselinnykh zemel' i spetsposelentsami"; ibid, d. 847; and OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, dela 1929-31, 2049-50, 2137-39, 2336, 2348, 2470-71.
- ^{xcvii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 843, l. 186.
- ^{xcviii} Ibid, d. 903, l. 127.
- ^{xcix} Anonymous interview, June 14, 1996, Akmola, Tape 96-7.
- ^c Anonymous interview, September 12, 1996, Akmola, Tape 96-39.
- ^{ci} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2138, ll. 68-69, 122-128; ibid, d. 2471, ll. 108-110.
- ^{cii} GARF, f. 9479, dela 903, 847.
- ^{ciii} Viktor Zemskov, "Spetsposelentsy (po dokumentam NKVD-MVD SSSR)," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 11, 1990; Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie spetsposelentsev i ssyl' nykh (1954-1960 gg.)," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 1, 1991, pp 5-26.
- ^{civ} Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie," pp 10-13.
- ^{cv} Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie," p 11.
- ^{cvi} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 847, l. 11, December 21, 1954, Kabylbaev to Novikov.
- ^{cvii} GARF, f. 9479, op. 1, d. 903, ll. 11-15, February 16, 1955, Karamyshev to Kruglov.
- ^{cviii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, l. 132.
- ^{cix} Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie," p15-16.
- ^{cx} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, ll. 1-4, February 2, 1956, "Spetszapiska ob osvobozhdenii iz pod administrativnogo nadzora organov MVD nekotoroi kategorii spetsposelentsev i nastroeniakh spetskontingentov po oblasti."
- ^{cxii} Archive of the President of Kazakstan (APRK), f. 708, op. 28, d. 1339a, ll. 56-57, September 17, 1955, "Spravka o rabote partiinikh organizatsii respubliki sredi spetsposelentsev."
- ^{cxiii} APRK, ibid., d. 133, l. 135.

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- ^{cxiii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, ll. 152-153, "Spetszapiska: O khode raboty po ob'javleniiu Ukaza Presidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR ot 16.7.1956 goda."
- ^{cxiv} Ibid and see Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie," p 16.
- ^{cxv} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, l. 172.
- ^{cxvi} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, l. 135; and *ibid.*, ll. 134-135.
- ^{cxvii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, ll. 128-131, June 25, 1956, "Dokladnaia zapiska o nastroeniiakh i povedenii spetsposelentsev"; and *ibid.*, ll. 171, September 15, 1956.
- ^{cxviii} OPDAO, f.1, op. 1, d. 2336, ll. 64-66.
- ^{cxix} APRK, f. 708, op. 30, d. 625, ll. 3-4, January 1957, Abazatov, "Dokladnaia v TsK KPK."
- ^{cxx} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2470 and d. 2360.
- ^{cxix} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2471, ll. 121-126.
- ^{cxvii} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2336, ll.128-131, June 25, 1956, "Dokladnaia zapiska o nastroeniiakh i povedenii spetsposelentsev"; *ibid.*, l. 200.
- ^{cxviii} Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven and London, 1998), p 320.
- ^{cxvii} See Bugai, *op cit*, pp 297-318, for a detailed restussion of organizational and territorial questions relating to the restoration of autonomy.
- ^{cxv} OPDAO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 2630, ll. 126-130.
- ^{cxvii} Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (Boulder, 1991), pp 242-244.
- ^{cxvii} For German religious life in Akmola, see Berta Bachmann, *Memories of Kazakhstan: A Report on the Life Experiences of a German Woman in Russia* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983) and Joseph Schnurr, ed., *Die Kirchen und das religiöse Leben der Russlanddeutschen* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp 265-268.
- ^{cxviii} Roy A. Medvedev and Zhores A. Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, translated by Andrew R. Durkin (New York, 1978), p 122.
- ^{cxix} See above, note 73.
- ^{cxix} Cited in Otto Pohl, *op cit*, p 268.
- ^{cxix} Ingush made up 0.5 percent of the region's total population of 871,100 in 1989, about 4,350 people, and the number of Chechens was under 0.3 percent, up to 2,600 individuals. *Ekonomicheskoe i sotsial'noe razvitie Tselinogradskoi oblasti* (Tselinograd: Regional Statistics Office, 1991), p 3.