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**FORCED LABOR OF DEPORTED PEOPLES  
IN THE INDUSTRY OF SOUTHERN KAZAKHSTAN  
(the example of Kentau city)**

One of the most tragic pages in the history of the Greeks was Stalin's deportation. Almost the majority of the Greeks, who lived on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea, were deported to Kazakhstan.

The article is considered the deportation of the Pontic Greeks in the South Kazakhstan region and their role in the development of industry and agriculture in the region. The purpose of this article is an attempt to restore the chronological order of the deportation of Greeks, their resettlement and employment in the city Kentau, within the framework of the concept of the history of everyday life. This article consists of two separate parts. The first part is considered deportations of Pontic Greeks to South Kazakhstan. The second section talks about the formation of Greek communities in the city Kentau. And also it is said about the use of labor of the deported Greeks in industry.

**Key words:** deportation, repression, Kentau city, special settlements, pontic Greeks.

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**Оңтүстік Қазақстанға жер аударылған халықтардың  
еріксіз еңбегін өнеркәсіпте пайдалану**

Кеңестер Одағындағы гректер тарихының ең қайғылы беттерінің бірі сталиндік депортациялау шарасы болып табылады. Сталиндік депортациялау шараларының нәтижесінде Қара теңіздің солтүстік-шығыс жағалауында тұратын гректердің басым көпшілігі Қазақстанға жер аударылды.

Бұл мақалада понтикалық гректердің Оңтүстік Қазақстан облысына, оның ішінде Кентау қаласына депортациялануы және олардың аймақтағы өнеркәсіп пен ауыл шаруашылығын дамытудағы рөлі талқыланды. Мақаланың негізгі мақсаты – гректердің Кентау қаласына қоныс аударуы және жұмысқа орналасу барысында кездескен қиыншылықтарын, күнделікті өмір концепциясы аясында қарастыру болып табылады. Мақала екі бөлімнен тұрады: бірінші бөлімде понтикалық гректерді Оңтүстік Қазақстанға депортациялануы қарастырылса, екінші бөлімде Кентау қаласындағы грек диаспорасының қалыптасуы туралы айтылады. Сонымен қатар, депортацияланған гректердің еріксіз еңбегін өнеркәсіпте пайдалану жолдары да қарастырылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** депортация, репрессия, Кентау қаласы, арнайы қоныс, понтикалық гректер.

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**Принудительный труд депортированных народов  
в промышленности Южного Казахстана  
(на примере города Кентау)**

Одной из самых трагических страниц в истории греков была сталинская депортация. Практически большая часть греков, проживавших на северо-восточном побережье Черного моря, была депортирована в Казахстан.

В статье рассматривается депортация понтийских греков в Южно-Казахстанской области и их роль в развитии промышленности и сельского хозяйства в регионе. Целью данной статьи является попытка восстановить хронологический порядок депортации греков, их расселения и занятости в городе Кентау, в рамках концепции истории повседневности.

Данная статья состоит из двух отдельных частей. В первой части рассматривается депортация понтийских греков в Южный Казахстан. Во втором разделе говорится о формировании греческих общин в городе Кентау. А также сказано об использовании принудительного труда депортированных греков в промышленности.

**Ключевые слова:** депортация, репрессия, город Кентау, специальные поселения, понтийские греки.

## Introduction

An objective, comprehensive study of the history of deported peoples in Kazakhstan is one of the most important tasks of modern national historical science. Until now, historical science has not covered the entire range of problems associated with the deportation of Greeks to Kazakhstan, the extent and consequences of the deformed social fate of this ethnic group have not been fully appreciated. For many years, the tragic situation of the deported Greeks in the former Soviet Union was hushed up, and archival sources on this issue were inaccessible to researchers.

The totalitarian system that prevailed in Kazakhstan in the 40s of the XXth century, needs a particularly thorough rethinking from the standpoint of new scientific and theoretical concepts. In this regard, the problem of a comprehensive study of the history everyday life deported Greeks in Kentaу and their use as a labor force is important not only in the scientific and cognitive, but also in practical terms. Given the urgency and weak development, the authors set themselves the following goal: to analyze the history of forced labor of deported Greeks to the development of the largest enterprises of Kazakhstan's industry – the Achisai Polymetal Combine and the Kentaу city.

## The special operation «Wave»: the deportation of Pontic Greeks to South Kazakhstan in 1949

Among the measures, «punishment» of unruly, full use of unreliable and deportation. In this research a deportation meant the forced expulsion of a person to another state or another country, usually under escort. After the war the Soviet government considered Greece as an ally of the Germany, and thus all «Greek» in the territory of the USSR was questioned, translated under the status of «disloyalty». In the implementation of policy of forced displacement in 1930 – the beginning of the 1950s. Kazakhstan has become one of the main accommodation areas of various «special contingents. In the history of the Pontic Greeks were deported to Kazakhstan three stages. In 1942, the Greeks were expelled from the Krasnodar Territory, in 1944- Greeks from Crimea, in 1949 – Greeks from Georgia. The largest-scale and most systematic deportations took place in the 13th June 1949.

On May 7, 1949, the Politburo of the Communist Party of Central Committee adopted another decision on the Greeks. The motivation for expulsion is the cleansing of the Black Sea coast of the RSFSR and Ukraine, as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan as a whole «from politically unreliable elements.» Deportations to the South Kazakhstan and Dzhambul regions (Koigeldiev, 2017:122).

Kazakhstan was subject to the following administrative categories of ethnic Greeks: Greek subjects, former Greek subjects who were accepted into Soviet citizenship. However, in fact, the Greeks were also deported – Soviet citizens whose ancestors appeared on the territory of the Russian Empire even at the invitation of Catherine II, who never took part in foreign citizenship (Arches, 1969:85). But ostensibly according to their voluntary desire, which was certified by subscriptions. In this case, the property evicted was seized.

State security special forces encircled Greek villages, herded populations to various locations, and conducted them to railway stations. The majority of Greeks on the eastern Black Sea coast, including the whole Greek population of Abkhazia and half of the population of Adzharia, were deported to Kazakhstan. The main content of the operation, code-named «Wave», was reduced to the liberation of the non-titular ethnic group mainly the part of the Georgian Black Sea coast.

The operation was carried out officials the Ministry of State Security of the MVD troops. The route of the train deportees were accompanied by special the staff. For operational services of agent resettled each train there was one operative worker. The composition of the tier had to be arranged in such a way that the cars were located 7-8 resettled, one car was intended to guard. In addition, it allocates special wagon that served as sanitary insulator. Special settlers were allowed to take a maximum of 500 kg per family owned their property. All the rest – the house and farm buildings, livestock and poultry, grain, and another thing – they are left in place. They were taken in cattle cars, previously transferred all their property to the population, do not get caught «by the decision.» All trains, which took out the Greeks, consisted of freight cars. Only the accompanying police officers went to the authorities of cool cars. The freight cars were not any windows, only a door. As she closed in car total darkness. And from the outside, no one knew that being taken, one driven in these cars – cattle or exiled people.

Veteran of Labor of Kentau city V.Gabairov remembers those difficult years: «We were living in the city of Sukhumi. It happened late at night. When the barking of our dogs, alarmed father got up and went outside. It turned out that they came armed soldiers. First they offered to surrender their weapons, if any, and then said: take away the clothes, bed – have relocated to another area. We were taken to the railway station. At the beginning of the eviction, many, especially the peasants thought that the Greeks sent to Greece. Even they are going

out, dancing and singing under kemendzhe. Then he cried, when they realized they were wrong. I still remember how heart-rending crying children and women in despair, tore my hair out. In Kirovobad occurred sorting, the Greeks gathered in one car, the representatives of other nationalities – in the other. For transportation isolated «veal» 18-ton railroad cars – these can be seen in war movies. Each of them is equipped with bunk beds bedroom on both sides. We drove for a long time, it was very hot, thirsty people. But most importantly, no one knew where we were going well. And it oppressed most of all» (Rakisheva, 2013:179)

26 Greek trains were sent to Kazakhstan in 1949. Most of them were from Georgia (19 levels), some of them add to the load in the Krasnodar region.

More than 37 thousand Greeks, which was to be deported in 1949, about 75% were residents of Abkhazia and about 7% – Adjara. Memorandum «On the reception and resettlement of newly arrived contingent of Greeks on the territory of the Kazakh SSR», signed by the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh Republic I. Dolgikh and dated August 5, 1949, shows 8911 families and 37108 Greeks (Bugay, 1995:83).

They settled on the territory of South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Kyzylorda, Taldykorgan and Almaty region of Kazakhstan in June and July of the same year. Most of them were concentrated in the Southern Kazakhstan. From 8911 Greek families in the South Kazakhstan area 5512 families (24882 persons) were resettled, about 62%. 7510 of them men, 8272 women, children-9100.

Unloading point «of the Greek contingent in the area of steel station Great- Alekseevskaya, Syr Darya, Kyzyl-Tu, Badam, Timur, Turkestan, Sas-Tobe and Shymkent. At Aris station was established control point for the distribution of trains with deportees about the points of discharge.

The train number 97122 was unloaded at stations Shymkent and Sas-Tobe. In connection with the unpreparedness of the destination station to receive the train redirected to Turkestan station for unloading and subsequent transmission to the deportees to the mine «Mirgalimsay». But in Turkestan passengers categorically refused to come out of the cars, citing the chief promise tier major Osipova take them to Shymkent (Juha, 2008:157).

«Apply measures» rebels were not possible – on the station of Turkestan no «operational force». As I reported to Moscow the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh. Then it was decided to promote the trains to unload to Badam station and from there distribute arrived on collective Arys district.

However, the station Badam passengers did not leave cars and continued «bagpipe».

June 27, 1949 at Badam Station urgently arrived operative group of 40 people. The aid given to them 85 soldiers and sergeants from the 74th Division of the Interior Ministry convoy troops from Tashkent. «Executive Force» began negotiations with the rebels. In the end, they managed to persuade. Echelon began unloading. In order to avoid a new outbreak of mass disobedience, unloading is performed for 3-4 cars.

Of all the areas is in South Kazakhstan region most Greeks fell on industry. Actually, it was one of the only enterprise – lead mine Mirgalimsay in Kentau. It is «consumed» three-tier full with the Greeks from Georgia and Krasnodar territory. The rest are scattered in more than 70 collective and state farms in eight regions. By note of June 17, 1949, the total number of Greeks in the South Kazakhstan region was 24882 people, of them: Arys-1,554, Ilichevsky-6,550, Keles-1,494, Kyzylkum-1,870, Kirov-4,714, Pahtaralsky-3,624, Myrgalimsay-5,076 (Juha, 2008:181).

South-Kazakhstan region – mostly steppe with low hills and ridges of the mountains. Just east of the railway line rises above the steppe ridge Karatau. To the west stretches the famous Kyzyl-Kum desert – the birthplace of the sultry winds and devastating sandstorms (Keshanidi, 2015:50).

Unloading wagons held in an organized and planned way. As with admission trains, and in the universe as a collective and state home no accidents had not arrived by the Greeks. Most of the special settlers in the first days after the settlement started to work in collective farms and local industries.

At the same time arrivers explored the area and the local population. Hardest Greeks were hit the steppe – without a single tree. It was the same boundless sea, as in Abkhazia, but without water. Arriving at the farm were amazed that even the roofs of the houses were made of clay. Some of them grew weeds. In steppe grazed horses, donkeys and acquaintances only the pictures camels (Mikhailov, 1983:189).

The result of the settlement punished peoples became noticeable expansion of the geography of the great «construction projects of communism» and the areas requiring urgent agricultural development. The vast majority of these were places with a complete lack of the population, or with its minimal presence. That again proves that one of the major national economic reason for the deportation was the settlement and development of vacant land.

### **Deported Greeks in Kentau: peculiarities of everyday life in the industrial city**

All the labor of able special settlers were obliged to engage in socially useful work, in coordination with local authorities. From special settlers were required strict adherence to the prescribed regimen and public order in the resettlement areas, the subordination of all the orders of special commandant. In general, life in forced exile, under the supervision of special commandant, in completely different than at home, climatic conditions became an ordeal for the deported Greeks. The largest concentration of Greeks coming to town Kentau. Since, in this city are the industrial enterprises, in dire need of manpower. One of these companies was – Achisay-sky polymetallic plant. As noted in 1951 exceeded 15,000 people deported by the Greeks. Special settlers, the Greeks were of different professions. The main areas of application are industrial labor and construction (KRSA, F.120.Op.27).

Lack of social and living conditions, famine, especially at first, frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases, heavy work caused mass mortality among the Greeks. Most of them – children and the elderly. The most common cause of death – starvation and typhus. Once in Kentau, the Greeks were forced to pass the climate, labor, social and cultural adaptation, which was aggravated by a special regime of detention. By adaptation in the broad sense refers to an individual device or group to external conditions. Special settlers could not independently choose their neighbors, occupation, place of residence, so the adaptation began in advance of the proposed terms of power. However, the adaptation process was necessary for the continued survival of internally displaced persons. For adults, special settlers adaptation occurs mainly in the course of joint work with the local population. Indigenous population helped deported to master the skills of a new activity for them. We are not inclined to idealize the relationship between immigrants and the Kazakhs, especially in the initial period of deportation. Before the arrival of the deportees attitude toward him was not positive. The Greeks, in his memoirs noted that initially they were as «enemies of the people.» As you explore the deported families attitude toward them changed. Local residents shared with starving products, assisted in the construction of housing. Patience and hard working as the basic qualities mentioned by the Greeks locals. «Of course, the local inhabitants showed us sympathy –living themselves wealthy life, they shared with us whatever they could. I will

never forget the taste of the Kazakh bread and milk « says an honorary citizen of the city Kentau D.A Karakozidi (Koigeldiev, 2017:123).

Expelled family staunchly endured all the hardships of deportation of a role in the preservation of ethnic identity played and polyethnic cultural environment Kentau. The Greeks were on the special settlement with other ethnic groups deported. The community of fate allowed to survive the difficulties of deportation. The Kentau then there were about 40 different nationalities – Germans, Tatars, Koreans, Russian and Kazakhs, etc. All lived together, there was apathetic to the troubles and joys of life. Expelled family staunchly endured all the hardships of deportation. The local population, which consisted, inter alia, of the descendants of exiles, belonged to the special settlers with compassion.

Concerns about labor unit special settlers were assigned to the trust «Mirgalimsay lead system», in which there was a special department for special a transit. He ordered all settlers arrived specials were identified in labor camps, closely spaced industry.

Using special settlers in the construction of the city and lead mine «Mirgalimsay» was made on the basis of contracts concluded with the leadership of the « Achpolimetall plant « 1949. According to which able-bodied settlers were passed special industrial enterprises as labor and were not allowed without permission to leave the special settlements located around the mines, where authorized by the special commandant's strictly monitored adherence rate. The contribution made by the Greeks in the construction of the city Kentau in the South Kazakhstan created to develop Achisay polymetallic deposit. Kentau is among the most rapidly developing in the 1950 years city-buildings of the Soviet Union.

It was the international building, where on the first roles were representatives of the repressed and the deported peoples: the Greeks, Chechens, Germans, Tatars, Russian and Kazakhs, Uzbeks. Construction of the city also attended by Japanese and German prisoners of war. Since that time, it began a large-scale work on the construction of the city Kentau and their infrastructure.

Construction of the city, carried out deserted empty space is extremely difficult problem: there was no material and technical base, qualified personnel, transportation, engineering communication.. New construction of housing and household objects of the city were torn down because of the lack of comprehensive measures to ensure the work of building materials and technical neglect works.

Only in 1953 from appropriated combine «Achpolimetall» 1250 million rubles for housing, com-

munal and cultural construction were received only 855,000 rubles, it is not utilized for more than 30% (KRSA, F. 15. Op.1).

Peter Stavrovich Kuimsar deported Greek from Sukhumi, headed the first in the Soviet Union communist labor brigade plasterers, painters. It was an amazing time, when a relatively small international team, poorly armed with technology, their labor heroism performed miracles in the bare steppes (Shpiljanskaya, 2005:21).

All the city's storied houses built by their hands. Living in tents and barracks, they dreamed of a bright future and their work from day to day brings its offensive. Kentau initially built up spontaneously, but compact.

In just a few years Kentau becomes a kind of industrial town. During this time, in the remote steppes were built thousands of houses, clubs, libraries, hospitals, businesses, farms. At the factory buildings grew floors of houses were built clubs and playgrounds.

1950 construction of the theater ended with the symbolic name «Druzhba». August 1, 1955 formally signed the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR on the formation of Kentau (KRSA, F.57. Op.7). It means «Ore Mountain».

Forcibly separated from their land and deported to distant Kentau, deprived of all civil rights, the Greeks were among the first builders of a strong industrial base in the south of the country and has long formed the backbone of skilled construction personnel of the city.

Combine an exceptional role in the pre-war period and during the Second World War, when he gave the bulk of lead ore, necessary defense industry. During the Second World War Achisaysky polymetallic plant gave the country about 75% of the lead, melted in the USSR (Shpiljanska, 2015:12).

After 1945 the lead content in the ore is gradually decreased. 1950 the Central Committee of Communist Party of Kazakhstan is discussing measures to increase ore production and ore mines further builds on Achisaysky polymetallic plant. But the main issue in the construction industrial facilities was the issue of its skilled labor force, attracting a huge amount of labor.

Voluntary recruitment of skilled workers from the local population due to a number of circumstances did not meet this demand. In such circumstances, part of the special settlers arriving in manufacturing employment was extremely necessary. However, it was explained that special settlers in the industrial enterprises, including the defense industry plants, as a rule, can be used in the construction and ancillary works.

In connection with the deportation of the Greeks there was an acute shortage of housing in their places of residence. The Greeks have lived more than one severe winter in dug dugouts. Overcrowding, unsanitary conditions spawned numerous epidemics.

By the autumn of 1950 Mirgalimsaysky mine and construction of the city worked 2236 special settlers Greeks. At first, the productivity of the special settlers working in the mines and factories was low. Local guide explains this lack of experience in the industry, poor material and social conditions. Industrial Training special settlers often lacking, with the result that their productivity was in the first years of exile 30- 60% of the norm. But later, many Greeks were not only met, but and exceeds performance standards. For example, in August 1956 to Achisaysky polymetallic plant fulfilled the norm was 597 people, and over-fulfilled – 438 people (KRSA, F.41. Op.2).

Under the terms of the contracts concluded enterprise «Achpolimetall» had to provide the Greeks and their families living quarters on a common basis. And families without housing, single room in barracks and dormitories. However, in conditions of acute shortage of housing, the administration initially built mines sometimes limited only to release an improvised building materials.

Special village «Mirgalimsay» represented large tracts of little adapted for living rooms without windows and furnaces, made hastily braided Sediment barracks or simply tents and dugouts. A significant part of the barracks and houses the standard for living in winter conditions was not prepared.

Companies should also ensure that the special settlers were permanent jobs, inventory, tools, vehicles, machinery and materials. Working conditions, providing work clothes, working hours, number of days of rest and holidays, production quotas have been in accordance with the contract to be the same as for other categories of workers.

In the hands of all the calculated labor settlers were given the calculated books, which reflected their wages, as well as all workers. For a good work labor settlers relied progressive and bonus pay. At the same time local authorities are listed in different periods from 5 to 25% of earnings of special settlers.

So they, to a certain extent, have been interested in preserving the employment fund *trudoposelentsev*, in maintaining a more or less tolerable living conditions of this category of workers. Special settlers same enterprise should provide a par with the rest of the workers, domestic services (baths, laundries, kindergartens, nurseries).

And also to organize supply their families with food through a table on production and manufactured goods through the relevant trade organizations. However, the treaty provisions to ensure equal conditions of work and life to a civilian special settlers and workers are very often violated. There were arbitrary reduction of supply standards deportees basic products and commodities, illegal withdrawal from the individual supply, the lack of deployed and poor quality catering.

In addition to industrial and construction spheres, the Greeks worked in other sectors of the economy, for example in the service and trade sector, where they occupied the post – head of the warehouse, seller, driver, shoemaker.

Labor and special settlers are faced with many difficulties in the new place of residence: hunger, disease, poor living conditions, separation of families, the death of loved ones, a humiliating stigma «enemy of the people» – all this could not all survive. To carry out all the hardships of life that fell to their lot, and sometimes just to survive helped local residents who met with the hospitality of people of other nationalities resettled in Kentau.

Only in the 50 years the state policy towards the deportees began to change for the better. At 27 March 1956 by the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR «On the lifting of restrictions on the legal status of the Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians and members of their families living in special settlements.»

It was partially lifted restrictions on the legal status of special settlers, the Greeks. Exemption from under the administrative supervision of the Interior Ministry were conducted without the right of return of the special settlers to their original place of residence. Moreover, the deportees took a receipt that they are notified on the prohibition of return to their former place of residence and a non-return of confiscated property.

However, they have not received proper rehabilitation, they were forbidden to return to their former place of residence. As a result, tens of thousands of Greeks settled in Kentau and found a new home here. Many houses are built in the center of Kentau Greeks, they lived very well off, worked, and their work to generate income. Kentau Kazakhstan then called «small Athens.»

Kentau was one of the densely populated cities of the Greeks of Southern Kazakhstan until the end of the 80-th years of XX century. Here, the Greek language was heard, even when most of the Greeks of the former Soviet Union, finally lost its main national trait – the Greek language. Indeed, the vio-

lent methods of the deportation of peoples can not be justified by any military or other considerations. The main charge against the deported peoples were «across-the collaboration with the enemy.» But this assertion was absurd, since the vast majority of the male population of these nations were mobilized into the Red Army.

### Conclusion

Much largest Pontic diaspora exists in Kazakhstan. The first post-revolutionary census of the population in the Soviet Union in 1926 revealed in the whole Kazakhstan only 157 Greeks. One of the most touching pages in the history of Greeks was Stalin's deportation. In 1930 to Kazakhstan were deported several hundred dekulakized Greeks from Sochi, Adler, Lazarevsky, Tuapse and continental part of Krasnodar land. Practically the great part of Greeks living in the north-eastern coast of the Black sea was deported to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The main part of Greeks found themselves in Kazakhstan in 40s in connection with the deportation from the places of traditional inhabitation – mainly from Georgia, Crimea, Azov area.

By 1950 Kazakhstan among the 820.165 persons, there were 44,000 thousand Greeks. According to the data of the census of population of 2009 in Kazakhstan live about 9,000, Greeks or 0,06% from

the common number of the whole population of the republic (Smailova, 2011:65).

Greeks inhabit predominantly in the south of the republic –Almaty, South Kazakhstan regions and Kentau city. In the republic function 17 Greek community, entering the Association of Greek communes of Kazakhstan «Filia».

The analysis showed that the basis of the deportation of entire peoples are reasons of a political nature. The eviction took place on trumped-up charges of treason. Thus, the deportation of peoples was a measure of legal insecurity, characterized by a flagrant violation of human rights and was one of the means to enhance the totalitarian regime. The totalitarian mode has transformed Kazakhstan into a gigantic reservation, where they had been deported hundreds of thousands of people from different regions of the USSR.

Such attention to the problems of deported peoples due to the fact that Kazakhstan is like no other country in the former Soviet Union endured all the hardships associated with the mass migration of anything its innocent people on its territory. Deportation of peoples to Kazakhstan has played a huge role in shaping the national structure of the population. Resettlement streams from different places of the former Soviet Union, increasing the population of Kazakhstan, led to a group of non-local population.

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