Deported Karachays in Kyrgyzstan: The Experience of Integration

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the years 1943–44, which proved to be a turning point for the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War,1 entire peoples of the North Caucasus were forcibly deported to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. It was not a voluntary movement aimed at seeking a better life, but a forced relocation due to the military and political situation at the time. The subjective position of the country’s leadership, headed by Joseph Stalin, also played a role. Karachays2 were among these deported peoples. There were only 26,432 of them in the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).2 They had to undergo a difficult process of adapting to an unfamiliar geographical and social environment. For many of them, Kyrgyzstan became their second homeland. Notwithstanding many humanitarian, economic, political and legal difficulties, a negative, stereotypical view of Karachays as the enemies of the people—which was artificially created—did not prevent them from being accepted by the local community. Among the citizens of the newly independent Kyrgyzstan, there are currently fewer than 2,000 Karachays. They are involved in the formation and development of the country. At the same time, they revere their ancestral homeland just as much as those who are now living in Karachay-Cherkessia.

The need to study the Karachay diaspora of Kyrgyzstan is justified by the fact that local historians have not extensively studied this issue, although there are some isolated studies. Shaiyrkul Batyrbaeva has examined the historical and demographic aspects of the deported peoples of the Caucasus, including Karachays in her works Naseleniye Kyrgyzstana v 20-50-ye gody XX veka (The Population of Kyrgyzstan in the 20-50s of the Twentieth Century, 2003) and Epokha stalinizma v Kyrgyzstane v chelovecheskom izmerenii (The Era of Stalinism in Kyrgyzstan in

1Translator’s note: The “Great Patriotic War” describes the fighting between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (and its allies) along the Eastern Front from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945. The term is used in Russian and some other former Soviet Republics.

This paper is part of Global Voices on Pluralism, a new publication series from the Global Centre for Pluralism. These seven papers were produced in 2016 as a part of History and memory in Kyrgyzstan – toward an inclusive society, a project developed to support local scholars. Each paper explores an aspect of Kyrgyzstan’s history as a diverse society with the aim of generating awareness in Kyrgyzstan about the importance of more inclusive historical narratives as a pathway to pluralism.
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The author notes the inaccessibility of important sources from a wide range of researchers despite the fact that many archival materials were declassified in 1958. Pointing to the existing problems in clarifying the demographic losses during the war years, Batyrbaeva contends that carrying out proper research into the wartime migration processes would reveal the groundlessness of deporting entire peoples. D. Sh. Kyzaeva, T. D. Dotsenko and S. I. Begaliev’s Arkhivnyye dokumenty svidetel’stvuyut (Archival Documents Indicate: Deported Peoples in Kyrgyzstan, 1995) was published within the framework of Transforming Liberal Education, a program supported by the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The book examines the deportation process, and the settlement and the fate of the deported peoples. These and other issues are addressed in Subakun Begaliev and Zholdoshbek Sulaimanov’s Deportirovannyye narody Kavkaza v Kyrgyzstane. Razmyshleniya “po rel’ sam sud’by” (Deported Peoples of the Caucasus in Kyrgyzstan. Reflections on the “Rails of Destiny.” 2012). These works conclude that the true causes of mass deportation should be sought not only in Stalin’s motives and “evil will,” but also in the very essence of the Soviet state’s totalitarian regime. The authors conclude that no regimes, prohibitions or curfews succeeded in creating a barrier between the “ordinary” people of Kyrgyzstan and deportees.

Two monographs by Lidiya Dyachenko, namely Iz istorii deportirovannykh narodov Kavkaza v Kyrgyzstane (From the History of the Peoples of the Caucasus Deported to Kyrgyzstan, 2010) and Deportirovannyye narody na territorii Kyrgyzstana: problemy adaptatsii i reabilitatsii (The Deported Peoples on the Territory of Kyrgyzstan: The Problems of Adaptation and Rehabilitation, 2013), are based on archival and other materials. They examine the purpose of deportation and the processes of relocation, initial adaptation, rehabilitation and returning to one’s own historical homeland. The main mistake of the Soviet Union’s leadership was, as the author notes, the resuscitation of the principles of “mutual guarantee” when an entire ethnic group suffers for the crimes of individual citizens. This led to feelings of ethnic insult, which, in many cases, became one of the most important principles of ethnic identity. According to Dyachenko, communication between deported peoples and ethnically and culturally different populations was established through official state-ideological channels (educational institutions, trade and business activities, power structures, and production). Alim Tetuev, G. D. Dzhunushalieva, and others touch upon the history of deported peoples in some of their articles. (Alim Tetuev (2014), «Karachayevo-balkarskaya diaspora v stranakh Tsentral’noy Azii» (The Karachay-Balkar Diaspora in the Central Asian Countries), Voprosy istorii, no. 11). Archival documents about the placement of these peoples in the country’s districts and provinces, as well as other data, were systematized and published as a collection by V. M. Ploskikh and M. K. Imakeeva: Deportirovannyye narody Kavkaza v Kyrgyzstane (Deported peoples of the Caucasus in Kyrgyzstan, 2010).

As we can see, the number of scientific publications that detail the deported Caucasians’ fate has increased considerably in post-Soviet years. Journalistic and popular works appealing to a wide range of readers began to be published in the late 1980s. However, these scientific studies mention the history of Karachays in Kyrgyzstan only in passing and provide a fragmented account of the issue. Meanwhile, the daily life and integration experience of deportees and their descendants with other nations, as well as civil society in general, are waiting for their researchers and experts.
The appearance of deported peoples in Kyrgyzstan has changed the local ethnic and cultural mosaic. To what extent were the authorities and society ready to take real steps towards the integration of new minorities? What was the trajectory of life for the first spetspereselentsy9 (“special settlers”) and their children, and those who continue to be citizens of Kyrgyzstan? Can we say that they have integrated into the socio-economic, political and cultural life of the republic and do not feel excluded? For us, for government agencies and for the general public, it is important to get answers to such questions. This might help preserve the historical and social memory of the people, both the local population and those that were deported, among other things. In general, we believe that Karachays have managed to integrate successfully into Kyrgyzstani society thanks to their hard work and positive qualities that include tolerance, openness and friendliness towards the population of Kyrgyzstan.8

II. METHODOLOGY, SOURCES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I used both stationary (a longer stay) and moving methods (short stays) of ethnographic field work in places with significant Karachay communities (the villages of Sadovoye, Malovodnoye, Nijne-Chuiskoye, Orlovka and Budyonovka, as well as the cities of Bishkek and Kant). I held long conversations with the older and younger generations, and interviewed a number of employees and volunteers of the Ata-Jurt International Association of Karachays. I interviewed 28 people of different ages, sex and social status. Nine were born before the resettlement; three are public figures or deputies of local councils; seven are farmers; five are culture and education workers; and four are village council and cooperative workers. I did my best to establish trust in the process of my field research in order to get as much information as possible. While conducting the interviews and analyzing the materials, I tried to be neutral in order not to compromise the study’s results. Applying the methods of oral history and observations served as an important methodological basis for studying the issue. Finding archival documents at the Central State Archive of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Central State Archive of Political Documentation of the Kyrgyz Republic was an important part of this study. Various materials, including those published in newspapers, magazines, and news agency websites, served as valuable sources. From a theoretical point of view, it is interesting to trace the process of including parts in a single whole. Karachay society, which is characterized by a relatively stable preservation of folk traditions, stands out due to the predominance of collective consciousness. As described by Emil Durkheim, a separate individual is dependent on society, and consider themselves to be an organ of an organism.9 The perception and acceptance of a society’s norms and rules by people who want to integrate—the approach proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein—plays an important role in this study.10 These provisions can facilitate the analysis of the process of integrating deported Karachays into local life. While analyzing this research topic, it is difficult to do so without the problem of the diaspora and its prospects. Here we can apply the theoretical developments of William Safran, Valeriy Tishkov, and other scholars.11

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9 Translator’s note: people who had been declared state enemies and forcibly deported within the Soviet Union became known as spetspereselentsy, which means “special settlers.” They usually had a special stamp on their passports.
III. THE DIASPORA'S ETHNIC IDENTITY

During the last years of perestroika, there was increased interest in the historical past throughout the Soviet Union. Many scholars began to study the problems of the ethnic, historical and cultural past of their people. People wanted to learn more about their genealogical roots. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of publications appeared on the peoples of the North Caucasus who had been deported to Kyrgyzstan during the Great Patriotic War.

Journalistic materials that were published in the Literaturnyy Kirgizstan journal, and newspaper articles in general, had a noticeable impact on Karachay national consciousness. Appealing to the collective memory of the past, associated with difficulties and hardships during the forced eviction and settlement in a new environment, was an important factor in the development of a sense of unity among Karachays. There was an emphasis on the deportee’s character strength, diligence, tolerance and other positive qualities that contributed to their engagement in the socio-political life of Kyrgyzstan, which has become their second home. Naturally, not all Karachays read articles about the recent past of their people, but communication with elderly members and local leaders of the diaspora contributed to the formation of a certain understanding of their compatriots’ past. Notable people who represented the Karachay diaspora’s elite mentioned such publications. These include, in particular, public figures and scientists B. Gogaev, B. Kubaev, A. Botashov, Z. Kh. M Shidakova and others who talked about this at various social events and Karachay rituals. Some examples from their past life that characterize friendly inter-ethnic relations are also reflected in various articles and the remarks of representatives of other ethnic groups.

The emergence of various organizations and movements during the perestroika years to support compatriots abroad and their activities (with the aim of preserving and developing national languages, traditions, and customs) had a significant impact on the growth of ethnic identity in diaspora communities. In this regard, we need to agree with Ayhan Kaya’s statement that culture is not just a legacy, but also a political strategy. For example, in the late 1980s, an American Karachay charitable organization was created in the United States with the purpose of preserving and developing their culture under the conditions of integrating into American society.

Some organizations actively supported their compatriots who wished to return to their historical homeland. For example, the issue of repatriation was raised during meetings of the Adyga Khase organization and at the Congress of the Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus in October 1990, which was held in Sukhumi, Georgia. In these meetings, it was noted that: “In the case of the deported peoples of the North Caucasus, the elites raised the issue of politically rehabilitating them with the highest state authorities of the country.”

Well-known Russian scholar Valery Tishkov has pointed out that the Circassian (a Northwest Caucasian ethnic group) diaspora has not been extensively studied which, from a methodological point of view, is relevant to our topic. He writes: “... but there is reason to believe that in some countries this group of settlers [Circassians] were aware of their status and behaved like a diaspora: they had associations, political unions, publications, shared a feeling of solidarity, and undertook efforts aimed at conserving their culture and language.”

Can we consider the Karachay community in Kyrgyzstan as a real diaspora? How do they perceive their historical homeland? I think that the answer to these questions can help us understand the extent to
which Karachays have been integrated into Kyrgyz society and how they associate themselves with their historical homeland. Obviously, for the older generations who experienced the forced evictions firsthand and their descendants who grew up in the North Caucasus, the region always remained holy. The vast majority of them could not help but feel emotional closeness to their ancestral homeland whenever this topic was brought up or think about its virtues. They truly longed for the mountains, rivers, and valleys where they had previously lived and worked. Such a state of mind arose due to historical memory, the preservation and honouring of ancestors’ traditions, and centuries-old social values of the people. D. Rakhaev writes:

> Ethnic consciousness of the peoples of the North Caucasus is focused around symbols that are vital to them. The most important of these is a special, sacral attitude to traditional homeland. The reduction of homeland and especially the expulsion from it gave rise to a ‘cultural trauma.’ Accordingly, in the ethnic consciousness of Karachays and Balkars the forced mass migration to Central Asia has remained a tragic event, an attempt to completely annihilate them.\(^{17}\)

I would like to note that in the history of the Kyrgyz people there were some events that resulted in forced migration and left a psychological imprint that traumatized the Kyrgyz consciousness. This applies particularly to the Pamir Kyrgyz in Turkey. Local narratives have become a constant part of their identity, as Cholpon Turdalieva and Aizhamal Marat argue in «Diaspora pamirskikh kyrgyzov v Turtsii» (2015).\(^{18}\) The region’s history includes the Kyrgyz being forced to leave their homeland at the beginning of the 20th century. This applies both to the flight of the Kyrgyz to China following the uprising of 1916 (which became known as urkun) as well as the period of collectivization. In the first case, people saved themselves from the punitive actions of the tsarist regime; in the second, some did not want to endure the young Soviet state’s repressive policies, especially its policies on expropriating the means of production.

The Karachays exiled to Central Asia and Kazakhstan did not cross a state border—they simply moved within one country. Such migration is defined as inner migration not only legally and politically, but it was perceived as such psychologically.\(^{19}\) In Soviet times, the historical homeland was not subject to a policy whereby natives of the Caucasus republics supported those who had been accepted in other places. This did not become necessary either. Therefore, until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Karachay community felt that they were citizens of the same country as the residents of their historical homeland. For them, close relatives living in Kyrgyzstan and those in the Caucasus had the same civic identity. All of them were citizens of the USSR, despite the existence of Soviet and autonomous republics. Kyrgyzstani Karachays continued to be included in the socio-cultural and political life of the country. The transformation of Karachays into integral members of Kyrgyzstani society took place in an organic manner. The factor of being related to the Soviet political system played its role here. Under the conditions of state paternalism, citizens across the country—regardless of where they were—were not particularly worried about the future. However, some of the “special settlers” missed the places where they had been born and raised. During Nikita Khrushchev’s time in office, on 9 January 1957, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a resolution on the restoration of the Karachay-Cherkessia Autonomous Region. The return of administrative and political status, and permission to return to homeland, sharply increased the flow of returnees. As a whole, 35,790 exiled settlers from the North Caucasus left Kyrgyzstan.\(^{20}\) Nevertheless, they, like the local population, were members of the same state.

A different picture began to take shape as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Newly independent states emerged on the basis of the former Soviet republics. In many cases, crossing the borders...
of these countries freely as before was no longer possible. Nobody had imagined being able to enter a neighbouring republic’s territory only after the fulfillment of certain bureaucratic procedures, let alone more thorough customs inspections. Citizens of one large country had become foreigners towards each other. Thus, with changing boundaries, many ethnic groups ended up away from their historical homeland. This factor played a decisive role in the popularization of the term diaspora. The selection of the country of origin as homeland was influenced to some extent by the policies of individual states that were aimed at promoting repatriation to facilitate a smoother process of registration and to create an opportunity for settlement. For example, speaking at the Third World Congress of Compatriots that was organized by the Integration of Compatriots’ international information forum in 2009, then-president of Russia Dmitri Medvedev said: “We are not chasing numbers. Much more important is the confidence of all those who have ended up outside of Russia in the fact that they may return to their homeland and the state will support them.”

Karachays who were deported to Kyrgyzstan and their children who remained in the country have become an integral part of a multicultural society. A certain detachment associated with ethnic identity and culture does not prevent them from being included in the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the country. As a result of a close exchange that has been going on for many decades, a diverse livelihood has become a reality for them. Karachays borrowed from the Kyrgyz, Russians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Dungans some advanced methods of farming. In turn, deported Karachays introduced rational and effective methods in the field of animal husbandry. This experience has been useful to the local population.

It is important to note that the Karachay diaspora already has extensive experience of interaction and cooperation in Kyrgyzstan’s multicultural environment. Karachays, whose mother tongue belongs to the Turkic-Altaic family, have quite successfully managed to integrate not only with the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, but also with Russians, Ukrainians and Dungans, whose languages are very different. The Kyrgyz were happy to communicate with them in their own language, sometimes trying to remember words and expressions denoting certain things and actions. An example is the term ана сүтү (mother’s milk), which is associated with wedding ceremonies. In Kyrgyz, it is called эне сүтү. Still, the Russian language, which was used by peoples of the former Soviet Union to speak and write, also played an important role in the establishment and expansion of inter-ethnic relations.

Karachays have a memory or, as William Safran calls it, a myth about the “original homeland” which has persisted through oral stories and visual aids. A large part of the younger generation also have this memory, despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan has become a true homeland for them and they were born, grew up and received their education here. Today’s young people and school-age children are aware of the land of their ancestors through rare visits to the North Caucasus, books, photos and videos, oral histories, and imaginations on the basis of the information they have received. The transmission of national culture, the passing of information about the homeland to younger generations and the preservation of the language are, among other things, one of the basic factors in consolidating ethnic identity and the formation of a sense of identity with one’s homeland. It is difficult to say whether there are examples of—in the words of Valery Tishkov—“the usurpation of identity.” However, in my opinion, under the domination of collective consciousness in a homogeneous micro-environment, the inheritance of ethnic identity takes place without any fluctuations. However, at the same time, for families that have arisen as a result of inter-ethnic marriages, this issue comes to the fore and sometimes causes a certain ethno-psychological fluctuation. I have not come across cases related to a change of identity depending on the situation in order
to gain something. The vision of the homeland as a place of imminent return was widespread among an absolute majority of Karachays who had been deported during the 1940s and 1950s. As I was told, there was not a single Karachay who did not utter the words: “I know that we’ll be back.” However, when the chance to legally return to the historical homeland presented itself, some of the deportees decided to stay in their new homeland. By this time they had successfully adapted to the circumstances of the host country. While some of these people did not want to start all over again and experience the difficulties once again in their historical homeland, others did not want to leave the graves of their ancestors, as entrusted by their ancestors. Considering the convenience of family life as a decisive factor, I do not wish to belittle the importance of a sense of attachment to the local people, natural and geographical environment, as well as the organizations and businesses where they have worked. They came to regard their surroundings as their own and identify themselves as full-fledged members of society, not as “enemies of the people.” At the time, some of the displaced people made a very difficult, but—in their own opinion—the right decision to stay in Kyrgyzstan and chose it as a place of residence for the family. There were a lot of influential people who had won the respect of their relatives. The decision to stay in the host country should be regarded as a rather bold move, as, under the domination of a community consciousness, it was not easy to go against the majority. Empirical data show that Karachays did not feel rejected by the new country. Except in rare cases, they did not feel alienated.

Thus, the conditional triangle of diaspora-homeland-host country in the context of our topic became a reality only after the Soviet Union collapsed. The Karachays have a stable relationship with each other thanks to the efforts of political institutions and diaspora leaders. However, in order to learn more about the ethnic minority at hand, we should look into their past.

IV. DEPORTATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF IMMIGRANTS: HISTORY AND MEMORY

Karachays are one of the representatives of North Caucasian peoples living in the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan. They ended up here as a result of forced resettlements during the Great Patriotic War. Karachays were forced to comply with the decision taken on 4 October 1943 by the Council of People’s Commissars on the administrative and political system, and the forced resettlement of local populations to other Soviet Union republics. Their autonomous entities were liquidated, split apart and transferred to the neighbouring republics and regions.

The memories of the older generation of deportees are quite interesting: what they felt and saw; and what was happening in their small homeland when they were embarking on a long journey against their will. In the words of I. Kochkarov, this condition was imprinted on their minds as follows: “... at the time of the deportation, dogs were howling, horses were neighing, and the clouds were thickening over Karachays. It seemed heavenly forces would not allow this unheard-of violence and arbitrariness to happen. But madness prevailed... Even the mountains, for the first time in their history, lowered their heads, too embarrassed to show the tears rolling down their gray hair.” In the minds of the deportees, the day of expulsion when people had to be ready to leave while being supervised, and within a short period of time, probably remained one of the hardest and, at the same time, most vivid memories. Oral eyewitness accounts of what happened around that day were handed down to their children and grandchildren. In the minds of the carriers of such information, nature itself and their animals were disappointed in this unfair decision and were genuinely worried about the original inhabitants.
of the Upper and Lower Teberda, Uch Kulan and other areas of Karachay-Cherkessia.

The loss of loved ones on the road and during the initial stages of adapting to a new geographical and social environment had a negative impact on their psychological state. They felt humiliated and insulted when people talked about them as enemies of the people because everyone knew that Karachays fought on various fronts against the Nazis along with other peoples of the USSR. As Aleksandr Shepelenko states: During the Great Patriotic War, more than 20,000 Karachays were sent to the war front. Fifteen thousand of them were awarded with military decorations and 35 soldiers were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Women and children worked hard on the home front. From 1941 to 1943, residents of Karachay-Cherkessia handed over 52 million rubles to the defense fund.\(^{27}\)

It’s worth noting that following the “deportation the media were banned from mentioning war feats of the representatives of the deported peoples on various fronts.”\(^{28}\)

At the same time, there were some Karachays who conspired with the enemy. These people were condemned. Among those who colluded with the occupiers, there were also some Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Latvians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, natives of Central Asia and others. During the Second World War, nearly 1.2 million Soviet citizens served in the military and support structures of Nazi Germany. According to German sources, 270 Karachays were among them.\(^{29}\)

The Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR adopted a resolution to provide deportees with the opportunity to build adobe houses in 1943–44 using local materials and occupy existing buildings that were either empty or in need of repair. According to the document, the Selkhozbank had to extend credit of up to a maximum of 5,000 rubles per family of deportees for up to seven years.\(^{30}\) The Kyrgyz SSR and the Central Committee of the Communistic Party adopted a decree “On the resettlement of special deportees in the districts of Frunze Province.” It contained a plan to resettle the deportees on collective and state farms in Frunze Province, and orders for the central, provincial, and district authorities to carry out an array of organizational measures for the adoption and settlement of deportees and creating acceptable living conditions for them. Trios of executive committee chairs, heads of the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) and first secretaries of district party committees were entrusted with preparing buildings, procuring fuel for 15 days, and mobilizing horse carriages to take the deportees to their final location. The Council of People’s Commissars had to organize medical stations where the deportees would get off. The local consumers’ associations had to provide the deportees with tea upon their arrival.\(^{31}\)

The placement of deportees was a big problem, as there was not enough housing. Of the 1,445 deported families in Stalin District, only 171 had been provided with housing by the end of 1944. The rest lived in the houses of local farmers and in public buildings (sheds, barns, brigade bases, etc.) belonging to farms. Many families continued to live in tents.\(^{32}\) Among other things, cold weather and unsanitary conditions led to disease.

State and regional authorities adopted resolutions that dealt with assisting deportees with their households, the allocation of land for construction of houses and gardens, the purchase and construction of housing, the provision of food rations, the distribution of livestock, and the provision of fuel and fodder. This suggests that the Kyrgyz SSR carried out a government policy of helping the deportees in their adaptation to the new environment. However, these orders were not always clearly and consistently implemented. Sometimes the funds intended for the daily expenses of the deportees were used for other purposes. Cases of misuse of
resources were detected during inspections and reported to relevant higher authorities of the Kyrgyz SSR. Despite the measures taken to eliminate such negative phenomena, the authorities’ efforts were not always effective. By November 1944, in Stalin District, only 103 houses had been bought for 466,000 rubles. The average cost of a house was 4,525 rubles. The deportees received 107 abandoned houses, 39 of which were unfit for habitation. There were cases of squandering and misappropriating food rations. For example, the chair of the Red October kolkhoz Liventsov failed to provide the deportees with 1,085 kg of grain and freely left the territory of the Kyrgyz SSR. According to the Special Commandants’ Office of Stalin District, there were 1,400 deported families in the district. Livestock was provided to 1,018 families as part of the support program. By this time there was no livestock left for 300–400 families.

In a 30 January 1945 memorandum addressed to the secretary of the Frunze Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan B. Mambetov, it was stated that providing deportees with livelihoods and a place to live was being implemented poorly. It was noted that some of the settlers wanted to leave and thus, did not want to fully engage in the local economy.

The Karachays who settled in the Talas Valley fared no better than their counterparts in Frunze Province. Archival materials indicate poor housing and living conditions as well high levels of crowding. The district executive committee, the district health branch, and the NKVD were not ready to accept the deportees or to mobilize all forces to eliminate epidemic diseases. Such a fate befell the other deported peoples of the North Caucasus as well. In a 13 June 1944 memorandum on providing deportees with jobs addressed to the authorized secretary of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan A. Vagov, it was noted that serious violations were observed during the distribution of special funds in the Talas Valley. The memorandum also provided concrete examples.

At the same time, the memorandum’s author wrote about good leaders of collective farms that had taken exceptional measures to provide deportees with jobs. Inspections of these kolkhozes concluded that: “all of the deportees were provided with free housing and gardens which were being handled well; kindergartens were organized in places that received the special settlers; the deportees received foodstuffs; and, except for the sick, all of the special settlers...were working in kolkhozes on par with local farmers.”

A special report by the People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz SSR to the chairman of the People’s Commissars of the Kirghiz SSR T. Kulatov detailed the results of inspections on providing the settlers with jobs and houses. The report included several examples of misuse. The director of the Vasilyev sovkhoz in Frunze Province used the 45 m³ of wood that was allocated to the needs of the special settlers for the needs of the kolkhoz. Director of Plant No. 60 Tarasenko transferred all the wood that was intended for the settlers’ construction needs from the sovkhoz warehouse to the plant. In another example, director of Kirgosstroy Bezel used 97 m³ of the wood he received to build a special settlement for the deportees to instead construct a stadium, a teahouse, and a state circus in Frunze.

Funds were often diverted to repairing public buildings, and social and domestic facilities. It should be noted that the improper use of the financial and material resources took place regardless of how the deportees were treated.

It should also be noted that there were cases of unfair treatment of the special settlers working in the fields by farm managers and local authorities. For example, the chair of the collective farm Yaroslavl in Panfilov District did not provide the deportees with carts so that they could transport flour to their houses. He also did not provide the settlers who were working in the fields with hot meals. However, he did provide the Russians working in the same fields with meals. The
management of the Kurpuldek kolkhoz evicted the deportees from the homes of collective farmers. They provided the Kyrgyz with milk, but not the settlers.\textsuperscript{39}

The Stalin District executive committee did not rationally allocate plots to special settlers. The plots that were given to people from the Caucasus were located in fields where it was impossible to build individual houses. Most owners of such plots could not utilize them because they could not do it on their own and the collective farms did not assist them with plowing. In addition, many of the farmers who ended up in a new place were ill. Disabled Second World War veteran Ilyasov could not get a pension despite his repeated appeals to the district social security department. The head of this state institution clearly overestimated his powers and decided not to provide pensions to disabled Second World War veterans among the deportees who came to the country before 1944.\textsuperscript{40}

As we can see, in some places, the decisions of authorities were not implemented and sometimes were simply ignored. As a result, the double-standard approach infringed upon deportee rights. Such treatment was painful for the deportees. Many believed that the authorities let such things happen because of the ethnic affiliation of deportees accused of betraying the interests of the state. The policy of double standards was probably the barrier that made the integration of Karachays difficult during the war years, and they continued to feel like second-class citizens of the Soviet Union.

Mass migration to a “foreign land” led to a loss of human resources. Many people died on the road while being transported in freight trains, and not only from hunger. According to several sources, the changes in climate and the Karachays inability to quickly adapt to new climatic conditions were the main causes of death. The temperature drop led to large outbreaks of disease.\textsuperscript{41} At the time, the locals were suffering from food shortages. However, they often shared their bread, milk, and other products with the deportees. In Kyrgyzstani families that received Karachay families, taking good care of the deportees became the norm. For instance, in the Put’ Kommunizma kolkhoz, the family of Tilmek Semenov from Upper Teberda was placed in the care of Zakhar Mitin’s family. The Mitins had a single cow. The owner’s wife distributed the cow’s milk equally, including among members of the resettled family. In turn, the deportee family helped with household chores. Tamara Tebueva, a 76-year-old from Sokuluk District, recalled, in 2016, good memories of an elderly Kyrgyz woman who always gave her treats when she was a child. The families of Zhamankul, Orusbiy and Amankul, who resided in Sokuluk District’s Malovodnoe village, were not indifferent to the fate of the deportees from the North Caucasus, and tried to share everything with them, including their grain and food, despite the fact that they themselves were in a difficult situation.

According to various sources, local Kyrgyz were generous with their hospitality. The same can be said about Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and other nationalities that have lived in Kyrgyzstan for a relatively long time. Abdish Kubadaev recalls that, as a child during the war, he and his family were hungry. But, in spite of the widespread hunger, the Kyrgyz accepted the Balkars and Karachays who had been deported to the country. They became very close friends. There were no cases when someone pointed out the ethnicity of the other person, insulting his or her feelings.\textsuperscript{42}

\section*{V. CHALLENGES OF ADAPTING TO LOCAL CONDITIONS}

The Karachays who were deported to Kyrgyzstan in 1943 had to undergo a difficult process of adapting to
an unfamiliar geographical and social environment. Adapting to this new environment was complicated by economic and political-legal factors. The image of Karachays as “enemies of the people,” which emerged before their relocation, had its impact on their morale as well as on their relations with public authorities and the local population.

Author Mudur Usmanov wrote of this issue: “Initially, not everyone was happy with the arrival of the special settlers. Local people, especially the rural intelligentsia cautiously and carefully avoided [the deportees]. They avoided making contact with the [settlers].”43 Some of the special settlers who had experienced trauma due to being forcibly deported took the perceived negative attitude towards them close to heart. Such an attitude was engraved in the memory of another person. A newspaper article reads: “...some people looked down, physically and mentally oppressed and insulted me along with the other deportees.”44

However, feelings of alertness fairly quickly gave way to feelings of friendliness and hospitality. The artificially created negative image and stereotypes did not become a serious barrier to the Kyrgyz and other peoples living in the Kyrgyz SSR who approached the deportees with goodwill and hospitality. There were cases when there were Caucasians (Karachays, in particular) among the children of local families. These people remember with gratitude those who took care of them during the most difficult years in the life of the deportees.45 In turn, Karachays sought to establish warm relations with the local population, and contributed to the development of the local economy and culture.

The sympathy of locals played a significant role in facilitating the deportees’ adaptation to the new conditions. Their sympathy was not limited to only external manifestations of good will. They were also very friendly to the settlers and supported them during serious trials of life. This is evidenced by numerous examples. Many people shared their food that was not enough even for themselves. They also provided the deportees with second-hand clothes, fresh bread and potatoes. A local woman named Mrs. Chernogolova once left a pile of clothes at the doorstep of a Karachay family. She did it secretly in order to avoid offending them.46

Despite the fact that in some cases close relatives boarded different cars and convoys, and ended up in different districts, they still managed to settle compactly, which corresponded to the centuries-old traditions of their ancestors. They followed the principle of settling near fraternal close relatives, which was typical for Greater Karachay during the later 19th and early 20th centuries.47 This type of settlement was called tiyre. For the Karachay diaspora, this type of settlement was probably very significant, especially while adapting to the conditions of the new location during the difficult war and postwar years.

The process of adapting to new conditions took place faster in rural areas than in industrial facility construction zones. This was largely due to economic and cultural traditions, and the deportees’ social organization.48 Similar to other deported peoples of the North Caucasus, Karachays felt more comfortable when they were together as a community. This factor had a positive impact not only on their mood, but also on their productivity. Descendants of one and the same branch and those who resided in the same place were all part of one social community, and were able to maintain close economic ties. They shared their tools, sources of power and utensils, and helped each other while doing labour-intensive work. During the year-round production cycle of farmers and seasonal workers in the fields of agriculture and horticulture, they frequently used a form of collective work called kosh nyojerlik where all members of the group had the same rights and obligations. It was adapted to working away from their historic homeland, and to the framework of collective and state farms.
The skills and knowledge that they applied in practice should be regarded as an important tool that improved their social status and facilitated their relatively rapid integration into the new society. Blacksmiths, carpenters, teachers, doctors, and traditional healers among Karachays held the same high social status as their local counterparts. Professor Orozbek Sagynbaev, who grew up in the village of Kosh-Dobo side by side with the children of Karachay immigrants, and who mastered their language, warmly recalled Tekeev Padcha, a surgeon who was adored by all of his patients. The author always remembered the surgeon’s adept hands. This was largely due to his own experience: the surgeon had treated his broken ribs. In another example, according to Ramazan Uzdenov, an engineer born in 1933 and living in the village of Sadavoye, his father worked as a carpenter on a collective farm repairing carriages, and making cradles and shelves every day. In addition, he was known as an experienced traumatologist who helped people with bone fractures and dislocations. All the locals used his services. They traveled to his distant corral whenever he relocated there.

While noting that high mortality rates led to a massive loss of life among special settlers, Subakun Begaliev pointed out that Karachays, along with Balkars and Turks, fared better in this regard compared to Chechens and the Ingush. This is despite the fact that all of the deportees were treated equally. Begaliev posits that language played possibly the largest role here. “Karachay… is close to the Kyrgyz language. Therefore, this factor alone—a common language—promoted closer contact with the local population. And they handled deportation better… A Karachay or a Balkar could share his grief, as they could make themselves understood. They saw that they were understood and received sympathy. It gave some relief, and moral and spiritual support gave them a chance for optimism and survival.” At the same time, those who did not speak the Russian language experienced difficulty in areas where they had to live and work with Slavic peoples, in particular, with Russians, Ukrainians and others. The language barrier had an impact on their psychological state.

The Islamic faith was another mitigating factor that positively influenced the process of adapting to the new environment. The Kyrgyz, after making sure that the deported people from the North Caucasus considered themselves to be Muslims, and that many regularly observed the laws of Islam, became more tolerant and helpful, and demonstrated solidarity. Idris, a Karachai councillor of the Kyzyl-Tuu Village Council, mentioned this in particular. According to him, the Kyrgyz people saw how the deportees were using water pitchers for washing and praying five times a day, and, as a result, became even closer to them.

An effective way to quickly adapt was total immersion in the activities of production firms. Thus, many forgot—at least during working hours—about the unpleasant memories that were hard to get off the mind. Many deported Karachays took their duties at work very seriously. As a result, because of their hard work, they were often able to do more than what was required. It is worth noting that even those who were not familiar with their jobs were able to accomplish this. This applies particularly to mining as well as the cultivation and harvesting of certain crops in the agricultural sector. Breeders, who knew the technology of breeding horses, sheep and cattle, also excelled at their jobs. First, such people successfully adapted to a “foreign” environment in a relatively short period of time. Second, they achieved a high social status in society. Finally, they earned more than others, and it made supporting their families easier in the difficult conditions of the war and postwar years. Thanks to their work, they gradually earned the respect of neighbours, villagers, and colleagues. For their high job performance they were awarded with valuable gifts. The most active of them received state awards, including orders and medals.

After the relocation, well-preserved traditions dealing
with running the family helped the deportees survive. I am referring to female crafts. According to the stories of my interviewees, there was not a single Karachay woman who did not know how to knit. At the time of the eviction, many women had the presence of mind to pack some wool. After they had used it, they acquired new raw materials in their new settlements. They exchanged the warm clothes, socks, and other things that they knit for food. As acknowledged by some sources, knitting literally saved many families from hunger. With the help of these crafts and their skills they naturally came into contact with many locals. They met the local population, learning about each other’s lives and customs.

In a certain sense, the Karachays who were deported to the Talas Valley were in an especially difficult position. Under conditions of limited movement, it was not easy for them to go to the Chui Valley and maintain regular contact with other Karachays. In addition, the relative remoteness, mountains, and weak transport links significantly limited the abilities of the entire population, not just the deported.

The Talas Valley, which was the scene of many important historical events that took place in ancient, medieval, and modern times as well as in the middle of the 20th century, became very multicultural and was inhabited by the Kyrgyz, Russians, Germans, Karachays, Turks and others. The local features of ethno-cultural interaction in Talas could be considered the main cause of the relatively high degree of assimilation with the local population. This manifests itself in social relations and cultural events.

Central and national authorities did not fail to engage the school children among the deported peoples in the educational process. According to Order No. 13287-ps of the People’s Commissars of the USSR, the children of Chechens, the Ingush, Karachays, Balkars, and Crimean Tatars resettled in the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek SSRs had to be educated in Russian in the communities’ existing primary schools. A registration of homeless and neglected children of the special settlers was conducted across the republic. They were placed in children’s homes and foster families. Some of them remained in collective farms under the supervision of special commandants as well as in NKVD labour and corrective camps.

School-age children and students who studied with people from different cultures discovered new things for themselves. However, the process of involving Karachay children—just like the children of other exiled peoples—was not without issues. Many children were not drawn to study in schools for various reasons, among which were objective reasons such as illness and lack of clothing. Archival documents indicate the lack of willingness of individual parents to educate their children. The decision of the Bureau of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan “On the work among the special settlers,” stated: “Religious fanaticism and feudal-tribal remnants manifested themselves in the fact that many parents of special settlers do not let their children go to school, especially girls; prevent the youth of special settlers from communicating with Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek youths; and prevent them from attending cultural and educational institutions.”

In contrast with children who did not attend school, those who did formed a better worldview and sought to discover new things with the help of their teachers. In the course of the educational process, they mastered, among other things, the history and culture of the region where they were now living and developed positive personal qualities. Getting to know other cultures contributed to the formation of tolerance and respect for diversity among Karachay children and facilitated their relatively quick integration into multinational production teams. In this context, Marina Martynova writes: “During the long years of living in a single state and ethno-cultural space, the inhabitants of the country developed many common traits and behaviors... By living together, representatives of different nations become more and more similar to each other. And sometimes it is more productive not to emphasize cultural differences and to move...
towards recognizing the similarity of many features of everyday life."

VI. THE KARACHAYS’ INTEGRATION EXPERIENCE INTO KYRGYZSTANI SOCIETY

In 1957, deported peoples were officially allowed to return to their historical homeland. An overwhelming majority of Karachays took advantage of this opportunity. However, those who had successfully integrated stayed in Kyrgyzstan. Among them were those who had relatives buried here, as Caucasians honour the graves of their relatives. They continued to live and work on collective farms, in industrial enterprises and the service sector, and in educational institutions. Those who connected the future life strategy of their families with Kyrgyzstan did not often look to the North Caucasus. This was the case among an absolute majority of those who had been deported during the first 10 to 15 years. They were eager to educate their children in schools. Many high school graduates enrolled in local secondary special and higher educational institutions as well as universities and institutions in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities of the former Soviet Union. The number of Karachays living in Frunze and other urban settlements gradually increased.

The process of integration into the local system was very different for Karachays who did not leave Kyrgyzstan in the second half of the 1950s. After the bulk of the exiles had left for their historical homeland, the remaining Karachays had to strengthen and expand social relations with the local population. They had already established good personal contacts with neighbours and fellow villagers. Through hard work, professionalism, and positive human qualities, such as tolerance, sympathy, and good nature, many deportees gained authority in production teams. All this served as a contribution of Karachays to noticeable qualitative improvements in employability. This, in turn, improved their social status in Kyrgyz society.

The Karachays who were scattered around the country were incorporated into individual local Kyrgyz clans. To avoid being left out of the affairs of the local community, they maintained social relationships with neighbours who became like kin to them. For example, in the village of Kyrk-Kazyk of Talas District, Karachay families began to consider themselves as members of a Kyrgyz clan. Today, they are actively involved in various ceremonies and celebrations as well as mourning rituals, gift exchanges, and contribute a fixed amount in the framework of a collective mutual aid strategy. In turn, they receive gifts and assistance. The children of these families do not have a problem with civic identity. They are not faced with a puzzling dichotomy of choice. Obviously, they have been undergoing the process of assimilation naturally. Perhaps the specificity of cultural assimilation is related to the nature of the settlement where dispersed families have no choice but to take part in the social life of local communities.

Each member of the Karachay community feels protected by relatives. This is an indication that blood patronage is an important value for them. Yusuf, a disabled veteran of the Great Patriotic War who married a Kyrgyz woman, stayed and continued to live in the village of Udarnik even after almost all of his relatives left for Teberda. Members of his tribe who lived in other towns often visited him. The purpose of such visits was to greet Yusuf’s family and help them with household chores. Yusuf’s daughter Fatima Bairamkulova told me in 2016 that young people from Jany-Jer, Chui Province, visited them quite often. They helped carry the water, care for livestock, chopped wood, and did other chores. Not fully understanding the nature of the visits, Fatima used to ask the men why they were there and whether they had a place to
live. As an adult, she realized that these men had been sent by her grandmother Taumaral to assist Yusuf who was now living with his own family away from a large community of Karachays. Here we see the solidarity that emerged because of the development of an older generation’s collective consciousness. They were well aware of the importance of moral and psychological support during such periods of need.

The deportees were urged to stay to live and work in Kyrgyzstan even before the mid-1950s. A memorandum from the chief of the Interior Ministry in Frunze Province to the Frunze Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan on the special settlers’ reaction to the cancellation of some of the limitations on their activities, noted that: “Aliev Umar, a Karachay special settler and a resident of the city of Frunze, a member of the CPSU, associate professor of the Kyrgyz State University, said in a public gathering that a deregistered special settler, Kubanov, left the country for the Caucasus where he intended to stay for permanent residence. However, after seeing the Caucasus not only did he not stay, but he also brought to Kyrgyzstan his brother on the grounds that living in Kyrgyzstan is much better economically than in the Caucasus.” Aliev further stated that, “special settlers in Kyrgyzstan economically fare far better than in the Caucasus, but the bad thing is that our Karachay nationality has no right to exist as a nation.” In the context of this material, it should be noted that some people still regret the decision to leave the country.

The Karachay community produced some bright personalities, and heads of households and businesses. The life path of these people clearly indicates that they, as well as their relatives and friends, made the right decision at the time to stay in Kyrgyzstan. They demonstrated their ability and willingness to make a worthy contribution to the development of the economy, culture, and science of the republic. A number of factors brought them widespread recognition at the local and national levels. These factors include education, professional attitudes toward their duties, tolerance, and the ability to successfully engage in the life of communities. Another important factor was respecting the traditions of the receiving country. Since moving to Kyrgyzstan, Karachays have provided the country with skilled middle- and senior-level managers in the collective and state farms, factories, as well as competent people’s deputies (from the local level up to the Supreme Council) who are actively working as civil servants. Respected business executives, scientists, and politicians—many regarded as essentially public figures —became part of the country’s heritage. These include, in particular: B. Kh. Gogaev, a political and public figure; A. Botashov, an outstanding mathematician who was elected a corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic; B. Kh. Kubaev, a famous scientist and educator who made a solid contribution to the development of higher education in the country; M. Karakotov, head of a prosperous farm breeding sports horses; K. Karakotov, the president of the Kyrgyz Union of Beekeepers; Z. Kh-M. Shidakov, president of the Ata-Jurt International Association; E. Kochkarov, an ex-deputy of the parliament; T. Semyonov and A. Solpagarov, livestock producers who have introduced best practices; and many others.

At the same time, it should be noted that Karachays who continued to live in Kyrgyzstan never forgot their homeland and still maintain ties with it. Karachay citizens of the country traveled to the North Caucasus and visited relatives on the occasion of family celebrations and rituals. There were cases when they traveled there during holidays. As acknowledged by some of my interviewees, they also carried out a sort of reconnaissance to consider permanently moving there. In turn, the deportees themselves had guests from Karachay-Cherkessia. Letters and phone calls were the main means of communication. In the 1970s, there was a flight from Frunze to Mineralnye Vody. A two-way ticket cost 52 rubles. On 4 August 2016, Zainep Adzhieva, born in 1950, told me that she visited the North Caucasus for the very first time in 1975. Forty years later, she went to her nephew’s
wedding. She stayed there for a month. Those who had left Kyrgyzstan welcomed her. Ramazan Uzdenov, an 83-year-old, told me during a 5 August 2016 interview that he visited the Caucasus after serving in the army, and then again in 1971. Thus, the state created certain conditions for supporting the communication of the people of Kyrgyzstan with the Caucasus.

VII. MODERN TIMES: LOCAL AND CIVIC IDENTITY

The collapse of the Soviet Union came as a surprise for many citizens. The question of political identification came up on the agenda. Quite naturally, some felt abandoned and betrayed. They believed that they had suddenly become outsiders, while others rejoiced at gaining sovereignty and celebrated the emergence of a new state on the world map that was recognized by the international community.

In this context of an economic crisis with widespread unemployment, many people began to migrate in search of jobs with a decent salary. While some became seasonal workers, others decided to go to their historical homeland for permanent residence. At the same time, they naturally assumed that they could live better there than in the country where their compatriots had found shelter since 1943. Among these repatriates there were some Karachays. Here are some statistics about Karachays in Kyrgyzstan. According to the 1989 census, there were 2,509 Karachays in the country. This number had decreased by 300 and fallen to 2,179 by 1999. In 2015, there were only 1,722 Karachays in the country. According to my interviewees, not all Karachays successfully settled as they had hoped. Just like here, not everyone was able to get a stable job in their historical homeland. The economic structure in the North Caucasus was not attractive to migrant workers and was not in a shape to receive compatriots from abroad. In the 1990s, the economy of every North Caucasus republic remained a garden economy where the bulk of the family’s income comes from the family backyard and the processing of small plots. Such an economy is based on the manual labour of highlanders. Many young people continued the tradition of seasonal work.

Today, Kyrgyzstan’s Karachays are engaged in different types of work. They have their own plots of land where they grow crops. Almost all rural families have cattle. Some provide shuttle services and are engaged in business. There are also well-known Karachay civil servants, politicians, and public figures.

Daily life in the villages, neighbourhoods, and communities most clearly reflect the nature of relationships among different cultures. Here we can find answers to questions related to the process of integration or disintegration. As neighbours, the whole community often finds it necessary to discuss issues related to the improvement of their community well-being. They are often invited to social meals during family events, holidays, and rituals. They also lend money, cattle, fodder and such to each other. They discuss economic and political issues. This picture can be seen, for example, in the villages of Malovodnoye, Orlovka, and Sadovoye where the Karachay community long ago found a common language with the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Russians, Ukrainians, and Dungans. There are cases of inter-ethnic marriage. Yusuf, for example, married Jiydebubu, an ethnic Kyrgyz who cared for all Karachays with whom the family maintained contact. Their daughter Fatima told me in an interview on 21 July 2016 that she heard a lot of warm words about her mother from Karachays when she visited Karachay-Cherkessia in 2010. Zeinep, who married a Dungan, told me in a 6 August 2016 interview that she worked in sugar beet production along with many Russians. They used to eat together. She had many Russian friends. She has kept in touch with one of them.

Karachays are now perceived as organic components
of the local community. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were cases when Kyrgyz tried to control representatives of Slavic peoples as well as people from the Caucasus. However, such cases were sporadic and mostly involved marginalized individuals, especially when they were drunk. In Kyrgyz society such negative phenomena are always sharply condemned. Even nationalists did not call for them to leave the republic. In public policy, the multi-national population of the country as a whole was considered to be its main wealth. This is evidenced by the activities of the assembly, which was established on the initiative of national cultural centres in 1993 with the support of the country’s leadership. The assembly continues to play a significant role in strengthening inter-ethnic harmony in the republic.

Social events, family and calendar rituals, and festivals play an important social function where the participants feel part of a team and community, and are able to show their true feelings. As residents of the same quarter or a village, invited guests enjoy happy events and discuss their problems. They exchange gifts during special events of the life cycle (birth, marriage, etc.). Almost everywhere there is a culture of collective mutual help among all the families of the village in connection with the loss of a close family member. They do not discriminate based on ethnicity. Everyone attended all of the funerals because they believed that throwing a handful of earth into the grave was a holy duty. This tradition exists to this day. Karachays who have always linked their destiny with Kyrgyzstan actively try to occupy a worthy place in the society of this Central Asian state, which has become their second homeland. However, a considerable number of the younger generation have a very weak, vague idea about their ancestral homeland are not eager to go to a place where they would have to get used to the new conditions and to start many things anew.

For Nadezhda Tilmekova, the village of Sadovoye is very dear. In a 6 August 2016 interview, she told me that Kyrgyzstan is her homeland. She stated this openly when she was in Karachay-Cherkessia. This place attracts her more. The graves of her mother, father, and son are here. “I support Kyrgyzstan more than Russia. I think that things will get better. We all have the same rights. The main thing is to work.”

Other interviewees told me they consider Kyrgyzstan to be their second homeland. Akhmad Dalaev and Leoza Uzdenova noted this in their respective 7 August and 4 August 2016 interviews. At the same time, they perceive the districts as their small homeland. Group solidarity and a sense of connection to the birthplace of their ancestors is one of the most important characteristics of the Karachay diaspora. Support and mutual assistance is especially evident during times of misfortune, for example, when someone dies or during other unpleasant situations for the family. Wealthy Karachays help the needy by giving them money and cattle.

The Karachay community in Kyrgyzstan does not care only about its own problems. Individual members—and the diaspora as a whole—contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country through the Ata-Jurt International Association. Some of the association’s most important activities provide social support to children’s homes and shelters, and actively participate in the preservation of inter-ethnic harmony.

The association is committed to instilling the ideas and positive thoughts about good deeds in the minds of the youths. It praises Kyrgyzstan where they were born and grew up, where their parents and grandparents found refuge, compassion, understanding, and generosity after being deported, where their people came to know the value of hospitality during hard times.
VIII. CONCLUSION

The Karachays who were deported during the Great Patriotic War became one of those who made the ethnic picture of Kyrgyzstan diverse. Despite “political rehabilitation” and the opportunity to return to their homeland, some of them stayed in the country, as they found it hard to cut ties with Kyrgyzstan. Despite being away from the North Caucasus and living among other nations for seven decades, they have not lost their original culture. Moral, material, and other types of mutual assistance, and the code of honour known as Ozden adet played a significance role in the adaptation and integration of deported families, communities, and their descendants into the new space where many Karachays now live and work despite having the chance to return to their historical homeland. Many elements of their culture have remained stable, largely due to the continued functioning of strong social institutions with centuries-old traditions.

Adapting to the new social and geographical environment did not go smoothly for the special settlers. It took place at a time when the entire Kyrgyzstani population was experiencing difficulties. Moreover, deported Karachays suffered psychological trauma. However, they were able to improve the course of their lives and became actively involved in the socio-economic, cultural, and political life of the country. Nowadays, despite their relatively small number, Karachays are an active and dynamic part of a multi-cultural Kyrgyzstan.
NOTES

1 Karachays (къарачайлыла): the indigenous population of Karachay-Cherkessia whose origin is associated with the ancient Alans, Turko-Kipchaks, and the local Caucasian population. Karachays belong to the Turkic-speaking peoples of the North Caucasus.


7 V. M. Ploskikh and M. K. Imakeeva (2010), Deportirovannye narody Kavkaza v Kyrgyzstane [Deported Peoples of the Caucasus in Kyrgyzstan] (Bishkek: Neo-Print).

8 I wish to express sincere appreciation to the Global Centre for Pluralism for providing me with the opportunity to undertake a study on this issue. I would also like to express my gratitude to my mentor, Professor Cholpon Turdalieva, for her continuous advice, comments, and suggestions.


10 Immanuel Wallerstein (2003), The End of the World As We Know It: Social Science for the Twenty-first Century, translated by V. L. Inozemtseva (Moscow: Logos).


12 B. Kh. Gogaev (1939–2006) was a prominent public figure and politician. He was elected to the Supreme Council of the Kirghiz SSR and the Legislative Assembly of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic. He was the chairman of the Ata-Jurt Association of Karachays. In addition to state awards, he received an award from the Rukhaniyat International Association “For Peace and Harmony Among Nations.” B. Kh. Kubaev is a well-known public figure, pedagogue, and economist. He has made a sizeable contribution to the development of the higher education system of the country. He worked as deputy minister of Education and
Science for several years in the 2010s. He is now head of a university that was established at his initiative in Bishkek. A-A. I. Botashov (1937–95) was a well-known scientist, a doctor of physics and mathematical sciences, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Kirghiz SSR, and an expert in the field of differential equations and nonlinear local analysis. Z. Kh. M. Shidakova is a public figure and the current president of the Ata-Jurt International Association of Karachays as well as deputy chair of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan.


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19 Rogers Brubaker (2000), «Diaspory kataklizma’ v Tsentral’noy i Vostochnoy Yevrope i ikh otnosheniye s rodinami (na primere Veymarskoy Germanii i postsovetskoy Rossii)» ['Cataclysm Diasporas’ in Central and Eastern Europe and Their Relationship with Their Homelands (The Case of Weimar Germany and Post-Soviet Russia)], *Diaspory* no. 3: 9.

20 Kyzaeva, Dotsenko, and Begaliev (1995), 88–89.

21 Lyudmila Pavlovich (2009), «Operatsiya repatriatsiya» [Operation Repatriation], *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 9 December.

22 Tishkov (2000), 43.

23 Boris Gogaev (1998), «My karachayevtsy» [We, Karachays], *Literaturnyy Kirgizstan* (Bishkek: Pub), 121.


26 G. Novikova (2007), «Tyan’-Shan’ i Kazbek srodnilis’ na vek» [Tien-Shan and Kazbek have become related for a century], *Vecherniy Bishkek*.

27 Aleksandr Shepelenko (2009), «Istoriya, kotoruyu khranit serdtse» [The story that the heart keeps], *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 2 October.

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30 Central State Archive of the Kyrgyz Republic (CSAKR), Fund 350, Inventory 17, Case 76, Sheet 139.

31 CSAKR, Fund 350, Inventory 17, Case 92, sheets 296–97.

32 CSAKR, Fund 1811, Sheet 27.

33 CSAKR, Fund 1811, Sheet 27.

34 CSAKR, Fund 1811, Sheet 27a.

35 Central State Archive of Political Documentation of the Kyrgyz Republic (CSAPDKR), Fund 406, Inventory 2, Case 198, sheets 39–42.

36 CSAKR, Fund 1642, Inventory 11, Case 2130.

37 Ploskikh and Imakeeva (2010), 85–86.

38 Ploskikh and Imakeeva (2010), 141, 145.

39 CSAPDKR, Fund 406, Inventory 2, Case 154, sheets 29–32.

40 CSAKR, Fund 1811, Sheet 27a.


42 Abdish Kubadaev (1993), «Eneni, tuugan jerdi kim sagynbayt» [Who does not miss his mother, his birthplace], Erkin-Too, 19 March.

43 Mudur Usmanov (1989), «Deportatsiya» [Deportation], Literaturnyy Kirgizstan no. 2: 100.

44 Y. Karachayly (1998), «Pamyat’ o chernom noyabre» [Memory of Black November], Vecherniy Bishkek, 30 November.

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