

Special Settlers of Arkhangelsk in the Cultural Memory of the Local Community and Their Descendants

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The article reports a case study of oral recollections of the descendants of special settlers, i.e. peasants dekulaked and deported to the Arkhangelsk region in the early 1930s. The region was previously a part of the Northern Krai.

A historiographical review related to the research topic has been carried out. The concepts of dekulakization in the USSR and destinies of dekulaked are discussed in the local context. The stories of the descendants of the special settlers analysed in the article result from semi-structured interviews. These stories form a hypertext. We select stable motifs of oral stories recorded from the descendants of the special settlers. Conclusions are drawn about the characteristics of the cultural memory of the descendants of the special settlers.

The article deals with the features of family identity and the role of awareness of the fate of their relatives in this identity. The children and grandchildren of the special settlers have different attitudes towards dekulakization of the families of their ancestors. This is driven by the diversity of behaviours, choices and particular circumstances of their life.

The interpretation is grounded in the idea of variability of the process of special resettlements and its dependence on the regional context, and on the method of family history.

Key words: cultural memory; special settlers; Arkhangelsk; folklore and speech practice; historiography

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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The purpose of this research is to analyse the features of the cultural memory of the Arkhangelsk community about the special settlers whose place of expulsion was the

Northern Krai, the predecessor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast (province), which was created in 1937. The Northern Krai was founded on 14th of January, 1929 for the purposes of rapid industrialization. It included the territories of the Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Severo-Dvinsk provinces as well as the Komi Autonomous Republic. Arkhangelsk became the centre of the Northern Krai (Kuratov, 2001: 361). The Northern Krai was infamous for being the region with the largest number of special settlements for dekulaked families in the USSR.

In this article we use the term cultural memory. M. Halbwachs (2007), P. Nora (1999) and J. Assmann (2004) are the founders of its study. For J. Assmann, the concept of cultural memory includes the memories of the past, the chirographic culture and the cultural and political identity affected by rituals. The cultural memory is a procedure of transferring the basic semantic structures from generation to generation and the revelation of the translation mechanism. The cultural memory, unlike the communicative memory, is focused on certain fixed moments in the past: "the past ... is here folded into symbolic figures to which a recollection is attached" (Assmann, 2004: 54). For J. Assmann, the cultural memory is sacred; it is mythologized and objectified in various forms: texts and commemorative practices (Assmann, 2004).

P. Nora introduces a concept of memory space, which ensures the unity of a community. These are monuments (of culture and nature), holidays, emblems, celebrations in honour of people or events, ritual speeches, etc. P. Nora encourages us to rethink our views on most of the factual knowledge of the past, as well as to give a new meaning to the problems of cultural memory (Nora, 1999: 17–50).

At different times, the past has different statuses. We proceed on the assumption that it is unstable and relies on the present. Memories are social and depend on which group we belong to.

Communicative memory is not very formalized. It is rather an oral tradition that arises in the context of everyday interaction and communication; a sort of a lively recollection that has existed throughout the life of three generations: children – fathers – grandfathers. Communicative memory is valid for three generations (Assmann, 1992: 21).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND / HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

In 1930, the Northern Krai became the place with the largest number of special settlements for dekulaked families. Special settlements were to be constructed in the desolated forest part of the region, because most of special settlers were meant to work in the forest industry. In February 1930, special settlers began to trickle in by troop trains; about 1,500 to 1,800 persons in each (Lobchenko, 2006: 137–156).

As the result of dekulakization, more than 300,000 people were sent into exile to the Northern Krai (Shashkov, 2000: 122). The number of special settlers in Arkhangelsk sharply increased in the early 1930s. By the beginning of 1932, special settlers, the administratively deported and other "alien elements" were working at factories and construction sites in Arkhangelsk and its surroundings (Korotaev, 2004: 38). In just two years (1930 and 1931), the population of Arkhangelsk doubled (Korotaev, 1998: 143).

Cultural memory is related to social groups, for whom it serves as a condition for self-identification, reinforcing a sense of unity and their own identity. Cultural memory has a reconstructive character. In other words, the valuable ideas and the degrees of

relevance implied in it, likewise the knowledge of the past transmitted by it, are directly linked to the current situation in the life of a group (Assmann, 1992: 21).

In the late 1980s, the policy of memory in Russia changed. Events of the Soviet history began to undergo re-evaluation and archives were opened. In this context, there appeared research and publications on topics that were banned in Soviet era. V. Ia. Shashkov was one of the first, who traced the development of the concept of dekulakization in the USSR and the fate of dekulaked families. In his works, the process of dekulakization in the Soviet Union was for the first time studied comprehensively. He dealt with political, socio-economic, legal and other aspects of dekulakization as a whole: the ruination of peasant households, the deportation of dekulaked families to remote regions of the country, the creation of the Gulag system of special settlements, the use of labour of special settlers and their social, medical and cultural services, the participation of former kulaks in the Great Patriotic War, the restoration of their civil rights, and finally the liquidation of the special settlement system in 1954 (Shashkov, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2001).

Outside Russia, there are few studies devoted to the recollections of dekulaked peasants. Western researchers wrote about the dekulaked as about victims of the Soviet regime, who maintained their identity through the Soviet time and, after perestroika, “tore off their masks”, started to talk about their fates, and revealed themselves as a school of survivors (Viola, 2007, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2005; Litvinenko & Riordan, 1998).

A great contribution to the study of the history of special settlements in the Northern Krai was made by N. V. Upadyshev. He was the first who carried out a theoretical and methodological study of the local component of the Gulag in the context of the history of the country and of the province. N. V. Upadyshev established the place and the role of the Russian European North in this process by the means of an analysis of the complex reasons and factors that led to the emergence of the Soviet system of forced labour camps (Upadyshev, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2012).

V. I. Korotaev (2004) in his monograph undertook an analysis of the demographic situation in the Northern Krai of the first decades of the 20th century. His work was the first special study on the demographic consequences of the labour of special settlers and prisoners in the region.

E. V. Khatanzeyskaya analysed the process of special settlement in the Northern Krai as carried out using the labour of the “special contingent” (prisoners, the administratively deported and special settlers). She made an analysis of this process in the light of the history of Arkhangelsk. The industry of the town and its port infrastructure were designed to promote the country’s foreign exchange reserves, which were necessary for industrialization. The researcher concludes that the settlement of remote areas of the country and the industrialization per se seemed impossible without urgent measures of labour contracting, and, in particular, without the use of the labour of significant parties of the “special contingent”. The process of continuous collectivization, which began in 1929, was accompanied by the expulsion of dekulaked peasants to the North. They became the main labour force in the sawmill industry of the region, and, along with other categories of the “special contingent” (especially with exiled specialists), created the conditions for the industrialization of the USSR (Khatanzeyskaya, 2016: 93–104).

In the 1930s new sawmills were being built in Arkhangelsk. Thus in 1930, the “V. M. Molotov A” and the “V. M. Molotov A-prim” sawmills were built. In the period between 1934 and 1957 they were referred to as the sawmills No’s. 16–17, and later became the Solombal’skii Sawmill and Woodworking Plant. The book by E. I. Ovsiankin (2001) is devoted to the history of this plant.

In this book he writes that the peasants of the Arkhangelsk province were reluctant to leave their villages and turned out to be poorly adapted to the city life after being recruited for the construction sites. Most of them took the first possibility to return home and so it was decided to use prisoners, the administratively deported and special settlers from various regions of the country at the sawmills and in the logging industry (Ovsiankin, 2001: 25).

The report of the Krai committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks states this as following: "This winter up to 30,000 kulaks and anti-Soviet elements from all regions of the Union, including 9,000 criminals, are expected to arrive to the Northern Krai. It makes no sense to let them walk freely around the Krai: they can and must be used as a labour force under the control of the Joint State Political Directorate (hereinafter – OGPU) and the camp" (SLON – the Solovki special camp was meant here).¹

Most of the special settlers arrived at the construction site of the Solombal'skii Sawmill in the 1930s. At the same time, the mill management asked the OGPU authorities to send over another 2,000 such workers.² Special settlers were severely discriminated against. The secret department of the Northern State Timber Trust SEVEROLES had been constantly sending various directives to the mill director on their methods of census, salary payments, meal service and ways of resettlement. So, for example, in the special directive issued on 5th of July, 1931, the OGPU stated the need to "observe the strictest secrecy on the issue of information about the administratively deported".³ The document indicated that this phrase, as well as the word SLON, must appear neither in books of accounts, nor in any primary documents. It was recommended to use the phrase "temporary worker on shift" instead. At the same time the directives reminded of the need to "observe the class consciousness" towards them, since supposedly "this group requires special attention".⁴ Five percent of the salary of the "special contingent" was transferred to the fund of the OGPU authorities "for the organizational expenses related to the development of special settlers in the Northern Krai", and two percent was confiscated to the accounts of the local districts for their cultural service.⁵ The "temporary workers on shift" were not allowed into canteens where civilian employees ate and they were given less provision as compared to other workers.⁶

The state set a goal to reduce the opportunities of special settlers to communicate with the local residents. The agreement concluded between the SEVEROLES company and the authorities of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (hereinafter – NKVD) stipulated that the management of enterprises had the right to transfer special settlers across the region, but they were forbidden to live in the same houses with civilian employees.⁷ The majority of the temporary workers were assigned to hard labour.⁸

1 The State Archive of Social and Political Movement and Organizations of the Arkhangelsk Region – GAOPDF AO. F. 290. Op. 1. D.43. L.77

2 The State Archive of the Arkhangelsk Region – GAAO. F. 2186. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 64.

3 ib. 2186. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 6.

4 ib. 2186. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 6.

5 ib. 71. Op. 9. D. 151. L. 8.

6 ib. 2186. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 11.

7 ib. 2186. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 14.

8 ib. 2186. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 83.

The formation of the cultural memory of local communities is influenced not only by professional studies but also by fiction, publications and interviews for mass media related to different time periods.

A. Rusinov's fiction "The Great Deception: Notes from Soviet Russia that Eluded the GPU"⁹ was published in Arkhangelsk in 2017. One of its chapters is devoted to the author's meeting special settlers at one of the railway stations. The narratives of special settlers published in the book include a typical motif of moving / expulsion of the families of special settlers to the Northern Krai in cattle and freight wagons (I highlighted such narratives in one of my previous works – Drannikova, 2019: 11).

Days and weeks are passing by. Cattle wagons are arriving day by day. ... Our station is already crowded with them, as well as with the Red Army soldiers and the State Political Directorate (GPU) employees. There are rows of these wagons throughout the entire stretch of the Vologda – Arkhangelsk road, six hundred kilometres long; all the dead ends and small parking lots are full of them.

Finally, it has been found that these are kulaks with their families, the enemies of collectivization. They are able-bodied peasants from the Volga region, Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc.; hundreds of thousands of them were sent to the North.

Two weeks after the wagons arrived to the station, these people were first allowed to step out into the fresh air no further than a hundred meters from the wagons.

From these grey shadows that used to be human beings, I learned their sorry affair.

"Death has already set many of us free on the way here. Some people died from camp fever, others from the cold, they froze to death being asleep, and still others died out of desperation. Soldiers arrive in the morning, roll out the corpses of the door and – boom! To the snow. What they do with them later... I don't know. I can't tell you if they are buried or not. Yes, death set free a good many, our saviour, we are waiting for it, death won't leave us, it will definitely come" (Rusinov, 2017: 122–125).

A. Rusinov was the pseudonym of the writer E. A. Gagarin (1905–1948), who was born in the Shenkursk uyezd of the Arkhangelsk province and stayed in exile in Arkhangelsk from the late 1920s till the middle 1930s before emigrating to Germany. His book "Great Deception" was originally published in Germany in 1936. It was only in 2017 that the book was first translated from German into Russian and published in Arkhangelsk. Despite its fictional character, it has a documentary basis to a great extent (Rusinov, 2017: 319–329). Rusinov, the principle narrator in the book, is exiled from Leningrad to Arkhangelsk in 1927 as one of the victims of political repressions. He works as a topographer and technician in construction and in forests and lives in the city full of former noblemen, officers, intelligentsia and priests. However, the dekulaked peasants constitute the biggest group in the city. The "great construction sites of socialism" are supplied with cheap labour by GPU (The state political directorate of the NKVD RSFSR). One of these sites is the Solombalskii sawmill. Pages of the book are full of descriptions of dead bodies lying on the streets of Arkhangelsk. These are bodies of special settlers that are dekulaked peasants from the central part of Russia. The main narrator witnesses the forced collectivization of rural areas, the elimination of churches, the death of specialists accused of "sabotage", the moral degradation and physical demise of large groups of population. He narrates about Kholmogory and

9 The book was originally published in Germany in 1936 entitled "Die große Täuschung".

Solovki prison camps as well as about destiny of some famous inhabitants of Arkhangelsk.

The text also includes a narrative of a special settler about the expulsion. It is eschatological in nature and based on syntactic parallelism, which is achieved by repeating or ascending gradation, which reveal the circumstances of the death of dekulaked peasants during the journey (*death has set free, died with camp fever, from the cold, roll out the corpses, bury or not, death set free*). The narrator, as a believer, is waiting for death which will put him out of his misery. Death for a Christian is a continuation of the life of the soul, the fate of which is decided at the Last Judgment. The narrative implicitly reveals the picture of the Anti-world, the actors of which are the Red Army soldiers and the GPU employees.

The publication of the book had a great resound. It influenced the cultural memory of the local community and aroused interest to the local history of repressions during the Soviet era. Indeed, many people living in the modern Arkhangelsk Oblast had not been aware about the real scale of repressions and the anti-religious campaign described in the book. Many of them did not even know that Arkhangelsk was a place of exile for dekulaked peasants. The book by E. A. Gagarin (Rusinov) provoked interest towards their own family histories and towards the traumatic chapters of the provincial history. In the Arkhangelsk province, there is no branch of the International Historical, Educational, Human Rights and Charitable Society "Memorial" and the restoration work on the memory of the victims of political repressions is therefore insufficient.

CURRENT FOLKLORE AND SPEECH PRACTICE AS A PART OF CULTURAL MEMORY

The modern folklore and speech tradition is a part of cultural memory. Conventional methods were used for data collection: conversation, family-biographical interview, surveys and the method of participant observation. In-depth interviews were held with the representatives of the second and third generations, i.e., children and grandchildren of special settlers. They were the main sources of information. An informal semi-structured questionnaire containing in fact only a list of topics to be discussed and a few mostly open-ended questions was used during the interviews. The informants were asked about the dekulakization of their families, their exile, and life in a special settlement or a prison camp as well as about the further destiny of the exiled family members and their descendants. I also asked the informants if the stories about dekulakization and exile were kept secret in their families, when they learned them and what was their reaction and attitude towards them. Since many of the informants were accessible only through people they trusted, the "snowball method", a special type of non-random sampling was employed: the informants who took part in the study were asked to recommend other potential informants by telling their names and contact data. Each interview lasted not less than two hours.

In the course of the study, one hundred local residents permanently living in Arkhangelsk and aged between 40 and 90 were interviewed. The informants differed in their education background. Among them were the descendants of the local inhabitants as well as children and grandchildren of the peasants who were deported to the Northern Krai from the Saratov, Vladimir and Astrakhan regions, Belarus, the Lugansk, Donetsk, Suma, Kharkov and Kirovograd regions of Ukraine, from the Kuban and the Caucasus,

Transnistria, Crimea and many others. A big group of the informants consisted of members of the Arkhangelsk Regional Organization of Political Repression Victims “Sovest” (conscience). These people are children of the repressed inhabitants of the Arkhangelsk Province. The interviews were performed over three years (2017 – 2019).

The collected materials are currently stored in the archive of the Centre for the European North Traditional Culture Studies of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University fund No. 37. This fund currently includes 200 hours of audio recordings and 100 files. All this data is original and has never been published before. We have divided informants into three groups: the younger generation (30 to 40 years old), the middle generation (40 to 60 years old) and the older generation (those older than 60). The youngest of our informants was born in 1982, the oldest in 1925. Most of the informants belong to the middle and older generation groups. 60 percent of the informants are women and 40 percent are men. All the recordings were made in Arkhangelsk.

The deportation of several hundreds of thousands of people led to a demographic disaster in the territory of the modern Arkhangelsk region. The alert level of local authorities to receive special settlers was next to none (Vasev, 2011: 396–397).

Grandchildren of the local inhabitant of Arkhangelsk recall:

Since my childhood, I remember the stories of my grandmother that in the late 1920s and early 1930s corpses, which were left out for a long time, were laying in the streets of Arkhangelsk. These were the dekulaked starved to death, who were sent to Arkhangelsk with their families and had no means for living. The entire families begged alms and were refused since the locals had nothing to eat themselves, but more often because of cruelty (male, 44 y.o.)

The memories of the descendants are recorded in the form of a family-biographical interview, which was focused or narrative. I relied on the classification of speech genres proposed by M. M. Bakhtin (1979). He relates an oral narrative to the primary speech genres that occur during a dialogue. K. V. Chistov (1988) emphasized the difficulty of distinguishing an oral narrative from everyday speech. Along with the term “oral narrative”, I use the term family-biographical khronikat – this is an oral narrative or a brief overview without a subject, characterized by “fragmentary nature and weakened intra-textual cohesion” (Razumova, 2019). The term applies to the narratives that tell the story of a family over a long period of time. Family texts exist in the following forms: ceremonial, representative and internal. Here we quote stories recorded from the Arkhangelsk Oblast inhabitants. The stories represent hypertexts: they show thematic and motive unity.

The inhabitants of Arkhangelsk partly remember the special settlers. In the first instance, a large number of the deported stuck in their memory, which left a deep impression.

They came from different places, from everywhere, and even the Poles were here. It seemed everybody was here, everybody was shot again here, and everybody was captured and sent into exile again and again. Strange as it may seem, a bulk of people from Ukraine, these Cossacks from the Don, somebody else’s were sent ... You need to look for this in Pinezhë¹⁰ – merely everybody was sent there.¹¹ We were here outside the town, so they were sent over there. But it’s a childhood experience... (female, 79 y.o.)

10 The Pinezhsky District, Arkhangelsk Region.

11 The Kuloiskii Forced Labour Camp of NKVD situated in the Pinezhsky District (1937–1960).

The childhood impressions of our informants are mythologized and acquire an eschatological character.

Everybody was exiled without asking, we were almost naked, but they still took everything from us. We were literally send away naked. (female, 95 y.o.)

We were transported in cattle carriage for a whole month. (female, 58 y.o.)

Our absolutely innocent family was dekulaked in 1937-1938. People came to us unexpectedly in the middle of the night and told us to harness our horse and leave our house. We were transported in a cattle carriage to the village of Nizhni Chov near Syktyvkar. Once we got to the railway, we were put into cattle carriages then we crossed the river on a raft and got into the village. Young people were put onto the raft and the old people pulled it. (female, 79 y.o.)

Living conditions were inhuman: we had to live in dugouts during the winter frosts. When it was raining, we did not have a place to dry our clothes. You can understand the attitude we had towards all this. For how long this continued? This continued till the war, till the war continued our very bad life (male, 75 y.o.)

We were brought to an exceptionally long barrack. There were a lot of people in these barracks and only one iron stove. There were... how they are named? ..., bunk beds. There we all, half naked, had to warm ourselves. (female, 95 y.o.)

We have lived through all of this... Let God protect anyone from living through this! I was only 5 years old but still even I remember everything. I remember how we travelled, how we were sent there, how we lived there. Our mother would lie over us and blow on us, blow to warm us, to protect us from cold. What else could she do: there was only one iron stove and the barrack full of people! (female, 95 y.o.)

The Arkhangelsk special settlers worked mainly in the forestry and logging industries, including the sawmills of Arkhangelsk, however the memories about this have not been preserved. None of the interviewed residents of Maimaksa, a suburb of Arkhangelsk, where the Solombal'skii woodworking plant was located and where most of the inhabitants of this town district worked, knew that the plant was built by the special contingent and that special settlers worked there.

As our study showed, the descendants of the Arkhangelsk special settlers do not know their family history well. Odd bits of information about the biography of their ancestors remained in their memory. As we believe, this is largely due to the social stigmatization, which arose when their families were considered as groups of kulaks, and the desire to protect children and grandchildren from this knowledge. The family history is better known to children of the special settlers who themselves lived in special settlements (Drannikova, 2019: 11).

I tried to learn something about my grandfather's family. My dad knows almost nothing, he was born in 1934, nothing was told about this in his family. I also got my aunt involved. Scant information: the family of my great-grandfather Iosif Garaz, wife – Proskovia Il'inichna, son – Grigorii Iosifovich – my grandfather born in 1911, and another son –

Nikolai Iosifovich born when they arrived to Maimaksa. So my great-grandmother arrived pregnant, they were dekulaked and sent to the North, to Maimaksa before 1932. They arrived from the Donetsk region. We don't know anything (female, 61 y.o.)

This family-biographical khronikat is incomplete and fragmentary and refers to the internal texts of the family, which was reproduced in response to our question. The informant does not know the reasons and circumstances of the expulsion; she knows only the names of the great-grandfathers and the place from which they were sent.

The oral narratives of the descendants of special settlers were given in the framework of a semi-structured interview, a type of individual in-depth interview, during which we sought to discuss with the informants a specific list of topics and aspects related to dekulakization of their families, expulsion and life in exile. These narratives form a hypertext. They circulated as internal texts of the family until the rehabilitation, which started in 1989, but in some families they continue to remain internal until now, while in others they have become representative. This is explained by the place of residence, education and how the memory of repressions by the local community is interpreted. Some of the descendants of the special settlers are trying to figure out the reasons for the repressions against their family and its expulsion. A moral and historical assessment of what happened is important for them.

I think this is a huge tragedy. It is probably difficult for the older generation to realize this, to accept. Some collective understanding of this is yet to come in years ahead. They were peasants. What skills did they have? Plant, plough – that's what they did. Just too little we know about it. Aitmatov has a novel about it, about local residents, that some cosmodromes were being built nearby, of which the locals knew nothing... This story is essential to be presented, so that someone just begins to do it. <...> Culture is just the right thing that can help to comprehend this traumatic experience (female, 35 y.o.)

This informant has two higher education degrees, is fully engaged in the cultural life of the town and socially active, often goes on foreign business trips. Therefore the level of her reflection in relation to her family's history differs from the level of understanding of many other descendants. She understands the necessity of work with the traumatic memory of the descendants of the repressed and the fact that arts and humanities can assist in it. The respondent says that it is necessary to study difficult history, that it should be studied along with the history of victories and achievements of the country, and regrets that she knows very little about the history of her family. The performer refers to Ch. Aitmatov's book "The Buranny Railway Stop",¹² in which there is a character – Mankurt, who lost his memory as a result of manipulations carried out on him and killed his own mother. The narrator compared the descendants of the repressed who do not know the history of their family with Mankurt.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of our respondents, the grandchildren of special settlers, were not aware of the history of their families, which is due to passing over in silence and tabooing this

12 The book was originally published in 1980 in the magazine "Novyi Mir" entitled "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years" but later was printed in censored form under the title "The Buranny Railway Stop".

subject in Soviet era and social stigmatization caused by dekulakization. In the USSR, it was not customary to talk about Soviet history within their household, because it was dangerous. Relatives of a significant part of people were repressed or suffered from persecution by the state. People believed that it was better not to talk about this with their children, so the descendants of special settlers do not know the history of their families well. One of the reasons for silence was fear. The descendants of the repressed were anxious about condemnation from the authorities or persons loyal to the authorities, delays in promotion at the working places, expulsion, dismissal, arrest, etc. People struggle to talk about humiliation, bullying, torture, and violence that their family members experienced. One of the participants, projecting her fear on me, asked if I was afraid to conduct such a study. The children and grandchildren of special settlers have different attitudes towards dekulakization of the families of their ancestors. This is due to the variety of behaviours, choices and particular circumstances of life. Most of them believe that it was unfair, that their ancestors were hardworking and intelligent people, who were able to properly organize their lives and thereby achieve the well-being of their families. Less often I heard that dekulakization was fair due to the use of hired labour in the families of their parents.

Some of the grandchildren in the survey had a detached attitude to the history of dekulakization of their grandfathers before my interview with them. Awareness of the importance of this event in the family history sometimes occurred in the process of our communication. This information was previously irrelevant for them, which is explained by the silence and taboo in relation to this topic during the Soviet period. The minority of grandchildren perceived the history of dekulakization and expulsion of their families as ongoing; they continue to live in it: they look for ancestral homes confiscated in dekulakization and collect information in the archives; they order paintings depicting ancestral homes and villages. Relationships largely depend on the level of education and upbringing within a family. Virtually no one is a carrier of memory about the time of repressions nowadays, whether it is personal or collective memory. It is common now to broadcast post-memory; in other words not a personally experienced event or eyewitness accounts, but some texts that have survived with certain defaults and ratings. Some grandchildren are trying to make sense of all that had happened and understand its causes. Every year they come on October 30, on the Remembrance Day of the Victims of Political Repressions of the USSR, to the Prayer of Remembrance or Returning the Names, which are held on this day in many cities and towns of Russia, in order to pay tribute and respect to their ancestors.

After undertaking the study on the cultural and communicative memory of the Arkhangelsk residents about special settlers, I draw the conclusion that several generations expose themselves to self-censorship, that passing over in silence by the older generation negatively affected the memory of expulsion and dekulakization. Communicative memory is applicable to three generations. Oral narrations about special settlers are not the part of this memory for most residents of Arkhangelsk, but relate to cultural memory shaped by scientific and regional discourse. The gap in cultural tradition was ensured by the decades of Soviet ideology, in which a person classified as a kulak was subjected to social stigmatization and by insufficient educational activities of the cultural and educational organizations of Arkhangelsk. The study led to the conclusion that local museums, teachers, textbooks, cultural and educational institutions do not greatly affect the knowledge of the inhabitants of Arkhangelsk about the history of forced labour in the former Northern Krai.

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