

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****TRANSFORMATION OF MATERIAL CULTURE OF NORTH
CAUCASIAN PEOPLES IN DEPORTATION PERIOD**

Svetlana Ismailovna Akkueva (a)*, Zulay Sulimovna Isakieva (b),
Khatmat Abuevna Matagova (c)
*Corresponding author

- (a) Institute for Humanitarian Research – a branch of Kabardino-Balkarian Federal Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences Nalchik, Russia, siak2000@mail.ru,
(b) Chechen State Pedagogical University, Grozny, Russia, Zulai-787@mail.ru,
(c) Chechen State University, Grozny, Russia

Abstract

The paper is devoted to the transformation of traditional culture in the course of the deportation of the North Caucasian peoples during the Great Patriotic War. Such terms as total deportation, forced eviction and deportation are used synonymously in the text. The processes of the changes in the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples began in the second half of the 19th century, when the North Caucasus became an integral part of the state territory of the Russian Empire. It was a natural tendency of cultural change under the influence of state and administrative reforms during the period of imperial modernization of society. In the 1920s–1930s, during the period of the Soviet reorganization of society and the creation of a society of justice, the conditions for both natural and purposeful changes in the traditional material and spiritual culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus (Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachais) were created. During the period of deportation, a violent transformation of elements of traditional culture started as a result of immediate forced eviction. As a result of the deportation, the system of settlements and traditional culture of life support was destroyed. The authors note the increasing role and significance of some ethnic traditions and customs. During the period of deportation, Soviet, ethnic and general Caucasian identities intensified and the importance of education increased.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: North Caucasus, deportation, Balkars, Chechens, traditional culture, modernization



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

During Soviet period, the national question was solved in simple and sometimes even in rough manner either by repression or assimilation of peoples. The North Caucasian peoples (Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, Balkars) were exiled. The repression caused significant moral damage to these peoples. Both the leaders and some of the Kazakhs were suspicious in relation to them. This was the whole ideology of the Soviet system, the task of which was to re-educate entire peoples in the Marxist-Leninist spirit. In places of forced resettlement, these peoples did not violate their moral code of life support and in relations with other ethnic groups adhered to their ethno-national etiquette, but at a certain distance and at the same time respecting the norms of behavioral culture accepted in society. The life support of the mountaineers has developed the spirit of collectivism and labor mutual assistance. The development of remote areas for growing grain crops, the need to face off against uninvited guests, grief, misfortune, loss of breadwinners have always brought people together. This was especially pronounced during the years of deportation (Ermekbai & Isakieva, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

Nowadays the problems of migration, acculturation and assimilation of peoples are extremely relevant and significant. The study of forced migrations of the 20–40s of the XX century is of great theoretical and practical interest for the investigation of the problems of traditional ethnic culture preservation. The paper studied the impact of deportation on the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples from ancient times living in the Central Caucasus. It is noted that the changes in the traditional culture of these peoples took place under the influence of the Russian state. By the 1930s these changes were very noticeable. During the period of deportation, the role of some traditional institutions and the intensification of ethnic and common Caucasian identity increase.

3. Research Questions

Social and political changes have certain impact on traditional culture. As a result of Russian and Soviet modernization, significant changes occurred in the material and spiritual culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus. Forced deportations led to the changes in the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples. In this regard it is necessary to study the factors which determined these changes. On the other hand, the role and importance of traditional institutions of hospitality and mutual assistance increased as important factors in the preservation of the ethnic group and adaptation to new places of residence.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to study the changes in the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples under the conditions of deportation and to determine the importance of traditional culture in the preservation of the ethnos in special settlements.

5. Research Methods

The general scientific principles of objectivity, historicism and consistency were used in this research. Together these methods allowed showing what transformational changes in the material and spiritual culture of the indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus took place under the influence of forced deportation. The research is based on archival, literary and field materials of the authors. The authors are representatives of the deported peoples, which allowed them not only to collect field material, but reveal details that are important for understanding the changes that occurred in the culture and life of the North Caucasian peoples under the influence of forced deportation.

6. Findings

By the time when the process of deportation started, the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples had already undergone certain changes, which was due to their entry into the Russian Empire and the reforms of the second half of the 19th century, which affected social, social and judicial structure of society, as well as the development of exchange relationships.

The Soviet transformations of the 1920s and 1930s contributed to social, economic and cultural development of peoples. It is necessary to note that these transformations were aimed at Sovietization and intensification of Soviet institutions, and at the same time contributed to the development of the ethnic culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus. Since the early 1920s certain measures were taken to eliminate illiteracy and to educate people on a mass scale and a written language was developed for “unwritten peoples”. School education was carried out in the native and Russian languages. Newspapers and books started to be published in national languages. Schools and medical centers were built in the settlements of the region. The Soviet government took measures to form a professional culture (creating a dance ensemble and a professional theater), training teachers, medical workers, etc. Due attention was paid to educate women and involve them in public life. The study of history, culture, language, everyday life of peoples etc. started.

In the 1930s, a campaign to organize collective farms was launched and it was quite simple process. In the republics of the North Caucasus, collective farms became the main producers of livestock products. Pasture lands were transferred to collective farms, thus personal livestock was grazed in remote areas. The livestock traditions, developed over many centuries, were also applicable in the animal husbandry of collective farms, because the collective farms turned out to be the leading ones and actually became the main producers of meat, cheese, butter and wool.

Despite major changes in the economic system, most of the customs associated with domestic life and social relations in the family, did not undergo major changes.

The important place in the life of the Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachais was occupied by the Islamic religion, which regulated family and social life. The Soviet government, understanding the role of Islam in the life of the North Caucasian peoples, was loyal to it during initial period. In the 1930s, the state began atheistic propaganda. Religious leaders were viewed as an alien class element and therefore many were deprived of voting rights, and later arrested and exiled. Many mosques were closed. However,

the overwhelming majority of the population of the North Caucasus remained believers and continued to perform religious rituals.

At the end of 1943 and the first half of 1944, Karachais, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars were subjected to total ethnic deportation. The reasons for the deportation of peoples were explained by Stalinist totalitarian system. The development of the country and the region in the pre-war years was complex and contradictory. The Soviet modernization, which was especially difficult in the national autonomies of the North Caucasus, was perceived ambiguously by the mountain peoples. The guiding motives for the discontent were the extremes of collectivization, the persecution of Islam and disregard of traditional folk customs. The desire of the peoples of the region to preserve their ethnic and religious identity accumulated traditionalist and nationalist sentiments, which took an anti-Soviet form among a part of the population and manifested themselves during the Great Patriotic War. The totalitarian regime explained the opportunistic nature of repression and the violent solution of the problems of ethnopolitical life (Sabanchiev, 2013).

It is necessary to note that forced resettlement and the destruction of the entire way of life led to the loss of national types of clothing, footwear, hats, jewelry, modes and means of transport, household and kitchen utensils, tools, handicrafts, books of religious and secular content. The items of museum and cultural value were stolen or stored in museum depositories without indicating ethnicity and even those that were stored in the local museum of local lore were rewritten without the indication of the nationality of the items after the re-inventory of 1951. Some of the exhibit items of the deported peoples were hidden in the storerooms of the Kremlin's Armory Chamber and were withdrawn from the cultural fund of the peoples during all the years of deportation.

Unbearable living conditions in the first years of the eviction led to a high mortality rate among the special settlers. Hunger, poverty and disease took the lives of not only old people and children, but also very young people. Few people lived in normal conditions, but most people huddled in barracks and slums without food or clothing. According to the decree of higher authorities local authorities in settlements issued instructions fixing the daily life of the deported people (Isakieva, 2020). Many special settlers who were deported as children noted during our interviews that adults, especially the elderly, had the hardest time. Population losses were particularly high in the early years of the deportation and continued until the 1950s.

The genetic and social funds of the Balkar people were seriously undermined (Ediev, 2003). The death of older people, keepers of folklore, traditions and language, led to irreparable losses in these areas. In general the languages of all the deported peoples had a smashing blow, since the oral artistic values of the language disappeared along with its native speakers. Literature and newspapers in their native languages were not published and the language was not taught in schools. The problem of ethnocultural values was also closely related to the problem of language. Dispersed settlement in small groups, complete absence of journalism, press, radio as modern means of broadcasting cultural values had a negative impact on this important sphere of culture. The settlers did not have the opportunity to study history, literature, professional forms of art (theater, choreography, etc.), they did not have the opportunity to receive education, especially professional (Karaketov & Sabanchiev, 2014).

Due to the difficult financial situation, lack of food supplies, warm clothing and shoes, the process of adaptation of the indigenous North Caucasian peoples to local conditions and work was difficult. For example, in the collective farms of the Semipalatinsk region during the harvest season, special settlers were divided into male and female groups due to dilapidated clothes: special settlers were dressed in sheepskins; women wore just rags instead of normal clothes (Mamaeva, 2011).

The members of many families were separated; one part of the family could be resettled to Kazakhstan, the other part to Kyrgyzstan, relatives knew nothing about each other's fate. The process of finding relatives and reuniting families was a complex and long-lasting process as people were in the regime of special commandant's offices, which prohibited the representatives of the deported peoples to leave the place of special settlement without permission and a corresponding document (Akkueva, 2019).

Being in a different ethnic environment, the special settlers felt hostile attitude towards themselves from both some heads of divisions, power, party and Soviet bodies and the local population. The reasons for such relations were the imperfection of the legislative and regulatory framework governing the daily life of the deported and other categories of the population, the negligent attitude of officials to the needs of the special contingent, lack of leisure of citizens, lack of housing and everyday goods, ignorance of the national mentality of the special settlers and ignorance of religious feelings, the expenses of ideological works resulted in disgust on the part of the population, as well as other facts that took place in Soviet society (Ermekbaev, 2009). The special settlers, including the Chechens, being in the most difficult conditions of the special settlement, used every opportunity to earn money and support their families. Practically all capable special settlers worked. Sometimes even those worked who were considered disabled; this was especially noticeable in the first years of their residence.

Archival sources indicate that in 1944 in the Dzhambul region 16 927 people out of 16 396 people able to work were employed, and 583 old people and teenagers were involved in seasonal field work. In Akmola oblast, actually worked 19,345 people out of 17,667 people registered as capable people, including 2,746 old people and adolescents (SARF, L. 313). As of July 1, 1946, 17,468 people worked in the mines of the Karaganda coal basin, including 10,417 people in Dzhezkazgan, 5448 in the mines of Karaganda and Saran and 1,468 at Temirtau enterprises (Isakieva, 2014).

The range of employment of the repressed citizens was different. They were involved in construction of industrial production, work in coal mining industry, mining, logging, construction of transport communications, industrial enterprises, railways and soil roads and fishing industry. Most of the deported citizens were employed in agriculture (Bugai, 2012).

In the places of special settlements, the Islamic religion became a powerful factor in the preservation of the faith and conviction that the hard times would pass and justice would be restored. Mullahs and other informal spiritual leaders with their sermons and advice helped the North Caucasian peoples to survive far from their homeland, not to break under the heavy hammer of totalitarianism and preserve the moral spirit of many generations.

During the period of deportation, the role of women in family increased, due to the reduction of capable men (deaths at the front, repression, diseases, hunger, etc.). A woman had to take care of the elderly and children. The history of the deported peoples is full of concrete facts of the perseverance, heroism and self-sacrifice of women. Women were widely employed in the hard work of the mining

industry in Kazakhstan. The women deported from the North Caucasus who had no education and professional experience in mines were involved in backbreaking work; they had family troubles and deviant behavior due to loneliness or life as a single mother.

The archetypal consciousness of deported women who worked hard was characterized by the symptoms of “inferiority complex”, ruined attractiveness and undermined health. The strong psychological stress caused by the sudden eviction did not keep people's minds in a state of depression and confusion for a short time. Many psychologists define stress as the body's defense response. In our case, we have an overprotective reaction, expressed in a willingness to put all our efforts to survive and maintain our family ties and national priorities. Due to their high morality, these women waited male representatives of their nation back from front for years, without mixing with other ethnic groups. As a result they saved the half-exterminated people from assimilation. In this regard, it is appropriate to cite the Decree of January 11, 1945, according to which special settlers of nationality Chechens, Ingush, Balkars and Karachais, when they marry local residents who are not special settlers, are removed from the register of special settlers and are exempted from all regime restrictions by a resolution of People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR (SARF F. P-9401. D. 2704-38).

In the places of special settlements, the majority of Chechens, Karachais, Balkars, Ingush followed moral etiquette of behavior, which did not allow them to acculturate and even more so to assimilate in another alien ethnic environment. Children, adolescents and youth, who arrived with their parents and, moreover, received primary and secondary education at home, certainly adapted faster than adults and were more susceptible to change. A long stay in Kazakhstan and Central Asia made its own adjustments in the minds of even people of the first generation. The first generation of the deported indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus managed to survive in difficult new conditions for them. They managed to go through the difficult path of everyday adaptation, master the Russian language, sufficient for communication at work and at home, and in the southern regions of Kazakhstan, some of them could communicate in Kazakh, as well as learn the basic rules of behavior and establish contact with the local population in places of residence. The high humanism inherent in the national cultures of peoples, their disinterested assistance and support helped to survive in these unbearably difficult conditions as well as to preserve the culture and traditions. As life was established in a foreign land, compatriot ties increased, and religion played the main spiritual role, which in general created conditions for close contact and mutual assistance and patronage in finding work and housing. All these aspects strengthened national identity and preserved historical memory.

During the period of deportation of the repressed peoples in the USSR, historical concepts about the peoples of the country were created. The repressed peoples were removed from the historical discourse, therefore, a lot of one-sided and incorrect interpretations were developed in science, which led to a distorted idea of ethnogenesis, history, culture, ethnic territory, social life of repressed peoples.

In places of special settlement, the role of such traditional institutions as hospitality and mutual assistance increased and ethnic and all-Caucasian consolidation intensified. The experiences of exile, especially the sense of difference caused by the situation of minorities and newcomers in the alien environment of Central Asia, stigmatizing restrictions on movement and employment, as well as official segregation from the rest of the population, generated a strong sense of national identity among “punished

peoples” despite their lack of access to education in their mother tongue and other forms of national autonomy. Moreover, the mixing of the highlanders destroyed the geographical barriers that traditionally impeded the national consolidation of the peoples of the North Caucasus (Lanzillotti, 2018).

7. Conclusion

Thus, the transformation of the traditional culture of the North Caucasian peoples began in the second half of the 19th century and continued in the Soviet period, when the Soviet authorities set the task to create a new society of justice. The creation of the collective farm system influenced the traditional life support system and traditional occupations of these peoples. Soviet policy was aimed at the development of educational and cultural level of peoples, while some traditions, customs and institutions were perceived by the new government as reactionary and obsolete, including religion. The deportation had negative impact on the centuries-old system of settlements, the culture of life support, the demographic and gender composition of the North Caucasian peoples, language, folklore, elements of material and spiritual culture, traditions and customs. In the 1940s-1950s, some false concepts of history, ethnogenesis and culture of the repressed peoples were developed, which still exist today. There was a transformation of family and gender relations and the role and position of women in public life and family changed. Deportation increased ethnic identity and common Caucasian identity.

References

- Akkueva, S. I. (2019). *Socio-cultural transformations of the deported peoples of the North Caucasus in the 1940s–1990s*. Editorial and Publ. Department of the Inst. of Geology and Geology KBSC RAS.
- Bugai, N. F. (2012). *Problems of repression and rehabilitation of citizens: history and historiography of the 20th century. The beginning of the XXI centuries*. Grif.
- Ediev, D. M. (2003) *Demographic losses of the deported peoples of the USSR*. Publ. house of SSAU “AGRUS”.
- Ermekbai, Z. A., & Isakieva, Z. S. (2019). Social and political activity of Chechens and Ingush in the years of forced resettlement. In *Coll. Actual problems of the history of the peoples of the North Caucasus* (pp. 160–171). Makhachkala ALEF.
- Ermekbaev, Z. A. (2009). *Chechens and Ingush in Kazakhstan*. Almaty.
- Isakieva, Z. S. (2014). Assessment of labor efforts of Chechens in mines and mines of the Karaganda coal basin (1944–1957). *Theory and pract. of soc. Development*, 20, 136.
- Isakieva, Z. S. (2020). *The contribution of the Chechens and Ingush to the development of the mining industry in Kazakhstan 1944–1957*. ZNANIE-M.
- Karaketov, M. D., & Sabanchiev, H. -M. A. (2014). *Karachais. Balkars*. Nauka.
- Lanzillotti, I. (2018). Towards an Explanation of Intercommunal Peace in Kabardino-Balkaria: Post-War Nationalities Policy and Late Soviet Society in the North Caucasus. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 70(6), 942–965. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1487680>
- Mamaeva, G. E. (2011). Eviction of Chechens to the Semipalatinsk Region. In *Socio-economic and cultural processes in the Upper Irtysh region in the 17th – 20th centuries. Coll. of articles, mater. of Int. sci. conf.* (p. 246). Novosibirsk.
- Sabanchiev, H. -M. A. (2013, November). *Questions of history*, 11, 104–112.