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Interview

Grover Furr: "The Deportation of Nationalities was Excusable"



The Georgian Times continues its series of interviews with Dr. Grover Furr

Q: Professor Furr, what about the wartime deportation of people? What happened is more or less known, so the real question is: How can these deportations possibly have been justified? Were they not a form of genocide?

A: In his secret speech to the XXth Party Congress on February 25, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev raised three objections to these deportations: (1) that there were "no exceptions"; (2) that they were "not dictated by any military consideration;" (3) that "whole nations" were punished "for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons."

None of these claims is true. N. Bugai, the leading Russian expert on deportations and a strong anti-Stalinist, documents some exceptions to the deportations for veterans and their families. Bugai also stated that "... the Soviet government had by and large allocated its priorities correctly, basing those priorities on its right to maintain order behind the front lines, and in the North Caucasus in particular."

Q: But should whole nationalities have been deported?

I think this can be answered in two points. First, how massive were the rebellions among these ethnic groups, and second, there is also the question of genocide. To split up a small national group that is tightly knit by a unique language, history, and culture, is in fact to destroy it.

In her famous book "GULAG", the American anticommunist, Ann Applebaum denies that there were massive rebellions and desertions. In my book *Antistalinskaia Podlost'* I cite facts which were uncovered by other researchers that prove that these pro-Nazi rebellions did involve most of the people in the ethnic groups in question.

For example, over 90% of Crimean Tartar recruits deserted. Researcher J. Otto Pohl has argued, from German sources, that not all these men joined Nazi forces. Even if true, this makes no difference as the Soviets could not have known this, and most would have joined anti-Soviet partisan or bandit groups.

Likewise, 93% of Chechen and Ingush men drafted to military service in 1942 deserted, went into hiding, joined the Nazis, or joined rebel or bandit groups. In February 1943, pro-Nazi Chechen nationalists led a major pro-German rebellion under the Nazi flag,

Grigory Tokaev and Viacheslav Molotov both agree that there were large anti-Soviet rebellions in these areas during the war. The only difference: Tokaev thinks the rebellions were justified.

Historian, V. I. Zemskov has specialized in deportations in general. His estimate is that out of 151,720 Crimean Tatars deported, 191 died during the course of deportation. That is 0.13 per cent. Not 13% or 1.3%.

According to Bugai and Gomov, "NKVD records attest to 180 convoy trains carrying 493,269 Chechen and Ingush nationals and members of other nationalities seized at the same time. Fifty people were killed in the course of the operation, and 1,272 died on the journey." This is 0.27



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per cent; 0.26 per cent if you exclude the 50 killed in the course of disarming, etc. Since it happened in the winter during the fiercest war in world history, that figure does not seem very high. It is probably a lot lower than the rate suffered by Soviet civilians in the occupied areas.

In the case of the Chechen-Ingush and the Crimean Tatars, collaboration with the Nazis was massive, involving most of the population. To try to isolate and punish "only the guilty" would have been to split the nation up. This would probably have destroyed the nation and there would have been very few young men for the young women to marry. Instead, the national group was kept together, and their population grew.

Q: But if the deportations of nationalities, like the collectivization of agriculture and so-called "Holodomor", are not simply excusable, how do you account for all the criticism of them by respected historians everywhere?

A: I don't think this is hard to understand. These events of Soviet history, especially of the Stalin period, are misinterpreted, distorted, lied about, in the service of extreme anti-working class, right-wing nationalism.

The deportations that I discussed above were the result of large-scale Nazi collaboration. In order to justify this Nazi collaboration and create a myth of a "heroic past" for the right-wing nationalists of these groups, this Nazi collaboration must be depicted as "justified", and the deportations as "unjustified."

by Jacob Jugashvili and Eka Buchukuri (Translated from Georgian edition of "The Georgian Times")

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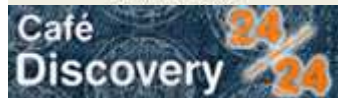
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