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Stalin's genocide against the "Repressed Peoples"

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The Stalin regime systematically deported 13 whole nationalities to remote areas of the USSR from 1937 to 1951. The Soviet government ruthlessly cleansed these ethnicities from strategic areas of the Soviet Union without concern for their national or individual rights. In chronological order the Soviet leadership ordered the uprooting of the Soviet Koreans, Finns, Germans, Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Georgian Kurds, Khemshils (Muslim Armenians), and Pontic Greeks from their traditional areas of settlement. These groups totaled more than 2 million people deported to internal exile by the NKVD–MVD (Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs–Ministry of Internal Affairs). The Stalin regime condemned and sentenced these people to permanent exile in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Siberia, and the Urals. The highest organs of the Soviet government issued a series of decrees ordering the exile and repression of the victim nationalities in their entirety. The Soviet leadership justified these mass expulsions by claiming that the deported nations were inherently treasonous and disloyal to the Soviet state. The true motivation for the deportations, however, was ethnic not political. The Soviet leadership made no exemptions from deportation on the basis of political allegiance. It deported loyal members of the Communist Party, Komsomolists (Communist Youth League), and Red Army veterans along with the remainder of their ethnic kin to the interior of the USSR. These deportations constituted some of the most thorough cases of ethnic cleansing in world history.

The human costs of this ethnic cleansing were tremendous. The deportations were extraordinarily brutal. The NKVD loaded the condemned nations on to unheated cattle cars at bayonet point. The deportees often only had a few hours to gather up a few possessions to take with them into exile. Transported in unhygienic and overcrowded rail cars thousands perished from disease before arriving at their destinations. The poor material conditions and harsh climates of these areas of exile led to hundreds of thousands more deaths. By July 1, 1948, the NKVD and MVD had recorded 264,086 deaths among the exiled Soviet Germans, Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, and Bulgarians, and the Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils.[1] This number is divided as follows: 42,823 German deaths, 16,594 Kalmyk deaths, 144,704 North Caucasian deaths, and 14,895 Turkish, Kurdish, and Khemshil deaths in special settlements.[2] These deaths represented 23.7 percent

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of the exiled North Caucasians, 19.6 percent of the Crimeans, 17.4 percent of the Kalmyks, and 14.6 percent of the Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils.[3] These mortality rates greatly exceeded normal mortality rates. Between 1927 and 1931, the average annual mortality rate for the USSR was 1.7 percent.[4] Between 1944 and 1948, the average annual mortality rates for the "Repressed Peoples" ranged from 215 percent (Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils) to 349 percent (North Caucasians) of this base line. There can be no doubt that the deportations constituted acts of ethnically motivated mass murder.

In addition to this massive mortality, the deported nationalities also suffered an assault upon their ethnic identity. The Stalin regime deprived these people of their ancestral homelands and the right to publish and receive education in their native language. The ultimate goal of these policies was to dissolve the national identities of the deported ethnic groups. Stalin aimed to destroy these ethnic groups as viable and distinct cultures through a combination of mass exile and forced assimilation.

The study of Stalin's mass deportations was limited in the past due to the inaccessibility of the Soviet archives. The Soviet government naturally wished to avoid public discussion of its past crimes against humanity. Hence it was only in 1989, with the political changes wrought by *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* that the issue of Stalin's national deportations could seriously be addressed. On November 14, 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed a declaration "On Recognizing the Illegal and Criminal Repressive Acts against Peoples Subjected to Forcible Resettlement and Ensuring their Rights."[5] This resolution recognized 11 of the 13 national groups deported in their entirety by Stalin as "Repressed Peoples." These nationalities are the Koreans, Germans, Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Greeks. This declaration was the first serious step in redressing the injustice of Stalin's ethnic cleansing against these peoples. Since this declaration, scholars have conducted a great deal of archival research on the subject of Stalin's national deportations. Russian scholars such as N. F. Bugai, V. N. Zemskov, and others have published a great deal of academic work on these deportations. Activists from among the various "Repressed Peoples" have long maintained that the deportations and the conditions of their subsequent exile constituted genocide. The newly released information from various Soviet era archives has added considerable strength to their arguments. On April 26, 1991, the Russian government publicly agreed that the deportations and exile of the "Repressed Peoples" did constitute genocide. The "Law on the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples"[6] issued by the House of Soviets of the RSFSR under the signature of Chairman Boris Yeltsin clearly recognizes that the Stalin regime's acts against these people were acts of genocide.

> Repressed Peoples are regarded at those (nations, nationalities or ethnic groups and other historically formed cultural-ethnic communities of people such as Cossacks) against whom a policy of slander and genocide was conducted at a state level on the grounds of their nationality or other features and was 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.[7]

It is now possible to examine these claims in light of the large amount of information released from the former Soviet archives in the last decade. Such an examination will allow us to determine whether Stalin's national deportations did in fact constitute genocide.

The term genocide has its origins in Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Lemkin defined the word as the destruction of national groups as viable entities.

> Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves [even if all individuals within the dissolved group physically survive]. The objectives of such a plan would be a disintegration of political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of personal security, liberty health, dignity, and even the lives of individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed at the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed at individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.[8]

Thus the original definition of genocide focused on the destruction of group identity rather than killing members of that group. Both lethal and non-lethal means can constitute genocide if the intent of such means is the eradication of a group's ethnic identity. Under Lemkin's definition of genocide a state does not have to attempt to physically kill all members of an ethnic group to be guilty of genocide. Sterilization or other means of preventing births and forced assimilation can also constitute genocide. Using Lemkin's original concept of genocide, it is apparent that most cases of attempted group destruction have employed both lethal and non-lethal means in combination. The partial physical destruction of victimized ethnicities by direct and indirect means in conjunction with the destruction of their cultural institutions and forced assimilation is a much more common than attempted total and immediate biological extermination. Numerous groups have been subjected to patterns of direct and indirect killings followed by forced assimilation with the aim of eliminating them as culturally distinct peoples in the last two centuries. Among those nationalities victimized in this way have been aboriginal peoples in North America, South America, and Australia. Other cases include not only the "Repressed Peoples" of the USSR, but also the Ukrainians, Kazakhs, and Baltic peoples. Today, the Chinese government is still extirpating the native culture of Tibet in favor of Han Chinese culture after decades of massacres. While the physical annihilation of such people was only partial, none the less, such practices have often caused even more long-term damage to the national existence and collective cultural health of these victimized groups than attempted total and immediate biological extermination has to other groups. Both the Armenians and the Jews have been

able to reconstitute their ancestral nations as independent states and preserve their unique cultures. In contrast a number of Native groups in the Americas and some of the "Repressed Peoples" of the former USSR such as the *Russland-deutschen* (Russian Germans) and Black Sea Greeks are on the brink of cultural extinction.

The UN General Assembly explicitly condemned genocide as a crime on December 11, 1946. Their original definition of the crime was similar to Lemkin's concept of genocide. However, by the time the General Assembly passed the Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide on December 9, 1948, the word had been redefined in narrower terms.[9] Forced assimilation and most other non-lethal means of genocide were left outside the legal definition of genocide created by the treaty. The final version of the treaty focused primarily on biologically eliminating members of a group and largely ignored the destruction of national cultures as a component of genocide. Article II of the treaty defines genocide as:

> In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such:
>
> (a) Killing members of the group;
> (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> (c) Deliberately inflicting on members of the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.[10]

This definition equates genocide primarily with ethnically motivated mass murder. Unfortunately, the UN definition fails to recognize that ethnic mass murder is often only the first phase of destroying national groups. The second phase which often extends long after the killing has stopped is the continued destruction of the victim group's cultural identity. Thus the forced assimilation of the survivors is often just as much a part of genocide as mass killings. The UN treaty, however, does provide a useful legal definition for the physical components of genocide.

Since the passage of the UN Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, scholars have offered numerous alternative definitions of genocide. The exact definition of genocide varies from author to author. Leo Kuper has noted that the term genocide has the "insuperable problem of precision classification."[11] His own definition is similar to Lemkin's. That is he believes that genocide is the destruction of national groups rather than all the individuals in those groups and can be accomplished by non-lethal means. Many scholarly definitions of genocide, however, limit the term exclusively to the destruction of groups through mass killing. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn give the following definition, "Genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator."[12] Other scholars go even further and limit genocide to those few mass killings where the perpetrator seeks

to totally and immediately physically exterminate the targeted group. French scholars studying the genocide in Rwanda have advocated this narrow definition of genocide in order to accentuate the horror of that country's recent past. They believe the Rwandan genocide should be viewed in a manner similar to the popular perception of the Holocaust and not left along with most other cases of state sponsored mass murder as a piece of esoteric knowledge known only to a few specialized scholars. Gerard Prunier defines genocide as "the systematic organization of the killing and the attempt at completely erasing the targeted group."[13] Alain Destexhe has a similar definition, "Genocide is a crime on a different scale to all other crimes against humanity and implies an intention to completely exterminate the chosen group."[14] He argues that there are only three cases of genocide in the 20th century.[15] These three genocides are the Turkish slaughter of Armenians, the attempted Nazi extermination of the Jews and Romany, and the Hutu mass murder of Tutsis in Rwanda.[16] He categorizes all other cases of systematic group destruction as being "other crimes against humanity that target ethnic or religious groups" rather than genocide.[17] The most extreme proponent of limiting the term genocide to as few cases as possible is Steven Katz. According to Katz, the Nazi extermination of European Jews is the only case of genocide in world history. He has written a massive two-volume work dedicated to showing that even the Armenian, Gypsy, and Rwandan cases should not be considered genocide.[18] In the end there is no scholarly consensus on what the term genocide should denote.

Despite the many differences among scholars on the definition of genocide there are two basic contending camps. The first camp consists of those adhering to a definition of genocide similar to Lemkin's original definition. These scholars maintain that genocide is the destruction of a group's ethnic identity and does not require immediately killing all members of the targeted group. The other camp consists of those who believe the term genocide should be reserved only for those cases where the perpetrating state attempts to immediately kill all members of an ethnic group. The term genocide in this article is used in the original sense that its creator Raphael Lemkin intended.

Information released from the former Soviet archives in the last 10 years supports the argument that the Stalin regime did indeed commit genocide against the "Repressed Peoples." The Soviet government sought to destroy these groups as distinct ethnic identities. To this end they employed a mixture of lethal and non-lethal means. The NKVD and MVD deliberately deported these nationalities in their entirety to areas it knew had deadly living conditions. The Soviet authorities acquired this knowledge during the mass exile of kulaks to the exact same areas during 1930–1931 with disastrous results. Hundreds of thousands of exiled kulaks perished from exposure, malnutrition, and disease during the 1930s due to poor material conditions. Despite this knowledge the Soviet government did little to improve the material conditions for people exiled to these remote areas. Initially almost no preparations were made to house and feed newly arriving waves of exiles. It took the Soviet authorities years to provide even the minimal amount of shelter, clothing, and food needed for basic survival to the

deported nationalities. The unsurprising result of this policy was massive mortality among the exiles. Adding to this excessive mortality, the Soviet government forcibly mobilized many of the exiles to work in dangerous and unhealthy conditions in coal mines, logging camps, rail construction, and other forms of heavy labor. 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. Its intent was to physically partially destroy the deported nationalities as a form of collective punishment. This policy fits the UN definition of genocide under Article II(c) of the Treaty to Prevent and Punish Genocide, "Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."[19]

Dispersed in exile among alien populations and deprived of their traditional areas of settlement and ways of life, these groups became susceptible to losing their cultural identity. The Stalin regime sought to accelerate this process by banning all publications and education in the native languages of the exiled nationalities. Instead they were to be immersed into Russian, Kazakh, Uzbek, and other larger cultures in the hope that they would dissolve as distinct national groups. This attempt to destroy the ethnic identity of the surviving portion of the deported peoples through forcible assimilation clearly meets Lemkin's definition of genocide.

Although direct killings claimed only a small portion of the total deaths among the "Repressed Peoples," the NKVD round up of the condemned nationalities involved considerable violence. They forcibly loaded the people slated for deportation on to cattle cars at bayonet point. On several occasions the NKVD massacred difficult to move groups of people rather than disobey Moscow's orders and leave them unmolested. In the village of Khaibakh, the NKVD decided that moving the local population to the nearest rail point was not feasible. Rather than allow the estimated 700 people of Khaibakh to remain in Chechnya, the NKVD herded all of them into barns, doused the structures with gasoline, and set them on fire.[20] The NKVD spared neither women nor children from incineration. Very few of the residents of Khaibakh survived this massacre. The NKVD also massacred a large number of Crimean Tatars. A few Crimean Tatar villages on the Arabat Strip managed to remain unmolested by the NKVD during the May 18–20, 1944 deportations. Deputy Chief of the NKVD Bogdan Kobulov learned of this oversight on July 19, 1944.[21] Upon this discovery, Kobulov ordered the immediate killing of these undeported Crimean Tatars. [22] In less than 24 hours, the NKVD rounded up the Arabat villagers and placed them on a boat in Genicsek port.[23] Most of the villagers were women and children.[24] The NKVD sent this boat out into the Azov Sea and sunk it.[25] NKVD detachments with machine guns finished off the survivors who did not drown and attempted to escape.[26] Khaibakh and Arabat were only the beginning of the nightmare inflicted upon the deported peoples. The subsequent deportations and exile claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The Soviet deportations of the "Repressed Peoples" were aimed at the entire populations of these nationalities, not merely parts of them. In those cases where

the victimized nationality possessed an ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) or AO (Autonomous Oblast), as in the cases of the Karachays, the deportation orders all instruct the NKVD to exile the entire titular population of each national territorial unit named to special settlements. These orders also usually liquidated the territory itself or restructured it to remove all traces of the deported nationality. In the case of the Volga German ASSR and Crimean ASSR where they did not, the territories were dissolved by later decrees. All six of the deportation decrees dealing with the titular nationalities of autonomous territories are worded similarly. They accused the condemned nationality of treason and ordered all members of the nationalities deported from their autonomous territory to special settlements. The ukaz of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet 21–160 of August 28, 1941, entitled "On Resettling the Germans, Living in the Region of the Volga" decreed "The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet has deemed it necessary to resettle the whole German population, living in the region of the Volga, to other regions."[27] This decree set the model for the elimination of six more nationalities from their national territories to special settlements. The NKVD prikaz to implement this resettlement defined the region of the Volga as not only the ASSRWD (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Volga Germans), but Saratov and Stalingrad Oblasts as well.[28] On October 12, 1943 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued ukaz No 115–136 "On the Liquidation of the Karachay Autonomous Oblast and the Administrative Organization of the Territory."[29] This decree resolved, "All Karachays living on the territory of the Oblast are to be resettled to other regions of the USSR, and the Karachay Autonomous Oblast is to be liquidated."[30] The subsequent decrees by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on the Kalmyk ASSR, Chechen-Ingush ASSR, and Balkars have almost identical wording. The only noteworthy exceptions are that the decree on the Chechens and Ingush ordered the deportation of these national groups from not only the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, but adjacent areas as well and the decree on the Balkars renames the Karbardian-Balkar ASSR, the Karbardian ASSR, instead of liquidating the territory.[31] The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet did not issue an ukaz authorizing the deportation of the Crimean Tatars. Instead this deportation took place under the authority of GKO (State Committee for Defense) order 5859ss of May 11, 1944 signed by Joseph Stalin.[32] This resolution decreed, " All Tatars are to be exiled from the territory of the Crimea and settled permanently as special settlers in regions of the Uzbek SSR."[33] The sole determination of who was to be deported from these territories was ethnicity. The policy of deportation effected all those unfortunate enough to belong to one of the condemned nationalities regardless of political loyalty.

The Stalin regime also sought to deport all members of the "Repressed Peoples" outside their titular territories to confined internal exile. The only partial exception to this policy were the Soviet Koreans. The ethnic Koreans west of Lake Baikal not in special settlements, prisons, corrective labor camps, and corrective labor colonies were exempt from deportation. Most of the Koreans spared deportation were university students in Moscow and Leningrad. The NKVD hunted down ethnic Germans, Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens,

Ingush, and Balkars throughout the expanse of the USSR and sent them to special settlements. Stalin personally signed most of the orders to deport ethnic Germans from areas of the European USSR outside of the ASSRWD. These orders even covered areas with very small German populations. On October 8, 1941, Stalin signed GKO resolution 744ss "On Resettling the Germans from the Georgian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian SSRs" which ordered the NKVD to deport the 212 Germans in Armenia, along with the 23,580 in Georgia, and 22,741 in Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan.[34] On October 22, 1941, Stalin signed GKO resolution 827ss "On Resettling the Germans from Daghestan and Chechen-Ingush ASSR." This resolution instructed the NKVD to deport the 574 Germans in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR along with 4,000 from Daghestan to Kazakhstan.[35] The Soviet government also imposed the restrictions of special settlers upon the Germans already living in the Urals, Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia.[36] The Soviet government converted the traditional villages of Germans living in Soviet Asia into special settlements complete with barbed wire, guard towers, and strict NKVD discipline. The NKVD also deported the Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars to special settlements from where ever it found them. The NKVD rounded up and deported 329 Karachays from Stravopol Oblast, 25 from Rostov Oblast, 18 from Azerbaijan, 15 from Daghestan and 32 from other areas between November 6, 1943 and May 10, 1944.[37] A large number of Kalmyks lived in Rostov and Stalingrad Oblasts in 1943. The first wave of deportations in December 1943, bypassed these minorities. Several months later, the Stalin regime rectified this oversight. On March 11, 1944, the SNK ordered the NKVD to deport the Kalmyks living in Rostov Oblast to Omsk Oblast.[38] The NKVD and NKGB (Peoples Commissariat of State Security) exiled 2,684 Kalmyks from Rostov to Omsk shortly afterwards. [39] Between June 2 and 4, 1944, the NKVD and NKGB exiled another 1,178 Kalmyks from Stalingrad Oblast to Sverdlovsk Oblast.[40] The NKVD ran a dragnet through the Caucasus searching for members of these nationalities that escaped deportation in late 1943 and early 1944. In total, after the initial deportations, the NKVD rounded up and forcibly deported 4,146 Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars from Daghestan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Krasnodar Kray, Rostov Oblast, and Astrakhan Oblast.[41] The NKVD also searched major Russian cities for members of these ethnicities and subsequently deported them. In Moscow, the NKVD found eight Kalmyks, three Karachays, one Chechen, and one Ingush.[42] They deported all 13 of these people to special settlements. The Stalin regime targeted the "Repressed Peoples" in their entirety. No geographical region under Soviet rule was safe for members of the condemned nationalities. The NKVD sought out every individual belonging to these ethnic groups where ever they sought to hide and exiled them to special settlements in desolate regions of the USSR.

The Stalin regime did not even spare Red Army soldiers, Communist Party members, and Komsomolists from punishment. The Soviet government demobilized these soldiers and sent them to labor battalions or special settlements. On September 8, 1941, the NKVD ordered all ethnic Germans in the Red Army and Soviet military academies be demobilized and sent to construction battalions in

the interior of the USSR.[43] By 1945, the Soviet Red Army had demobilized 33,625 ethnic Germans.[44] These Germans served in labor battalions and colonies under conditions similar to those of convicts in corrective labor camps. After the end of World War II, the Soviet government gradually transferred the survivors from these battalions and colonies to special settlements. The Stalin regime extended this ethnic purge of the Red Army to other national groups in 1944. On March 3, 1944, the GKO ordered the removal of all Karachays from the army with resolution No 0741.[45] In accordance with this decree, the NKVD sent these soldiers to special settlements without any supplies.[46] The Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars received similar treatment. During the summer of 1944, the Stalin regime sent 7,000 demobilized Kalmyk soldiers to labor battalions in Molotov Oblast.[47] Between 1944 and the end of 1948, 843 demobilized Kalmyk soldiers arrived in special settlements.[48] The Soviet government also sent the Crimean Tatars fighting in the Red Army against Nazi Germany to labor battalion and colonies in Siberia and other areas.[49] The NKVD employed these former soldiers to mine coal, fell timber, and extract natural gas. By March 1949 the special settlements contained 91,624 former soldiers from the "Repressed People" including 4,825 officers and 12,873 sergeants.[50] In addition to these former soldiers were 7,544 former members of the Communist Party and 10,351 Komsomolists among the deported peoples in the special settlements.[51] The confinement of the "Repressed Peoples" to special settlements did not spare even loyal communists. The Stalin dictatorship imposed the special settlement regime upon them solely because of their ethnicity.

The only exemptions from deportation were in fact ethnically based. The NKVD instructions "On Measures for Conducting the Resettlement of the Germans Living in the Volga German Republic, Saratov, and Stalingrad Oblasts" allowed only one exception to deportation. German women married to non-Germans were exempted from exile.[52] In Saratov Oblast these women numbered only about 1,000 out of a total population of nearly 50,000 Soviet Germans.[53] The later deportation orders relating to the Soviet Germans do not even make this token exemption. The Soviet government also exempted Kalmyk women with non-Kalmyk spouses living in the Kalmyk ASSR from deportation.[54] Finally, this exemption was extended to Meskhetian Turkish, Kurdish, and Khemshil women married to different nationalities.[55] These few exceptions had an ethnic rather than a political basis. A few German, Kalmyk, and Meskhetian Turkish women managed to escape deportation by virtue of bearing and raising culturally Russian children.

The Soviet government deliberately exiled the deported nationalities to areas it knew would result in mass mortality. These areas had very harsh climates compared to the homelands of the deported nationalities. The taiga of Siberia, deserts of Uzbekistan, and barren steppes of Kazakhstan contrasted sharply with the much more hospitable living conditions in the Volga basin, Ukraine, Crimean peninsula, and Caucasus. They also lacked sufficient housing and food to adequately provide for the well-being of the exiles. There can be no doubt the Soviet government knew that these areas of exile would prove deadly to the

deported nationalities. The Stalin regime had previously exiled millions of kulaks to labor settlements (later renamed special settlements) in the exact same regions. In fact many of the labor settlements previously inhabited by kulaks became special settlements inhabited by Soviet Germans, North Caucasians, Crimean Tatars, Kalmyks, Meskhetian Turks, and others. The results from this experiment in large-scale population transfer were horrific.

During 1930 and 1931, the OGPU (Unified State Political Administration) the predecessor of the NKVD forcibly deported 1,803,392 peasants branded as kulaks to labor settlements in remote areas of the USSR.[56] Between 1932 and 1940, they exiled another 2,176,600 people to these settlements.[57] Packed into cattle cars without sufficient clean water or food, many deportees died *en route* to the settlements from typhus and dysentery. In one series of echelons from the Caucasus, 341 people out of 10,185 (3.3 percent) died before arriving in Siberia.[58] Upon arrival in the special settlements, the exiles found themselves without access to sufficient food or shelter. The Soviet government made few provisions for the material well-being of the exiles. The areas of exile lacked sufficient housing and food to accommodate the deportees and the central government did not supply the local authorities with the resources to remedy this situation. In September 1930, only 7 of 1,641 planned quarters for exiled kulaks had been constructed in Arkhangel'sk due to a lack of resources.[59] Exiled kulaks often found themselves abandoned in desolate areas with no shelter at all. Often without the aid of tools, they constructed primitive huts out of earth and mud. As late as 1935, 12 percent of all special settlers in North West Siberia still lived in these huts.[60] The lack of proper shelter contributed to the high mortality rate of the special settlers. Both exposure and infectious diseases facilitated by overcrowded and unhygienic housing conditions contributed significantly to the death toll among the special settlers.

The lack of adequate food was an even greater problem for the special settlers. From 1932 to 1940, the OGPU and NKVD recorded 389,521 (9.79 percent of all those deported) deaths among the exiles in special settlements. Most of these deaths resulted from malnutrition and famine-related diseases.[61] In August 1931, the Gulag supplied rations to special settlers consisted of 9 kg of flour, 9 kg of groats, 1.5 kg of fish, and 0.9 kg of sugar per person per month.[62] This averages out to only about 658 grams of food a day. During 1932, the first year for which there is data regarding total deaths in special settlements, the OGPU recorded 89,754 deaths out of 1,317,022 (6.8 percent) special settlers.[63] On January 1, 1933, Gulag cut the rations of special settlers by over two-thirds. The new rations consisted of 5 kg of flour, 0.5 kg of groats, 0.8 kg of fish, and 0.4 kg of sugar per person per month.[64] This averages out to a mere 216 grams of food a day. This starvation ration brought about a corresponding increase in deaths. During 1933, out of 1,142,084 special settlers, 151,601 (13.27 percent) died in the special settlements.[65] Those areas with the greatest number of deaths were the same areas the Stalin regime later confined the deported nationalities recognized as "Repressed Peoples." In descending order the Urals, Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, the Far North, Central Asia, and Eastern Siberia had the

greatest number of deaths among exiled kulaks in 1932 and 1933.[66] The Stalin regime sent the greatest number of members of exiled nationalities to Kazakhstan, Central Asia, the Urals, Western Siberia, and Eastern Siberia.[67] These areas had a proven track record of death for those forced to live under the special settlement regime. The severe climate, poor housing, and scarce food in these areas led to hundreds of thousands of deaths among the exiled kulaks in the 1930s and the "Repressed Peoples" in the 1940s. The Stalin regime deliberately deported the "Repressed Peoples" to areas it knew had lethal living conditions. The knowledge of the mass mortality that resulted from the deportation of kulaks to these areas did nothing to deter the Soviet government from selecting these areas of exile for the "Repressed Peoples." Indeed the deadly living conditions of these areas probably played a role in their selection.

The mass deportation of peasants branded as kulaks to special settlements was in many ways a model for the later deportation of whole nations by Stalin. Despite the massive mortality resulting from insufficient housing and food for the exiled kulaks, the Stalin regime did virtually nothing to improve these conditions before relocating millions more people to these same areas. While the kulaks were an arbitrarily defined social class, most later exiles were deported on the basis of their ethnicity.

The first nationality condemned to exile in its entirety by the Stalin regime were the Soviet Koreans. During 1936 and 1937, the Soviet Union feared an imminent attack by Japan. In 1931, the Japanese had already greatly expanded their border with the USSR by conquering Manchuria. The Russian memory of its defeat at Japanese hands in 1905 contributed to a witch hunt for Japanese spies in the Soviet Far East. Local authorities reported a large increase in "wrecking-Trotskyite-Japanese spies" during 1937.[68] In response the NKVD especially targeted non-Russians in the Soviet Far East as foreign spies. The largest of these groups were the Soviet Koreans. This witch hunt culminated in the forced removal of all ethnic Koreans from the region as potential Japanese spies and diversionists. The Soviet government distrusted its Korean population due to the ethnic and family ties this group had with the Japanese empire. The numerous border crossings between the Soviet Union and Japanese Empire by ethnic Koreans made them potentially valuable intelligence assets for both sides. Soviet authorities suspected that many Soviet Koreans were engaged in intelligence work on behalf of Japan. On April 23, 1937, *Pravda* ran an article on Japanese spies in the Soviet Far East.[69] This article stressed the Japanese use of ethnic Korean and Chinese spies who could blend into the local Soviet Korean and Chinese communities without arousing suspicion. According to *Pravda*, Japan was infiltrating ethnic Korean and Chinese spies into the Soviet Far East "masked as natives of the region." In order to remove the ability of Japanese intelligence agents to hide among local inhabitants of the Soviet Union, the Stalin regime decided to ethnically cleanse the Soviet Far East of its Korean and Chinese populations. The ethnic cleansing of East Asians from the Soviet Far East made identifying spies and diversionists sent from the Japanese Empire

much easier. Ethnic Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans stood out as easily identifiable in an all white Slavic population.

The ethnic cleansing of the Soviet Far East Kray was very thorough. The Korean population of the USSR numbered 168,259 as of January 1, 1937.[70] On August 21, 1937, the Soviet government ordered the deportation of all Soviet Koreans from border districts of the Far East Kray.[71] The NKVD rounded up and deported 74,500 Koreans and 8,000 Chinese from the areas bordering Korea and Manchuria to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the next two months.[72] On September 28, 1937, the Soviet government ordered the deportation of the remaining Korean population in the areas east of Lake Baikal to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.[73] This second decree authorized the deportation of 97,281 Soviet Koreans.[74] By October 25, 1937, the NKVD had deported 171,781 (36,442 families) Soviet Koreans on 124 train echelons from the Far East Kray to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan received 95,256 (20,170 families) and Uzbekistan 76,525 (16,272 families) of these exiles.[75] On November 1, 1937, the NKVD exiled the last remaining 700 Soviet Koreans in the Far East Kray to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.[76] In just over two months the NKVD completely purged the Soviet Far East Kray of its large Korean population.

The exiled Koreans experienced similar material conditions to the earlier kulaks. Although classified as "administrative exiles" rather than special settlers, the Koreans did not receive better food or housing. The local authorities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were unprepared for the mass arrival of the exiled Koreans. Originally Kazakhstan was to receive only 18,800 households instead of the more than 20,000 that arrived.[77] One group of almost 4,000 Koreans arrived in Kustan Oblast Kazakhstan on October 31, 1937 and spent a nearly week with no shelter whatsoever.[78] Many Korean families found themselves forced to construct earth dugouts and huts for shelter. The Soviet government did not address the lack of housing for the exiled Koreans in a timely manners. As late as December 10, 1938, the Uzbek authorities had constructed only 1,800 of 4,151 planned two-flat houses to accommodate the Korean exiles.[79] Another 5,817 Korean households in Uzbekistan lived in temporary lodgings such as earth huts and barracks at this time.[80] The lack of shelter combined with the harsh climate of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan made survival difficult for the exiled Koreans in 1937 and 1938.

Traditionally the Soviet Koreans had been rice farmers and fishermen. Exiled to the deserts of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan they found it extremely difficult to adapt to their new surroundings. Many of them could not find jobs and hence could not support their families. Korean exiles sent letters to the Soviet government complaining of a lack of employment and impending starvation.[81] Soviet authorities concurred that the housing and food situation for the exiled Koreans was quite desperate.[82] Despite this information the Soviet government did little to improve material conditions of the exiled Soviet Koreans. The lack of adequate housing and food had a devastating effect upon the Soviet Koreans.

The harsh living conditions endured by the Soviet Koreans in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during 1937 and 1938 led to a large number of deaths from disease,

malnutrition, and exposure. Michael Rywkin estimates that 40,000 Soviet Koreans, 23.2 percent of the total population, perished in 1937 and 1938 from these causes.[83] This mortality rate was nearly seven times greater than the average for the USSR as whole from 1927 to 1931.

The mass exile of the Soviet Koreans proved the effectiveness of deporting whole national groups thousands of miles away from their homes to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The deportation of the Soviet Koreans removed the suspect nationality from a strategic border region of the USSR and permanently ended any potential for them to assist the Japanese Empire. It also provided a cheap labor force to help develop the backward economies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The higher educational and skill levels of the Soviet Koreans versus the local Kazakhs and Uzbeks greatly benefited the development of these two republics. The success of the deportation of the Soviet Koreans led it to be adopted by the Soviet government as a model for dealing with all suspect nationalities. Following the deportation of the Soviet Koreans in 1937, the Stalin regime similarly exiled the Soviet Finns and Germans in 1941, the Karachays and Kalmyks in 1943, the Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Crimean Greeks, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds and Khemshils in 1944 and the Black Sea Greeks in 1949 and 1951.

The exile of the Soviet Germans came soon after the German invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941. The Soviet leadership feared that the Soviet Germans would provide assistance to the Nazi aggressors. In particular, they believed that the large concentration of Volga Germans in the heart of Russia would engage in espionage and sabotage against the Soviet war effort. Stalin assigned Molotov and Beria to create a policy to deal with the Volga Germans. Molotov and Beria recommended that they all be deported.[84] The rest of the Soviet leadership expressed agreement with this proposal. On August 12, 1941, the SNK and Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued resolution No 2060–9355 on deporting the Volga Germans.[85] This decision was followed by NKVD prikaz 09158, "On Measures for Conducting the Operation of Resettling the Germans from the Volga German Republic, Saratov, and Stalingrad Oblasts" on August 27, 1941.[86] Finally on August 28, 1941, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued ukaz 21–160 "On Resettling the Germans Living in the Region of the Volga."[87] Between September 3 and 20, 1941, the NKVD forcibly deported over half a million Soviet Germans from the Volga region to special settlements in Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Urals, and Central Asia. In less than a month Stalin and his henchmen destroyed the once flourishing German communities of the Volga. Some of these communities dated all the way back to 1763. After 1941 they permanently ceased to exist.

The deportation of the remaining German population of the USSR quickly followed the exile of the Volga Germans. By January 1, 1942, the NKVD had successfully resettled 799,459 Soviet Germans to special settlements.[88] During the next four years the number of Soviet Germans sent to special settlements increased to 1,209,430.[89] The vast majority of ethnic Germans born in the USSR found themselves in special settlements by 1946. Only about 70,000 Ukrainian

Germans who managed to flee to Germany and avoid repatriation escaped confinement.[90] The remaining Soviet German population suffered the full burden of the special settlement regime.

The Stalin regime sent the Soviet Germans to special settlements in Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Siberia, and the Urals. The local authorities in these areas were unprepared for the sudden influx of hundreds of thousands of ethnic German exiles. Housing for the Germans was better than it had been for the kulaks sent to these areas earlier, but still far from adequate. On October 5, 1941, the local NKVD authorities in Altai Kray reported that they had enough housing to accommodate 100,000 Soviet Germans.[91] By early 1942, however, more than 110,000 Germans had arrived in Altai Kray.[92] The NKVD housed many of the German special settlers in barns, barracks, and other primitive structures. The buildings available for housing the German exiles often needed extensive repair in order to provide even minimal protection from the elements. Many of these buildings even lacked roofs and windows. The lack of shelter was only one of the causes of death among the German special settlers. A great number of Soviet Germans also died performing forced labor during World War II.

The Stalin regime forcibly mobilized close to 400,000 Soviet Germans into labor battalions and colonies during World War II.[93] Collectively known as the trudarmii (labor army) these battalions and colonies worked in remote areas of the USSR in logging, construction, and mining. On January 10, 1942, Stalin signed GKO order 1123ss.[94] This decree subjected all able-bodied Soviet German men between the ages of 17 and 50 in Novosibirsk Oblast, Omsk Oblast, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Altai Kray, and Kazakhstan to mobilization in the labor army. Initially this order inducted 120,000 Soviet Germans into the labor army to work in lumber camps, industrial construction, and rail construction. The NKVD strictly supervised these workers and punished attempts to avoid mobilization or escape from the labor army with death. The GKO expanded the category of Soviet Germans subjected to labor mobilization on February 14, 1942 with resolution 1281ss.[95] This decree made all ethnic German men in the USSR aged 17–50 capable of physical labor subject to service in the labor army. Finally on October 7, 1942, the GKO issued resolution No 2383ss.[96] This decree made all German men aged 15–55 and all German women aged 16–45 eligible for mobilization in the labor army. The Soviet government only exempted invalids, pregnant women, and women with children younger than three from induction into the labor army.

Conditions in the labor army were extremely harsh. Germans in the labor army often worked in Gulag camps under conditions similar to those of prisoners. Workers in the labor army received only 400 to 600 grams of bread a day and frequently worked as long as 14 hours a day at hard labor.[97] The mobilized Germans working in the Chkalov oil industry lived in unheated and unsanitary barracks and earth huts.[98] Often these workers went as long as five days without any bread.[99] Hunger and typhus were endemic among the Germans in the labor army. Exhaustion, malnutrition, disease, and exposure took a high toll among the mobilized Germans. During 1942, over 12,000 out of 15,000 (80

Table 1. Deaths and births of Soviet Germans in special settlements, 1945–1950

Year	Deaths	Births
1945	6930	1914
1946	8519	4236
1947	12573	7314
1948	12309	17679
1949	9984	22126
1950	10340	32494
Total	**60655**	**94763**

percent) Germans in the labor army at Bogoslav corrective labor camp perished.[100] This extraordinary high mortality rate for units of the labor army was not unique to Bogoslav.

In addition to deaths in the labor army, often the children of the mobilized Germans died of neglect in the special settlements. Children of Germans mobilized into the labor army frequently had no relatives able to care for them. These children became wards of kolhozes (collective farms). In many cases the kolhozes provided substandard care to these children or simply abandoned them to their own devices. The survival rate of children abandoned in this manner was far below normal. In 1942, the NKVD mobilized and transported 5,689 German men and 13,129 German women from Altai Kray to the labor army.[101] As a result of this mobilization 6,310 minor children lost their parents.[102] Immediate family members took responsibility for providing for 2,096 of these children.[103] Another 1,425 children received care from more distant relatives.[104] The remaining 2,789 children became wards of kolhozes.[105] Many of these children faced a future of neglect and indifference.

The NKVD statistics on the losses suffered by the Soviet Germans from deportation, conditions in special settlements, and the travails of the labor army are incomplete and contradictory. The years 1941 to 1944 are especially difficult to tabulate. Samuel Sinner has extensively researched the excess mortality of the Soviet Germans during these years. He calculates that between 200,000 and 300,000 (14–21 percent of the total population) Soviet Germans in excess of normal died during World War II.[106] Almost all of these additional deaths can directly be attributed to the deportations and conditions in the special settlements and labor army.

The NKVD and MVD figures dealing with the Soviet Germans are more complete in the postwar period. Between 1945 and 1950, the NKVD and MVD recorded 60,655 German deaths in the special settlements (see Table 1[107]). Recorded deaths continued to outnumber recorded births among the German special settlers until 1948. Stalin's deportations and subsequent repression decimated the Soviet German population more than twice over according the best available estimates. This incredible loss still haunts the memory of those who survived Stalin's regime.

Following the deportation of the Soviet Germans, the NKVD exiled the Karachays and Kalmyks in 1943. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued an ukaz "On Liquidating the Kalmyk ASSR and Founding the Astrakhan Oblast as a component of the RSFSR" on December 27, 1943.[108] This decree accused the Kalmyks of treason and collaboration with Nazi Germany. In order to punish the Kalmyks for these alleged crimes the ukaz decreed "All Kalmyks living in the territory of the Kalmyk ASSR are to resettled to other regions of the USSR, and the Kalmyk ASSR liquidated." During December 28 and 29, 1943, the NKVD and NKGB recorded deporting 93,139 Kalmyks from the Kalmyk ASSR to special settlements in Siberia and Kazakhstan.[109] Then NKVD originally recorded 91,919 Kalmyks arriving in special settlements from the Kalmyk ASSR.[110] This figure, however, included 979 double counted exiles.[111] The actual number of arrivals was 90,940. In the following year the NKVD rounded up and deported those Kalmyks living outside the Kalmyk ASSR to special settlements. Among these later exiles were the 3,962 Kalmyks living in Rostov Oblast and Stalingrad Oblast.[112] By June 4, 1944, the NKVD had succeeded in forcibly relocating almost the entire Kalmyk population of the USSR to special settlements in Siberia.

The Stalin regime deported the Kalmyks to Siberia under inhumane conditions. Forced into unheated, unhygienic, and overcrowded cattle cars, they suffered horribly from the deportations. Typhus, tuberculosis, dystrophy, and other diseases afflicted the exiles in epidemic proportions. On the way to Novosibirsk 193 Kalmyks died of typhus and another 224 had to be hospitalized.[113] Out of this second group 39 perished from acute typhus while hospitalized.[114] *En route* to Altai Kray 290 Kalmyks perished from tuberculosis, inflammation, and dystrophy. Similar death rates existed among the Kalmyks sent to Omsk Oblast and Krasnoyarsk Kray.[115] In total, close to 1,200 Kalmyks died in transit to special settlements.[116] These deaths were just the beginning of a demographic disaster that would claim over a fifth of the Kalmyk population.

The Kalmyks endured great hardship in Siberian exile. In addition to the harsh climate, the Kalmkys also suffered from severe shortages of housing, food, clothing, and other essentials. Initially many local authorities were totally unprepared for the mass arrival of the Kalmyk exiles. They could not provide them with sufficient housing or other essentials. Many Kalmyk exiles initially lived in huts constructed from branches, barns, and other makeshift shelters. The Soviet government assigned many Kalmyks exiled to Siberia to already existing kolhozes. In addition to the compaction of living space this entailed, it also meant that the Kalmyks had to compete with the existing inhabitants for scarce jobs. Condemned as traitors to the motherland and unfamiliar with local conditions, the Kalmyks had a difficult time finding employment in the kolhozes. Many could not even speak Russian. Unemployment on Siberian kolhozes was especially pronounced among Kalmyk women. Kolhoz dwellers who did not work could not receive food or other goods from the kolhoz. This inability to acquire food, clothes, soap, and other goods led to extremely desperate material conditions among the Kalmyk special settlers.

Table 2. Deaths and births of Kalmyks in special settlements, 1945–1950

Year	Deaths	Births
1945	3735	351
1946	2187	628
1947	2358	757
1948	2766	1135
1949	1903	2058
1950	2257	2914
Total	**15206**	**7843**

Official Soviet reports document the wretched living conditions endured by the Kalmyk special settlers in Siberia in plain terms. In November 1944, NKVD Chief Beria informed Anastas Mikoyan of these conditions.[117] The Kalmyks lacked sufficient food and clothing and lived in unsanitary and unhygienic conditions. According to Beria's report the "majority of them do not own linen, clothes, and shoes."[118] In response to this report in November and December 1944, the SNK provided some material aid to the Kalmyk exiles. This aid included 50 tons of washed wool and 60 tons of cotton cloth.[119] The lack of proper clothing for the cold Siberian winters, however, continued to plague the Kalmyks even after this assistance. As late as July 15, 1946, 30 percent of the able-bodied Kalmyks in Novosibirsk Oblast could not work due to a lack of shoes.[120] The housing situation for Kalmyks also remained desperate in 1946. A report to NKVD Chief Kruglov on January 30, 1946, regarding the Kalmyk special settlers notes their poor housing situation.[121] Out of 28,120 Kalmyk families only 4,550 (16.18 percent) had their own houses. The majority of Kalmyk families, 18,370 (65.32 percent) lived at their place of work in industrial enterprises, construction sites, and sovhozes. This second group often lived in poorly constructed barracks. Another 5,200 (18.5 percent) still lived in the homes of local residents under extremely compact conditions. These overcrowded conditions combined with a lack of soap and salt led to poor hygiene and sanitation and facilitated the spread of diseases such as typhus and tuberculosis. The poor material conditions of the Kalmyk special settlers led to numerous cases of malnutrition, exposure, and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Thousands of Kalmyks perished each year in the special settlements from these causes. During 1944 alone, 5,548 Kalmyks died in exile.[122] Tuberculosis in particular killed many Kalmyk special settlers. In Altai Kray 48 percent of all Kalmyk deaths resulted from tuberculosis.[123] Between 1944 through 1950, the NKVD and MVD recorded 20,754 Kalmyk deaths in the special settlements (see Table 2[124]). Deaths greatly outnumbered births among the Kalmyks during these years. Only in 1949 did births exceed deaths among the Kalmyks for the first time since their deportation. Including deaths in transit, close to 23 percent of the Kalmyk population deported perished as a result of the conditions of deportation

and exile. These deaths are directly attributable to the actions of the Stalin regime against the Kalmyks.

Soon after the deportation of the Kalmyks, the NKVD proceeded to deport the Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars. Earlier, on November 6, 1943, the NKVD had deported 68,939 Karachays from the Karachay Autonomous Oblast to special settlements in Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, and other eastern areas.[125] The bulk of the mass deportations from the North Caucasus took place in late February 1944. Between February 23 and 29, 1944, the NKVD and NKGB deported 387,229 Chechens and 91,250 Ingush to Kazakhstan and Kirghizia.[126] Finally, the NKVD exiled 37,713 Balkars to these two republics on March 8 and 9, 1944.[127] The NKVD counted a total of 602,193 Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars arriving in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia by late March 1944.[128] This initial number, however, included 32,981 double-counted special settlers.[129] The actual number of arrivals was 569,212. Both the actual deportations and confinement in the special settlements occurred under inhumane conditions.

The NKVD ruthlessly rounded up the condemned North Caucasian nationalities and loaded them into cattle cars. They managed to pack from 40 to 45 people into each train wagon.[130] That more than 40 percent of the exiles were children greatly expedited this ethnic cleansing.[131] The crowded conditions on the trains led to numerous cases of typhus among the deportees. Many of these cases proved fatal. Every so often the trains would stop and remove the dead from the train cars. The NKVD shot any Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, or Balkars that strayed more than five meters from the stopped trains during these stops.[132] In total, around 8,300 North Caucasians perished before arriving in the special settlements.[133] The Balkars in particular suffered a large number of fatalities during the deportations. Close to 3,500 Balkars (9.26 percent of the population) died *en route* to the special settlements.[134] The train echelons carried their human cargo to the dumping grounds of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia with few amenities. Indeed, many died before reaching the special settlements due to the inhumane conditions of the deportation.

The mountain dwelling North Caucasians suffered greatly in the unfamiliar conditions of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. Lack of food, medicine, and shelter afflicted the exiled North Caucasians from their first days in exile. This deprivation combined with the harsh climate and squalid living conditions in the special settlements led to thousands of deaths. In November 1943, the first North Caucasian exiles, the Karachays arrived in Kazakhstan. Soon after their arrival local authorities began reporting severe food shortages among them.[135] As hundreds of thousands of Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars joined the Karachays in exile, housing became increasingly scarce for the special settlers. Severe housing shortages plagued the North Caucasian exiles for years. In Zhambul Oblast Kazakhstan only 3,051 North Caucasian families (11,570 people) out of 10,485 families (37,870 people), less than a third, had their own homes as late as November 20, 1945.[136] By July 1946, the authorities had only built 28 out of 1,000 planned houses to accommodate the North Caucasian special settlers in Akmolinsk Oblast Kazakhstan.[137] The failure to provide housing for the North

Table 3. Deaths and births of North Caucasian special settlers, 1945–1950

Year	Deaths	Births
1945	44652	2230
1946	15634	4971
1947	10849	7204
1948	15182	10348
1949	10252	13831
1950	8834	14973
Total	**104903**	**53557**

Caucasians was even worse in Tadly-Kurgansk Oblast Kazakhstan. Here the authorities had only managed to complete 23 out of 1,400 planned houses for the North Caucasian special settlers.[138] The housing conditions for the North Caucasian exiles were not much better in Kirghizia. In September 1946, there were 31,000 exiled North Caucasian families in the republic, but only 4,973 of them had permanent housing. [139]As late as the fall of 1946, many North Caucasian special settlers in Kirghizia still lived in tents.[140] This means that they spent the winters of 1944 and 1945 with out any substantial shelter against the elements. The lack of housing led to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions for those lucky enough to have shelter. These squalid living conditions proved to be ideal breeding grounds for recurring typhus epidemics. The severe material deprivation of the North Caucasian special settlers in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia proved to be deadly. The lack of food, medicine, and housing led to tens of thousands of deaths from malnutrition, infectious diseases, and exposure.

The death toll resulting from Stalin's deportation of the Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars was truly staggering. The lethal conditions of the special settlements decimated the exiled North Caucasian population within a year. During 1944 alone, the NKVD recorded 58,787 North Caucasian deaths in the special settlements.[141] By July 1948 this number had grown to 144,704. [142] Recorded deaths among the North Caucasians outnumbered recorded births in exile for every year from 1944 to 1949. In total, from 1944 through the end of 1950, the NKVD and MVD recorded 163,790 (28.7 percent of the population) deaths among the exiled North Caucasians in the special settlements (see Table 3[143]) The vast majority of these deaths were the direct result of the poor physical conditions deliberately inflicted upon them by the Stalin regime.

The Soviet deportation of non-Russian nationalities from areas recaptured from the Germans continued throughout 1944. On May 11, 1944, the Soviet Red Army completely reoccupied the Crimean peninsula. That same day Stalin issued GKO resolution No 5859ss ordering "All Tatars are to be exiled from the territory of the Crimea and settled permanently as special settlers in regions of the Uzbek SSR."[144] The NKVD and NKGB implemented this resolution on May 18, 1944. Between May 18 and 20, 1944, the NKVD and NKGB deported 183,155 Crimean Tatars to special settlements in Uzbekistan and eastern Rus-

Table 4. Deaths and births of Crimeans in special settlements, 1945–1950

Year	Deaths	Births
1945	15997	1099
1946	4997	961
1947	2937	1753
1948	3918	1753
1949	2120	3586
1950	2138	4671
Total	**32107**	**13823**

sia.[145] The Soviet government mobilized an additional 11,000 Crimean Tatars into labor battalions.[146] In total, the Stalin regime expelled 194,155 Crimean Tatars from their ancestral homeland in only three days. The uprooted Crimean Tatars suffered horribly from this forced exile.

A distinctly unhealthy climate met the Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan. The sweltering heat, unclean water, and poor material conditions led to massive outbreaks of disease. Malaria, dysentery, intestinal infections, yellow fever, and typhus ravaged the exiles. Near the end of July 1944, epidemics of yellow fever and malaria hit the Crimean Tatar special settlers in Namagan, Samarkand, and Bukhara Oblasts, Uzbekistan.[147] The Crimean Tatars in the Urals also suffered from infectious diseases. In December of the same year typhus broke out among the Crimean Tatar special settlers in Gorky Oblast.[148] These epidemics claimed thousands of lives. By January 1, 1945, 13,592 Crimean Tatars had perished as a result of the deportations and exile.[149] The following year another 13,183 Crimean Tatar special settlers died.[150] The NKVD and MVD recorded a total of 44,887 deaths by July 1, 1948 among the Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians deported from the Crimea to special settlements.[151] The vast majority of these deaths occurred amongst the Crimean Tatars. Rywkin estimates that 42,000 Crimean Tatars died between May 18, 1944 and January 1, 1949.[152] This massive loss of life due to the deportations (see Table 4[153]) had a profound effect upon the collective psyche of the Crimean Tatars. Like the Armenians and Jews, who have striven to memorialize their respective genocides, remembering the *Surgun* (tragedy) is an important component of modern Crimean Tatar national consciousness.

The last complete ethnic cleansing in the Soviet Union during World War II occurred in November 1944. In preparation for a future war with Turkey, the Stalin regime sought to clear the Georgian-Turkish border of Muslim minorities. Stalin and Beria feared that the Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils would provide assistance to Turkish intelligence in the event of a war. To eliminate this possibility Stalin ordered the deportation of all Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, Khemshils, and other Muslims from the border regions of Georgia. Between November 15 and 26, 1944, the NKVD and NKGB deported 94,955 Turks, Kurds, Khemshils, and other Muslims in Georgia to special settlements in

Table 5. Deaths and births of Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils in special settlements, 1945–1950

Year	Deaths	Births
1945	6902	599
1946	4343	547
1947	2259	895
1948	2389	1220
1949	1655	1800
1950	1500	2322
Total	**19047**	**7383**

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirghizia.[154] Even today most of these people are unable to return to their homes in Georgia.

The Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils also suffered a massive loss of life due to the Stalin regime's deportations. During transit to Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the NKVD recorded 457 deaths among this contingent.[155] The actual number of deaths was probably much higher. Upon arrival in the special settlements, the Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils suffered from the same destitution that previous exiles endured. They lacked proper housing, food, and medicine. On January 15, 1945, the NKVD chief of Uzbekistan, Babadzhanov reported to Beria that 8,000 (15 percent) of the deportees from Georgia in the republic lacked sufficient food, clothes, and shoes.[156] Compacted into overcrowded and unsanitary buildings for shelter, they suffered from repeated outbreaks of typhus and spotted fever. Disease, exposure, and malnutrition became the leading causes of death among the Muslims from Georgia. From 1945 through 1950, the NKVD–MVD recorded 19,047 deaths among the Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshils in special settlements (see Table 5[157]). More than one in five of the exiled Georgian Muslims perished in special settlements.

During and after their physical exile, Stalin regime sought to forcibly assimilate the surviving remnants of the "Repressed Peoples." The Stalin regime tore these nationalities from their traditional homelands, dispersed them among alien peoples, and outlawed their languages and cultures. The policy of forcibly assimilating these exiled peoples evolved throughout he late 1930s and early 1940s. Initially, the Stalin regime allowed the Soviet Koreans to maintain some of the cultural rights they exercised before the deportation. The Soviet government set up a few Korean language schools in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for the exiles during 1937 and 1938.[158] In 1939, however, the Soviet government changed the language of instruction in these schools to Russian.[159] From 1939 to 1945, Korean was only taught as a second language and after 1945, Soviet schools did not offer Korean language classes at all until 1988.[160] Following the deportations, the only Korean language publication in the USSR was *Lenin Kichi* (Lenin's banner). The Soviet government founded this paper in Alma Ata Kazakhstan on May 15, 1938.[161] All other Korean language periodicals were

abolished with the deportation along with other Korean cultural institutions. *Lenin Kichi* published little in regard to Korean culture. Instead it was devoted primarily to printing Communist Party and Soviet government documents in Korean translation. By 1939, the once thriving Korean literature of the USSR had been reduced to a single newspaper.

The Stalin regime did not allow later deportees even the minimal cultural concessions granted to the exiled Koreans. The Soviet government eliminated all education and publications in the native languages of the Germans, Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Meskhetian Turks, and Kurds from the time of their deportation until after their release from the special settlements. Linguistic Russification of the exiles was official Soviet policy. On June 20, 1944, the SNK passed resolution 13287rs mandating that all Chechen, Ingush, Karachay, Balkar, and Crimean Tatar children receive their primary education in Russian.[162] The children of the North Caucasian and Crimean Tatar special settlers could attend middle and higher education in Kazakh, Uzbek, or Kirghiz as well as Russian, but not in their native languages. The Soviet leadership sought to eliminate the language and culture of the exiled peoples and dissolve them into the larger Russian, Kazakh and Central Asian nationalities.

The success of Soviet efforts to eliminate the languages of the deported peoples varied from group to group. Those ethnic groups which were descended from immigrants to the Russian Empire underwent the most assimilation in exile. The Koreans, Germans, and Greeks underwent considerable linguistic assimilation into Russian as a result of the deportations. In 1926, 98.9 percent of Koreans, 94.9 percent of Germans, and 72.7 percent of Greeks in the USSR spoke their titular language as their native tongue.[163] After being released from special settlements these percentages were significantly smaller. In 1959, 79.3 percent of Soviet Koreans, 75 percent of Soviet Germans, and only 41.5 percent of Soviet Greeks spoke their titular language as their native language.[164] This assimilation continued unabated throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. By 1989, the majority of Soviet Koreans, Germans, and Greeks all spoke Russian as their native language rather than their ancestral tongues. In contrast those nationalities that were indigenous to the areas of the Soviet Union they inhabited proved largely resistant to linguistic Russification. Part of this difference can be explained by the restoration of the national-territories of the North Caucasians and Kalmyks while the Germans, Koreans, and Greeks permanently lost their small national autonomous units. In 1926, 99.3 percent of Kalmyks spoke Kalmyk as their native language.[165] Despite Stalin's attempt to eliminate Kalmyk culture, 91 percent still spoke Kalmyk as a native language in 1959. The Chechens and Ingush maintained their native language to an even greater extent. In 1926, 99.7 percent of Chechens and Ingush spoke their titular language as their native tongue.[166] In 1959, this percentage had only declined to 98.7 percent.[167] The restoration of their national autonomies allowed the Kalmyks and Chechens and Ingush to maintain their languages much better than the Koreans, Germans, and Greeks. In 1979, 91.3 percent of Kalmyks, 98.4 percent of Chechens and Ingush, 55.4 percent of Koreans, 57 percent of Germans, and only

Table 6. Titular language as native language for "Repressed Peoples" (in percent)

Nationality	1926	1959	1979
Koreans	98.9	79.3	55.4
Germans	94.9	75.0	57.7
Kalmyks	99.3	91.0	91.3
Chechens and Ingush	99.7	98.7	98.4
Greeks	72.7	41.5	38.0

38 percent of Greeks spoke their titular languages as their native language[168] (see Table 6). Today, assimilation into Russian culture by the Germans and Greeks is so far advanced that reviving them as viable national minorities in the former Soviet Union appears impossible. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans and Greeks from the former Soviet Union see no future in Russia and other successor states and have emigrated to the lands of their ancestors. Over half the ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union have emigrated to Germany since 1991. Likewise over a quarter of the self-identified Greeks in the former Soviet Union have emigrated to Greece. The remaining German and Greek populations in the former Soviet Union will undoubtedly continue to dwindle from the combined forces of assimilation and emigration. In several generations their numbers in the former USSR will be negligible.

The Soviet archival records clearly show that the Stalin regime targeted the "Repressed People" for destruction on the basis of their ethnicity. The deportation of whole nationalities to areas with deadly living conditions clearly meets the UN definition of genocide. Despite the clear evidence that the Stalin regime committed genocide, there is a strong revisionist movement among scholars in the USA to absolve Stalin and his henchmen of this particular crime. This revisionist school seeks to portray all of Stalin's repression as arbitrary rather than targeted against specific ethnic groups. These revisionists claim that mass murder motivated by ethnicity is worse than other cases of mass murder. They then seek to absolve Stalin of ethnically motivated murder in order portray Hitler's crimes against European Jews as uniquely evil. The most famous and extreme of these revisionists is Deborah Lipstadt. A professor of religion at Emory University, Dr. Lipstadt dismisses the thousands of pages of Soviet archival documents showing that many of Stalin's deportations were based solely upon ethnicity. Instead she claims, "Whereas Stalin's terror was arbitrary, Hitler's was targeted at a particular group."[169] She denies that Stalin targeted the Soviet Koreans, Germans, Karachays, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Pontic Greeks, Meskhetian Turks, and Kurds for repression on the basis of their ethnic identity. She expects her readers to believe that close to 100 percent of the population of 11 recognized nationalities ended up in internal exile by a purely random process of repression which did not consider ethnicity. She offers no counter-argument to the massive documentary evidence that these ethnic groups were targeted for deportation on the basis of their nationality

rather than at random. Instead she merely asserts, "In contrast no citizen of the Soviet Union assumed that deportation and death were inevitable consequences of his or her ethnic origins."[170] The release of thousands of pages of archival material on Stalin's deportations clearly refutes Lipstadt's ideologically driven denial of this genocide. Under the UN Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, the Soviet government committed this crime no less than 11 times between 1937 and 1953. Even the Russian government has admitted this now proven historical fact.

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