FEATURES OF THE RUSSIAN KOREANS' COLLECTIVE MEMORY: THE TRAUMA OF DEPORTATION

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Abstract: The article is about research into features of Russian Koreans' collective memory of the 1937 deportation. The author's aim has been to conduct a substantive analysis of semantic and sociopsychological aspects of memory of the deportation among different generations of Koreans, and to address the way they experience their history, the degree of reflection that they accord to it, and the influence of this memory on their social wellbeing and the definition of their identity. The methodological basis of the research is comprised by Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural trauma, Ron Eyerman's theory of collective memory, Aleida Assmann's theory of historical memory and Victor Shnirelman's theory of the structure of ethnic identity. The method of empirical research is in-depth biographical interviews. As a result, various semantic aspects relating to memory of the deportation among different generations of Koreans have been identified: the trauma inflicted by captivity, the loss of identity, the decapitalisation of ancestral experience, a tendency towards conformism and loyalty to the powers that be, and an avoidance of critical evaluations of the deportation and its consequences. The necessity of a comprehensive working-through of their social and cultural trauma by the Korean community is established. The article is based on field material, namely interviews with representatives of three generations of Russian Koreans which the author conducted in 2020 in Yekaterinburg.

Keywords: Russian Koreans, deportation, collective memory, social trauma, cultural trauma, identity, state (national) memory policy.

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Discourse about ethnic deportations, a key form of political repression, exists in Russia today at the edge of societal awareness. Yet this subject, connected as it is to Russian Koreans' historical memory, is directly related to their social wellbeing at the present time. Memory, as the basis for individual and collective identity, is the process of the selection of facts depending on the interests of the person(s) experiencing a given memory, and on the objective and subjective factors that affect them. The processes of reinterpreting the past, the 'memory wars' that are raging at present, are the result of a clash between the present interests of different sociopolitical subjects. They threaten to diffuse the identity of social groups. In this connection, the question of how exactly the trauma of the 1937 deportation manifests itself in several generations of Russian Koreans is one of especial significance.

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The collapse of the USSR resulted in mass labour migration to Russia. Immigrant communities came into being in the cities, and the problem of establishing relations between them and the local population became acute

[Borisov, Vasilenko 2007]. An increase in hostility towards immigrants from the former union republics, particularly those of Central Asia and the Caucasus, was noted in Russia during the first two decades of the present millennium. 'In these conditions, migrations from what used to be peripheral regions with a different culture to what used to be the imperial centre create the conditions for widespread racism and xenophobia, which become part of the compensatory "defensive" consciousness of the inhabitants of the former metropolis as they experience the dissolution of the imperial space' [Pain, Fedyunin 2018: 176]. Such nationalist or racial ideologies emerged from attempts to rationalise fears of the Other.

In a more distant sense, the sources of neoracism in present-day Russia are derived from the contradictions of Soviet ideology and practice with regard to ethnic groups. Communist policies included discriminatory and racist practices: the inscription of ethnicity in the Soviet passport and its instrumentalisation by the passport system in the USSR [Baiburin 2009], the hierarchy of peoples that assigned unequal political status to different peoples, and allowed 'undesirable' ethnic groups to be deported [Shnirelman 2013: 112], and practices of social exclusion based on the biological or cultural differences between ethnic groups [Malakhov 2013: 120]. Racism is manifested in the denial of access to social resources to a particular ethnic group, based on that group's phenotype. Neoracism, despite its new rhetoric — the terms 'population' or 'cultural communities' instead of 'race' — reproduces the logic of classical racism. Stressing the biological and other differences of social groups, reducing cultural differences to the 'biopsychical', neoracism prepares the ground for conflict between different groups. Many individuals and social groups in present-day Russia are experiencing a sense of otherness, of being alien to the majority of the population. This feeling is the counterreaction of people with differences to their perception by the dominant social groups. All this makes the study of the features of Russian Koreans' traumatised memory of the deportation, and of the effect of this memory on their social position and wellbeing at the present time, a matter of great relevance at the present time.

In my analysis of deportation memories, I employed the method of the in-depth biographical interview in order to assess how reflectively informants approached the history of their family and community and to record their subjective evaluations of historical events. In preparation, I evolved an analytical toolkit, formulating research questions and a list of topics for my in-depth interviews (family history, personal biography, the effect of deportation on life). The people surveyed were Koreans who had found themselves in Yekaterinburg as a result of two 'waves' of migration from the places to which they had been deported. The first wave consisted of the

children of deported people who moved to Russia in the 1950s and 1960s in order to enter higher education, and stayed on there after graduating. The second wave consisted of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of deported people who moved to Russia after the collapse of the USSR (from 1991 to the present).

The Korean community in Yekaterinburg includes both citizens of the Russian Federation and recent immigrants who are in the process of obtaining Russian citizenship. According to the most recent census, there are 153,000 Koreans in Russia, about 2,000 of them in Yekaterinburg. Twenty-two interviews were conducted in all, each of them lasting from two to three and a half hours. The selection was made in such a way that people were equally represented by sex, age (generation), level of education and social status. Fourteen women were surveyed and eight men, eight of them from the second generation (children of deported persons), eight from the third and six from the fourth. Two of the people from the second generation, one man and one woman, are leaders of the 'National Cultural Autonomy (NCA) of Russian Koreans' in Yekaterinburg.

Historical excursus

The emigration of Koreans to Russia began after the conclusion of the Convention of Peking (1860) between Russia and China, the incorporation of the Ussuri Krai into the Russian Empire and the confirmation by Alexander II of the 'Rules for the Settlement of Russians and Ethnic Minorities in the Amur and Primorskaya Oblasts of Eastern Siberia' (1861). The first group of Korean migrants — fourteen families (sixty persons of both sexes) — crossed the border in January 1864 and founded the first Korean village, Tizinkhe, in Primorye. Russian officials valued the Koreans as agriculturalists who were beneficial to the empire [Tsoy 2003: 130]. By 1917 there were already about 100,000 Koreans living in Russia. The Primorskaya Oblast alone was home to 81,825 Koreans, 30% of its entire population. Of them, 32,841 were Russian subjects [Pak, Bugay 2004: 130]. In the Civil War, the Koreans fought for the Bolsheviks in partisan units. The Soviet regime was initially supportive of the Koreans, but later suspicion of them as 'almost Japanese' (since Korea was a Japanese colony) intensified. Korean immigration ceased in 1930, when Russia's borders with Korea and China were completely closed.

A secret resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) No. 1428-326cc. 'On the removal of the Korean population from the border areas of the Far Eastern Krai', passed in 1937, and signed by Stalin and Molotov, justified the deportation of Koreans '[i]n order to put an end to the penetration of Japanese

espionage into the Far Eastern Krai' [Tsoy 2003: 168]. Thus, the deportation of the Koreans was seen as a preventative measure, and people of Korean ethnicity were stigmatised as potential spies and traitors. To quote the memoirs of Hwang Synger, a man born in 1925, who was deported from Primorye to the Kazakh SSR: 'Sometimes the train would stop at a passing loop and we would see the people who had died on the journey being buried right beside the railway line under the supervision of the OGPU[1]. We arrived at our destination station in the morning of 25 October, and were unloaded onto an almost empty place. It had been an old Kazakh aul, but the people had abandoned those places because of a lack of drinking water, and now the houses were dilapidated <…> That winter there was not one family in our village that did not bury an old person or a child' [Ibid.: 183]. In the process of resettlement and over seven years of life in the places to which they were deported, the number of Koreans fell by 30%, i.e. 50,000 persons: 172,000 Koreans were deported in 1937, and in April 1945 the USSR security forces reckoned their number at 123,000. Most of the Koreans were moved to the Uzbek and Kazakh SSRs. Many old people and children died during the first winter, including a third of all the unweaned babies [Ibid.: 126, 167]. Rehabilitation of the Koreans took place in 1953–1957: the restrictions on their serving in the army were lifted and they were permitted to move outside Central Asia. But any attempts to re-establish territorial autonomy were severely repressed. The limitations on promotion at work and occupying senior positions remained in place until 1991. According to the 1959 census, 44.1% of Soviet Koreans lived in Uzbekistan, and 23.6% in Kazakhstan. When the Soviet Union collapsed, 'Soviet Koreans' became 'Koreans of the CIS' [Ibid.: 128].

The historical and political analysis of the process of deportation remains unfinished, insofar as many of the contradictions, stereotypes and 'myths' in the data about the event have not been explained or even addressed. For more than half a century the violent, forced and total resettlement of the Koreans of the Far East to Central Asia was a forbidden subject. Only after 1991 did historians come to the conclusion that the deportation was the logical culmination of the nationalities policy of the Russian Empire and of Stalin's regime [Kim 2013: 53]. The economic, demographic, social, cultural and psychological consequences of the deportation have not yet been fully realised. The social and cultural trauma inflicted upon the Koreans has not been processed. There has not been any judicial or moral condemnation of the officials responsible for this crime. No means of coming to terms with the tragic past have been developed by any of the parties.

[1] The Soviet police and secret police from 1923 to 1934 [Eds.].

The problem of the effect of the collective memory and traumatic experience of a particular ethnic group on the social wellbeing and the formation of the identity of later generations has various dimensions and is interdisciplinary in character. Research into it must include an analysis of the demographic, political, economic and cultural consequences of the traumatic event, and also examine the sociopsychological and cultural mechanisms whereby the experience of trauma is transmitted from generation to generation. A synthesis of aspects of the problem is, I would argue, attainable within the framework of social anthropology, even when the definition of this discipline in Russian conditions is debatable [Sokolovskiy 2012]. The facts of the several waves of political repression against the Koreans, including the elimination of those Koreans who were party leaders or military officers, the Korean section of the Comintern, and the majority of those Koreans who had higher education, as well as the total deportation of 172,000 Koreans from several regions of the Far East in 1937, are confirmed by documentary evidence and described in the historical literature and elsewhere [Bugay 2000; Polyan 2001; Pak, Bugay 2004; Yakovlev et al. 2005: 37–38, 80–98; Khan 2009; Gentshke 2011; Kim 2013]. Memoirs of eyewitnesses to the events have been collected [Tsoy 2003: 166–190; Kan 2010]. There are documentary films about the Korean deportation, such as Vadim Kim's *Deportatsiya*. An analysis of the discourse regarding the deportation of other ethnic groups has also been presented [Guchinova 2002]. There are works based on archival research containing a complete list of the 'penalised peoples' and describing the evolution of the system of special colonies in the USSR, the statistics of the losses, and the adverse demographic consequences ('a gigantic negative balance between the birth and death rates') and other consequences of the deportations [Zemskov 2001; 2005].

The problem of the transmission of the experience of the traumatic event between generations has also received attention in an article analysed within a framework of family psychotherapy orientated towards cultural-historical research [Baker, Gippenreiter 2005]. However, the problem of the correlation between the psychological dynamics of processing the traumatic experience personally and socially has not been sufficiently studied. Even within a single ethnic group, identity is not a homogeneous phenomenon, because there may be different reactions to a traumatic event. Identity is composed of different identifications, organised dialogically: it is a complex inner dialogue of personal self-awareness with the environment and with projections of this self-awareness onto different social and cultural groups of people [Burlakova 2016]. There is no research on how the memory of the deportation influences individual biographies or the histories of Korean families. In my opinion, an integrated

understanding of the problem and a solution to it can be facilitated here by the aggregation and comparison of the empirical data relating to the experience of trauma by Russian Koreans and other ethnic groups in Russia and other countries. It is likewise essential to include the results of empirical research within the conceptual frameworks of a number of theories. The conceptual and methodological basis for our research consists of the theory of cultural trauma [Alexander 2003], the theory of collective memory [Eyerman 2016], the theory of historical memory and its role in the construction of cultural and political identities [Assmann 2014], allied to a methodology of that draws on studies of Soviet history, the nature of the state nationalities policy in the USSR, and the concept and structure of ethnic identity prevailing at the given era [Shnirelman 2003]. Without pretending to a complete achievement of the task of synthesising approaches and disciplines in resolving the problem in question, we shall try to move in that direction. Our aim is to study the peculiarities and character of the influence of the social and cultural memory of the deportation on different generations of Koreans, since it is memory that organises and structures people's sphere of values and motivations and their self-perception as it defines their social, economic and political behaviour and identity.

Memories of the deportation

In the present day, only written sources allow us direct access to the recollections of the generation of Koreans who experienced the deportation of 1937. However, interviews with Koreans born from 1937 to the 1950s in the places to which their parents had been deported present these recollections at one remove:

My parents were ordinary peasants, they lived in the Primorsky Krai, but they had been born in Korea. In 1937 they were deported to the Tashkent Oblast of the Uzbek SSR. There they created a small collective farm. They all had the same attitude to the deportation: the older generation had been torn away from the places where they were accustomed to live. We were born in Central Asia, and we accepted everything around us as what it ought to be [AFM, m., b. 1942, parents deported from Primorye to the Uzbek SSR].

When they were deported, several families from the same village in Primorye were put into the same cattle truck. When the train stopped people went and got cold and hot water. When the train reached its destination, the deportees were set down by villages and wagons at the same place. Thanks to this they survived. My mother's relatives ended up in Tashkent Oblast, my father's in Samarkand Oblast. When it was cold, they were short of clothing and footwear, they had to wrap their feet in straw and rags. The Korean families had left their homes, their livelihoods and their property behind in Primorye. The Central

Asian climate saved them from cold, hunger and death. They spent the autumn and winter in mud huts. In the spring of 1938, they began to build houses. The roofs were thatched, and they had earthen floors as before. The Koreans were given land along the left bank of the river Chirchiq, all along which there were reed beds. The Koreans cut them down, built an irrigation system, and created collective farms. Their labour was calculated in days worked, they never saw any money. By the 1960s these enterprises had become twenty of the richest collective farms [AFM, f., b. 1950, parents deported from Primorye to the Uzbek SSR].

Such are the memories of the children of the generation of Koreans whose socialisation took place under the conditions of 'the victorious march of Soviet power' through the Far East, with the active participation of Koreans in the collective farm movement, in the reinforcement of the ranks of the party and the Komsomol, and later in their 'purges'. These children's parents perceived the deportation through the prism of Soviet propaganda. Neither their encounter with repression and deportation nor the events of the 'Thaw' brought these Koreans, or most of them, to a truthful assessment of the actions of the authorities. The socialisation and life of the children of the deported also took place in the conditions of the 'immutability' of the Soviet order and the monopoly of communist ideology. Korean intellectuals only made an evaluation of the losses resulting from state terror in the period of perestroika and the 1990s. Here are memories of the generation of Koreans born from the 1960s to 1980s, the grandchildren of those who experienced the deportation.

My grandfather and grandmother on my father's side lived in Primorye, near Ussuriysk. My grandfather was a regular officer, my grandmother a housewife. My grandfather went to the front in the first year of the war and was soon killed. The deportation took place at the beginning of the war. They moved people further away from the frontiers. Korea was not far away. But they did the same to the Germans, the Poles, and others. They mixed them up, so as to get them away from the frontiers. My grandmother, left without a husband, was loaded with her four children into a goods waggon and deported to Kazakhstan. Not all of them survived, two of the children died on the road. When they arrived, they unloaded them with three bags of their things onto the bare earth and left them there [AFM, m., b. 1960, Kazakh SSR].

I only learnt three years ago, from my uncle (b. 1952), that my grandfather and grandmother had been through the deportation. My grandfather had told him that until 1937 they had lived in Primorsky Krai. When they were moved my grandfather was 26, my grandmother 18, and they had two boys about 3 or 4 years old. On the train journey from Primorye to the Uzbek SSR my grandfather's two sons died, and

they had to bury them by the railway line. They were thought lucky to have been able to bury their children in the earth. But the guards did not allow them to put up plaques with their children's names, so that those children were lost without trace. <…> But it did happen that people were waiting for the opportunity to bury their children or old people, and the train went for a long way without stopping. The bodies were decomposing. Then the guards threw the bodies of the dead from the moving train... In the autumn of 1937, one evening, the whole train was disembarked near the 55th passing loop of the Yangiyul District of the Uzbek SSR. All around were fields and marshes. Nobody helped [AFM, m., b. 1969, Uzbek SSR].

My father is a Korean, my mother a Kalmyk. Both peoples were subject to deportation, the Koreans in 1937 from east to west, and the Kalmyks in 1943 from west to east. My grandmothers and grandfathers experienced the deportation. My grandfather told me that many people died on the road. But they said, 'That means that is how it must be, that is how it was.' They did not know the word 'deportation', they said 'relocation'. On the journey there, women died from ruptured bladders, because they were travelling in a mixed waggon. Many children and old people died. They brought them and threw them out into the bare steppe [AFM, m., b. 1976, the Korean side of his family was deported to the Kazakh SSR].

These are the reminiscences of the grandchildren of deported Koreans. They grew up in the time of 'developed socialism', in conditions of the same monopoly of the CPSU and belief in the 'flowering of the friendship of peoples'. They lived through the period of perestroika and the 1990s, the time of the awakening of ethnic self-awareness and the 'renascence of national culture and traditions'. But at the same time they encountered the contradictions in the emergence of the new independent states and the first ethnic conflicts and crises as a result of the collapse of the USSR.

This is what abides in the memory of the generation of the deportees' great-grandchildren, born in the 1990s:

My parents told me that my great-grandmother and great-grandfather were deported from the Far East in the 1940s. My relations on my father's side ended up in Russia, in the town of Kurgan. My father had a Korean name. All my relations on my mother's side ended up in Uzbekistan. They were transported in a goods waggon. My grandfather was little then. They were afraid, they didn't understand where they were being taken, but they were ready to work, and not afraid to have children [AFM, m., b. 1995, Uzbekistan].

There is ever less information about the tragic event itself and its consequences. No clear evaluation of the nature of the deportation has been developed.

In fact, all generations of Koreans, while they have retained the physical markers of their ethnic identity, their ethical norms of relationships within the family, and a fondness for their national cuisine and for certain customs and traditions, have gradually lost the linguistic and cultural signs of their ethnic identity. Only four of my informants, who spent their childhood in places where deported Koreans lived in compact groups, speak Korean. Seven more (four from the second and three from the third generation) use occasional words and expressions in Korean. The representatives of the third and fourth generations (five and six persons) do not speak Korean, and only one of them has begun to study it at Sunday school. Only some of the traditions and rites of Korean culture are maintained in Yekaterinburg. For example, people of Korean descent celebrate the three chief events in the life of each person: the first birthday, the wedding and the sixtieth birthday. However, these are marked in a modernised form, and other birthdays, dates and life events are celebrated also. On the initiative of their community organisation, they celebrate calendar festivals such as Seollal, the lunar new year.

There has also been a 'dissolution' of the political identity linked to Soviet citizenship. A new identity has had to be sought for. Koreans were faced with the concept of the diaspora in Russia and in the countries of the CIS, with the task of defining their place in the hierarchy of ethnic groups and communities, and with the division of the population into titular and non-titular 'nations'. The Koreans who were left in the countries of the CIS after 1991 had to make a choice of their country of residence and calculate the risks and advantages if they migrated from Central Asia to Russia or South Korea. The conditions of the market economy presented them with new challenges and problems of adaptation. The social and professional structures of the Russian Koreans' community changed, and an economic and social differentiation took place.

'Keeping silent' — a norm of Korean culture or a sign of trauma?

The subject of resettlement was forbidden, nobody ever spoke about it [AFM, m., b. 1942, Uzbek SSR].

Nobody spoke openly about the hardships of life or their resentment of the Soviet regime [AFM, m., b. 1960, Kazakh SSR].

Our grandmothers and grandfathers never complained to anyone about anything. They worked hard. I never heard any words of bitterness against anyone from them. They never cursed anybody, they didn't even criticise Stalin for his inappropriate policies [AFM, m., b. 1976, family deported to Astrakhan Oblast].

Nor did my mother tell me of the death of their two sons, my father's elder brothers. I found out from my uncle that his mother had told him 'Don't tell anyone that we had two boys.' And my uncle kept silent for a long time [AFM, m., b. 1969, Uzbek SSR].

This is the 'inconvenient' memory that is a serious moral and sociopsychological problem both for the Koreans and for Russian society. The life of three generations of Koreans under the conditions of the Soviet and post-Soviet political regimes was determined by the need to survive and adapt. Most of them, employed in agriculture or trade and foodstuffs, were not concerned with understanding the nature of Stalin's policy or the meaning of what they had experienced. The challenges of survival eclipsed the need to reflect on one's own position.

Two sets of factors caused this long silence. The sociopolitical conditions of life in the USSR and the Russian Federation tended to generate fear of the state [Fan 2011]. The second set of factors is linked to culture. The foundation of traditional Korean culture is considered to be the Korean language's complex system of kinship terms. The extremely high significance of the family and of relationships within it influences Koreans' mechanisms of identification: the need for everyone systematically to define their mutual relationship with each of their relatives and their own place within the family as a complex system of roles. My informants confirm that the family and kinship relationships within it are of the first importance for them. As a rule, when Koreans migrate from the countries of Asia to Russia, they choose to settle in a place where their relatives have already acclimatised themselves. Most Russian Koreans maintain close links with their relatives in other regions. 'Interaction within the Korean family assumes an obligatory "scanning", a repeated procedure with every new interaction, of mutual identification depending on generation, age, sex (male or female, the same or opposite) and line of descent (paternal or maternal), and all these elements are organised into a complex hierarchy' [Pyagay 2003: 451]. There is also a specific outlook on the world within this culture. Koreans themselves say that Koreans are not an ethnos, but one big family. Therefore it is more important for them not to stand out as unique personalities, but to identify themselves as mutually dependent units of a social group. The maintenance of silence, reference to things obliquely rather than directly, limitations on the use of mimicry and gestures, the division of the language into male and female subsystems — all these are specific features of the Korean language and culture. There are rules of 'keeping silence': things on which it is not proper to express an opinion are not spoken of. Evading direct answers, and keeping silence, are connected with the expectation that the interlocutor is capable of fellow-feeling, fellow-thinking, and understanding what

has not been expressed. These meanings are comprised by the Korean concepts of *nunchi* (empathy, the ability to read someone's eyes, to put oneself in tune with another person's soul, switch to 'reading thoughts') and *jeong* ('the eyesight of the soul', the capacity for intuitive seeing and foreseeing). 'A constant of all the linguistic means of establishing *jeong* is a mitigation of the categorical, empathy' [Pyagay 2003: 455]. It is also essential to take into account Korean culture's orientation towards the norms of obedience and submission to authority, derived from Confucianism.

However, traditional Korean culture has evolved. The deported Koreans have been interacting for a long time with representatives of Uzbek, Kazakh, Russian and other cultures. Given that most Russian Koreans do not speak Korean, it is impossible to speak of their having preserved their traditional culture unchanged. To provide an adequate answer to the question of the degree to which traditional Korean culture has modernised and accepted the values of European or world culture would require extensive specialist research.

Psychological research on families that suffered Stalin's repressions show the significance of the preservation and transmission of the family memory for the normal functioning of its third-generation members. The removal of this memory is linked to lower indicators of the basic aspects of life in the grandchildren's generation. This confirms Murray Bowen's theory of the negative influence of the loss of ancestors and interruption of the vertical links in the family on the life of different generations. The transmission of family experience through links between generations is particularly fertile when the grandchildren receive the personal models and moral values accumulated in the grandparents' generations and transmitted to them via the parents or directly. Such 'family resources' provide a direction for life in the crisis of present-day Russia for the children and grandchildren of those who suffered repression [Baker, Gippenreiter 2005: 449].

We shall follow J. C. Alexander in understanding cultural trauma as 'a cultural process' of a battle between the meanings constructed by and arising from the different interpretations of the tragic event. Work with the pain of trauma and therapy for negative interpretations of its causes and effects is a condition for any attempt to integrate into society both the 'victim' — the social group or community that suffered — and the 'executioner' — the persons responsible for people's suffering and death [Alexander 2003]. It is important to distinguish between the concepts of collective trauma and cultural trauma. 'Collective trauma is the set of psychological sensations that occur in eyewitnesses or participants <…> of the tragic event and are common to them, but <…> not entirely transmissible by the

experience <…> of living through the situation in question. Cultural trauma is a narrative which places the event that took place into the totality of the images that are significant for the collective identity of a particular community. Cultural trauma comes into being when the transmission of a sacralised canon of cultural memory, including elements of the past that are both heroic and tragic, is included among social practices' [Anikin, Golovashina 2017: 80].

The collective memory of the Koreans has features of an incompletely processed social and cultural trauma. Koreans traditionally revere their ancestors and treasure their family values. But the deportation that their ancestors had experienced was something that could not be talked about. The death of relatives and the forced silence break the mechanisms of the vertical transmission of collective experience, striking a blow against the continuity of the national culture. Some Koreans have ancestors who were missing and have still not been found. Unburied and unmourned relatives, forbidden memories, events not spoken of or denied, the suppression of pain — all these form the background to present-day life. But a past that has been elided by state propaganda does not disappear, and without an answer to the questions of what happened to one's ancestors and why, it is impossible to determine one's own identity. The Koreans whom we interviewed spoke for the most part about events, facts, and details, but not about feelings, assessments of the deportation or attitudes towards it. This is explained not only by faithfulness to their ancestors' outlook, but also by their attitudes towards the situation in Russia.

Keeping silence is one of five strategies for excluding (or justifying) traumatic experience: mutual attribution of blame, externalisation, omission, keeping silence and falsification [Assmann 2014: 169]. According to Assmann, who describes the state of the Germans' historical memory after the Second World War, there are two sides to keeping silence: the silence of the victims, which expresses their powerlessness and fear of speaking the truth in public, and the silence of the guilty, who are silent about their crimes out of reluctance to take responsibility for them and thereby demonstrate their continuing power [Ibid.: 177]. The state policy towards memory in present-day Russia favours a continuance of 'silence'. Silence, as a result of denial, forgetting, or the deliberate exclusion of tragic memories is still an enforced means of experiencing the deportation and Soviet 'serfdom'. But the return of silence after the attempts in the 1990s to make the truth public testifies to the return of fear. The official rhetoric of the necessity of forgiving and forgetting everything is practised by those who are on the side of the people who are guilty of perpetrating the injustice. There is in operation a conscious and unconscious defence against the sense of guilt [Adorno 2005: 39].

The subject of the effect of traumatic experience on the life of later generations has been actively examined with regard to the second generation of those who survived the Holocaust, who did not have direct experience of death and collective violence. Practitioners of cultural-historical clinical psychology saw the same symptoms of trauma in survivors' children as in those who had actually experienced the horrors of the Holocaust. For the generation of those who had experienced the Holocaust, children were a means of restoring the family and the nation and preserving the memory of the past. Fear and a sense of obligation towards their parents were involuntarily instilled in the consciousness of the children: they must continue the family, restore the link between generations, 'achieve much in life so as to justify the sufferings of both the departed and the survivors, and to some extent console their parents' [Burlakova 2016]. Characteristic of the second generation were an inner fracture, a disintegration of personality, a conflict between the experience of the Holocaust as a personal, family tragedy and the experience of it as a national event, a sidelining of personal experiences and problems, low self-esteem with problems about identity, excessive identification with the image of the victim, a need to be super successful so as to make up for the losses of the dead, an extreme attachment to the family and an extreme dependence on it. As a rule, the second generation achieves success, but by way of colossal inner tension and lack of personal happiness [Ibid.]. Different types of people have different reactions to traumatic experience. There are different ways of processing traumatic experience, and different strategies for dealing with the experience of life. Hence the significance of the question of cultural ways and means of translating life experience in the upbringing of children.

The experience of the people and ethnic groups who survived deportation cannot be compared to the experience of the people who survived the Holocaust. However, research into such experience may be useful to our topic. The specific feature of the Koreans' traumatic experience is that the death of their relations while being transported or at their place of exile was a side effect of the deportation. But this does not make the material and moral hurt of their unjust punishment and public stigmatisation any less deep. In studying the memory of the Koreans, research into the multiple meanings of silence is significant, since silence prevents the processing of the trauma, denies the past, and interrupts the continuity of culture and the transmission of experience and the life stories of their ancestors to new generations. In the present culture of the Koreans there is a contradiction between the tradition of respect and reverence for the ancestors and the enforced forgetting of certain of them. In the situation of a 'difficult memory', not brought into the light of publicity, much comes into question: the

moral choice, the distinction between good and evil, questions of justice and law, the concept of the norm of collective and social life, and participation in political life.

The obverse of the Koreans' silence about their deportation, in my view, is the attitude which, from the late 1940s and 1950s, the older generations instilled into their own children: they must get a higher education, and in Russia.

After the eighth class of the Korean collective farm school, my parents sent me to Tashkent to study at a Russian school. All the pupils in our class entered higher education. Koreans who had been deported to Uzbekistan, Kirgizia or Kazakhstan left, if possible, for Russia to get a good education [AFM, f., b. 1950, Uzbek SSR].

University entrance in the Uzbek SSR reserved 80% of places for young Uzbeks, and 20% for the rest. Koreans had little chance of getting in. Therefore, our elders advised us to go and study in Russia. And so young Koreans were dispersed all over Russia [AFM, m., b. 1942, Uzbek SSR].

Parents' expectations that their children would leave 'the blessed country' was an oblique recognition of the unsatisfactory nature of their social position, a wish to deliver their children from the condition of 'second-class citizens' and give them a chance to improve their social status. Older people saved up money to send their children to study at institutions of higher education in the RSFSR. This strategy for overcoming the consequences of the deportation was employed mostly at the level of family adaptation to Soviet life. These desires and aspirations did not extend to the public sphere.

Summing up the experience of work with the traumatic past in several countries of the world, Nikolai Epple demonstrates that every stage is important in the sequence of processing the trauma: 'Remember — Know — Condemn — Forgive' [Epple 2020: 222]. An important stage in society's work on the trauma is to establish who is guilty of the crimes, and their responsibility. To prevent Russian society from working on its traumas in this way, state institutions control the processes of remembrance, archiving of data, historical education of children and young people, and the dissemination of information about the political repressions of the Soviet period. Therefore, state memory policy is directed towards the elision of the memory of actual events by means of artificial myths about the prosperous past, the replacement of the memories of people who had experienced repression, deportation and war with a variant of history put together to suit the current aims and interests of the powers that be. Such a memory policy hinders the creation of conditions for the interaction of the vast number of narratives of deportation.

Avoiding 'powerful emotions'
and an evaluation of the consequences of deportation

The people interviewed answered the question of how their parents had perceived the fact that they had been undeservedly deported, and how they regarded their own position in the present, in this way:

Mother did not know how to evaluate the Soviet system, Stalin's role, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, or the prohibitions applied to Koreans, either at the time or later [AFM, m., b. 1943, Uzbek SSR].

My parents were aware of themselves at that time <…> They had been through a lot <…> They perceived the relocation of our family as it was explained to them: 'This is how it must be! It is for your own safety, there may be aggressive actions by Japan on the frontier.' They only discovered the real meaning of the Decree for Deportation after 1991. Everything was kept secret in those days. Therefore, Korean families took it as a given and believed what was spoken from the rostrum. In my childhood, and in the 1960s, no one spoke of dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime. They spoke of difficulties, but not of offences. Later, in 1966, mother said that, on the whole, the Koreans were living better now, of course one wouldn't say thank you for the deportation, but we had ended up in a blessed country [AFM, f., b. 1950, Uzbek SSR].

My grandmother was an uncommunicative person. I remember, she used to sit in her room, combing her long grey hair with an old Korean comb. She never spoke about politics, nor about problems, nor about resentment against anybody. She never complained about anybody. There was no discussion of the prohibitions and limitations connected with the deportation of the Koreans. Although now I understand that there were obstacles to Koreans' professional lives [AFM, m., b. 1960, Kazakh SSR].

What was it — ignorance of what had happened, or something else? What is important for me is my ancestors' enjoinder: there is no point in bemoaning your fate, you must live, move on, and not blame other people. Yes, they were undeservedly deported, but so what? Those who were resettled lived through it, they were distressed, but they said that that was their fate [AFM, m., b. 1976, the Korean side of his family were deported to the Kazakh SSR].

I cannot condemn the deportation. The way it happened, why <…> It was not spoken about in my family. And the very word 'deportation' was not used. Their attitude was: if it happened, it happened [AFM, m., b. 1995, Uzbekistan].

Only once did I hear words like these:

Russia gives everybody the opportunity to live, admittedly, sometimes it humiliates them [AFM, m., b. 1942, Uzbek SSR].

The silent memory does not allow people to give an adequate evaluation of the consequences of the deportation, the Koreans' position at present or their prospects for the future. But 'what has been forgotten' does not cease to be a social and cultural trauma. It is not only the memory of immediate physical losses. During the deportation the adults' passports were confiscated, which deprived them of the formal rights of a Soviet citizen. Special notes were placed in their passports, which placed the Koreans in total subjugation to the administrative organs and the police, such as the violet stamp 'Has the right to live in the Uzbek SSR.' The prohibitions on free movement, occupying leading posts, or going to institutes of higher education related to the military-industrial complex or state secrets are only some of the practices of exclusion to which the Koreans were subject. In reply there arose 'a sense of humiliating exclusion' from the ranks of Soviet peoples. 'People who were repressed for ethnic reasons became ashamed of their ethnicity' [Guchinova 2020: 168]. The label 'Japanese spies', and persecution of the inhabitants of the receiving republics if they had contact with deported persons were signs of the stigmatisation of Koreans that was only lifted after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. Hard work with almost no rest was the condition of physical survival, likewise the demonstration of loyalty 'to the Party and the government'. The position of most Koreans until 1953–1956 was not much different from serfdom.

When I finished school in 1959 I thought of going to Moscow to enter the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. But I could not go; we were not issued with school-leaving certificates because children had to do agricultural work. They were only issued on 10 July. All children in Uzbekistan worked like the damned: in spring at clearing the ground and weeding and in summer and autumn at pruning. On 15 September every year the school closed, and opened again on 15 December, and during that time the children picked cotton. Cotton is the national pride and heritage of Uzbekistan. But children were not educated for half the year. However, people were not discontented with this, it was taken to be how things were supposed to be. The orders came from Moscow, 'Fulfil the plan!', and the government of the Uzbek SSR issued a ruling that children should be employed in seasonal work [AFM, m., b. 1941, Uzbek SSR].

Even now Koreans do not regard these facts as discrimination.

Semantic aspects of traumatised memory

The memory of the deportation is expressed differently in different families: some of them acknowledge the trauma, but most of them deny it.

Our memory is not tragic. My parents and I never talked about the tragic aspect of the situation. None of the prohibitions, or consequences of the deportation were discussed, even in the kitchen. Conversations were always practical and businesslike: it was hard, but never mind, we managed. And my grandmothers and grandfathers were shock workers. I remember from my childhood that my grandmother and grandfather were up by four o'clock in the morning, and when you would go to sleep at ten o'clock at night, they were still not asleep, doing something. But I don't remember any sense of tragedy. I regard myself as a Korean, and I take life positively. I would like my children and grandchildren to regard themselves as Koreans [AFM, m., b. 1975, Astrakhan Oblast].

For the most part Koreans' memory is tragic. When they remember the deportation, the most often say: 'We never complained.' These are key words, they mean that there was something to complain about, but the pain and offence were suppressed, passed over in silence. But this tragedy is lying somewhere deep down in the subconscious [AFM, m., b. 1964, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk].

Any unique biographical memory is rooted in the history of society. Collective memory provides individuals with a cognitive network of co-ordinates and determines their behaviour, supplying both individuals and the society with temporal landmarks: Where did we come from, where are we going, and why are we here? [Halbwachs 1980: 58]. Ron Eyerman has synthesised the theories of the individual and collective natures of memory and identity. The collective memory is the process and result of communication, exchange and dialogue between the individual and the collective. Therefore, the processing of a cultural trauma with the help of new narratives of the tragic events becomes a renewal and resetting of the collective identity. These narratives interpret the past anew for the sake of a reconciliation with the needs of the present and the future [Eyerman 2001: 4].

Eyerman's approach allows the semantic aspects of the collective memory of social groups to be identified. The memory of peoples contains social and cultural trauma in which many aspects and meanings are concentrated. The first of them is '[t]he trauma of forced servitude and of nearly complete subordination to the will and whims of another'. This state of not having personal or collective freedom was 'traumatic in retrospect' the descendants of people whose rights had been limited as well. Children who observe their parents' humiliation also receive a trauma. The second aspect is a 'loss of identity and meaning' [Eyerman 2001: 1–2]. Representatives of the Korean intelligentsia in Russia find differences in the language, culture, traditions and customs between the Koreans of North and South Korea, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, mainland

Russia and Sakhalin, and also between Soviet and Russian Koreans. There emerge many separate groups of Koreans with specific identities. Dispersal as a result of deportation results in a blurring of the features that unite Russian Koreans. Victor Shnirelman has identified the following components of ethnic identity: autochthony, linguistic continuity, cultural continuity, the military glory of distant ancestors, the participation of distant ancestors in the foundation of ancient states, the mission of distant ancestors as Kulturträger or civilisers, and biological continuity [Shnirelman 2003: 514]. From the Russian authorities' point of view the Koreans are neither autochthonous nor a titular people, nor do they possess on this territory 'the image of a glorious heroic past' essential to political ambitions. They have to a large extent lost their linguistic continuity, since 90% of Russian Koreans do not know their native tongue. They give their children Russian names, not Korean ones. For the most part their biological continuity is preserved, and to a certain extent cultural continuity (Korean cuisine, particular festivals, the norms of respect for their elders). The traumatised collective memory also leads to a blurring of Koreans' ethnic identity.

The third aspect of the memory of most of the Koreans that we surveyed is a partial decapitalisation ('nullification') of the historical, cultural and professional experience and achievements of former generations, and also efforts and readiness to take a critical view of the events that have befallen them, since there was an unspoken prohibition by the authorities on reflecting on the past. The fourth aspect of the tragic memory of the Koreans is that information about their ancestors' dwelling in their places of exile in a state of 'serfdom' is sometimes met with rejection on the part of their descendants, a reluctance to accept the bitter truth. There emerges a fear of expressing critical assessments of tragic events, a tendency towards conformism, a loyalty to the powers that be, and a suppression within oneself of the urge towards freedom or any form of political activity. The fifth aspect is the replacement of the vagueness in the collective memory with the ideological clichés of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, such as the thesis of the 'equality of the peoples of the USSR', etc.

The experience of the population of various countries that have experienced some kind of repression [Epple 2020] shows the usefulness of overcoming such peculiarities of memory by means of processing the cultural trauma. The result of individual and public work on collective traumas is that groups that in the past were discriminated against can perceive themselves as equal, in their social and political status and by other parameters, to the more numerous communities that form with them a common civil identity. Such processing takes place as part of a process of rationalising the past

and detraumatising the events, it limits the possibility of repeating the past, effecting a transition from melancholy to mourning [LaCapra 1996: 13–14]. A condition for processing the trauma is a recognition that the two extremes, absolute remembrance and absolute oblivion, are not constructive. Paul Ricœur writes that forgetting is one of the conditions for 'good memory'. This is what makes it so important for there to be a discussion of the idea of the profundity of forgetting and the different perspectives of specific subjects of remembering / forgetting. The main danger for the condition of social memory 'est dans le maniement de l'histoire autorisée, imposée, célébrée, commémorée — de l'histoire officielle' [Ricœur 2000: 580]. It is society that must, by various means, do the work of memory, or the work of sorrow, and not allow official ideology to monopolise this work and turn the collective memory of the past into an object of the dominant ideology. It is important that there should be a 'just memory policy', including an assessment of political and moral guilt, and the establishment of persons' responsibility for their criminal decisions and acts, and only after that can there be forgiveness.

Russian Koreans' present social position and wellbeing, the resilience of their ethnic identity and the character of their inclusion in the national identity, are determined by a set of interconnected political, economic, demographic, social, cultural, psychological and moral consequences of the deportation. The state nationalities policy of Soviet and post-Soviet times has a decisive influence on the processes of assimilation and the loss of ethnic identity of this social group. Putting together the empirical data obtained, we come to the conclusion that 'keeping silence' about the fact of the deportation and avoidance of evaluating its consequences are explained by a combination of several factors. To a certain extent the traditions of Korean culture — the ethics of family relationships, the rules of 'keeping silence', etc. — are reproduced. For example, some informants from the middle generation follow the norm of obedience to elders and their opinion, repeating after their elders the clichés of Soviet propaganda about the existence in the USSR of 'a Soviet people as a new historical international community of people'. However, this generation already has a different evaluation of current events and phenomena. In order to adapt successfully to present-day Russian conditions, Koreans use a strategy based on a lack of any ambitions in the public sphere, but maintaining firm kinship and family ties, which often form the basis for a family business. However, the economically successful adaptation of some Korean families is achieved at the price of social differentiation and inequality, and also of a restricted spectrum of various opportunities and liberties — political, public, creative, professional development. The fact that they were for many years restricted to working in

agriculture, food and trade led to a reduction in the spheres and kinds of professional activity open to them, for example the involuntary concentration on the 'salad business'. The loss of the nascent Korean intelligentsia, party officials and military officers, the liquidation of Korean schools and the teacher-training college in the Far East, restrictions of freedom of movement, choice of residence, and study, the prohibition of certain professions — all the repressions of the past have accelerated the process of blurring and loss of the traditional national culture and ethnic identity.

My study has permitted the identification of the following peculiarities of Russian Koreans' collective memory. The conservation of an attitude that sets aside the memory of the deportation as an irrelevant area of life devalues the tragic experience of the ancestors. There is no expression of the dynamics or changes in substantial evaluation of the deportation and its consequences from one generation of Russian Koreans to the next. Reflection on the extent to which the deportation has influenced the history and social development of Koreans in Russia is insufficiently developed and poorly represented in the public space. 'Keeping silence' about the deportation is a sign of social and cultural trauma and is determined by a combination of the political conditions of life in post-Soviet Russia, as well as the action of the remaining norms and rules of Korean culture. I have also identified these semantic aspects of the Russian Koreans' traumatised memory: a constant sense of the lack of collective freedom, though this is not expressed in public; a gradual diffusion of identity; a decapitalisation of the experience of preceding generations; a rejection of tragic experience and of information of the ancestors' situation as 'outcasts' and 'serfs' in the past; an avoidance of critical assessments of the actions of the authorities in both past and present, a preponderance of conformism in social and political behaviour; the use of Soviet or present-day ideological clichés to evaluate the deportation and its consequences.

Cultural trauma must be processed also by people who have not directly experienced any tragic event. Immersion in the drama of particular crimes leads to moral enlightenment and forgiveness of the guilty. For this it is necessary that many people should be included in the process of shared experience with those who suffered. Equally essential is an understanding that in certain conditions 'evil' may arise in any nation and any person. 'Evil is inside all of us and in every society. If we ourselves have the capacity to be victims and also perpetrators, then none of us can legitimately distance ourselves from the suffering of victims or the responsibility of perpetrators' [Alexander 2016: 9]. This awakening of moral consciousness and attempt at catharsis when the narrative about the tragic event is publicly discussed or experienced gives us a chance of changing and preventing tragedies from happening in future.

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Abbreviations

AFM — Author's field materials from the project 'Social Agreement in Russia and the Construction of Civil Identity as a Means of Its Attainment' collected in Yekaterinburg in 2020

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