

Soviet Culture and Soviet Koreans (1920-1930)

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Abstract

The author examines the problems of proletarian (Soviet) culture, its inception, and activities of the creative intelligentsia of the Soviet Koreans. In the USSR, the leaders paid great attention to the liquidation of illiteracy, youth education, and the formation of the Soviet Korean Culture in the 1920-1930. During this period, Soviet authorities opened two pedagogical colleges and teachers training institutes, newspapers and magazines were published in the Korean language, and selected works of Korean Proletarian writers were published. Soviet cultural policy contributed to the development of Korean Culture. In 1932, Soviet Koreans created the Korean theater; artists, musicians, painters, and poets appeared among Korean youth.

Keywords: Proletarian culture, Soviet culture, Soviet Koreans, education, literature, music, Korean theater

I. Introduction

Proletarian culture (the Proletkult)¹ in the USSR

The issues of cultural development at critical periods of the history of any society remain an acute problem. Against the background of the development of traditional Russian culture, the events of 1917 led to the formation of a new proletarian culture. It is highly relevant to examine the theory and practice of the original cultural policy of the USSR in the 1920s-1930s. After October 1917, the building of a new workers-and-peasants society became the main task of the Soviet state. In the cultural policy, the most important issues were the creation of a new community culture, its relationship to the culture of the past, and the ratio of universal human and class values in this new culture.

After the February Revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik leaders created a mass cultural and educational organization *Proletkult* (Proletarian culture), to support the *samodeyatelnost'* of the proletariat². The main aim of this organization was to create a new proletarian culture, spreading it among the masses. The chief ideologue of *Proletkult* was Alexander Bogdanov (Malinovsky), a well-known figure of Russian social democracy at the beginning of the 20th century. He believed that proletarian culture was a class culture, more reliable and constructive

¹ The Proletkult as cultural and educational organization (1917-1932) due to ideological differences about the essence of proletarian culture and pressure from the Central Committee of the RCP(b) disintegrated in 1932. The term *proletarian culture* changed to term *soviet culture*.

² *Samodeyatelnost'* is a unique Soviet cultural term describing the voluntary participation of the Soviet workers during their leisure time in various cultural endeavors sponsored by the state.

than the bourgeois culture. This culture, based on the principle of collectivism, relied exclusively on life, social, and professional experience of Soviet workers denying authoritarianism. This culture was new and unique, solely created by the Soviet proletariat. It was A culture that nobody had seen before³.

Proletkult's task was the **development of independent spiritual culture**. It sought to **give a worker a holistic upbringing that immutably guided the collective will and thinking**.

Thus, the *Proletkult* ideologists consciously abandoned the culture, which humanity had been creating for 2000 years prior to the Revolution. *Proletkult* quickly involved a large number of ordinary people in its activities. In 1919, the organization had about 100 branches in Russian cities, and already in October 1920, it numbered about 400 thousand workers signed up for various departments, clubs, and studios.

However, the main question concerning the nature of the new, proletarian culture remained. Vladimir Lenin answered this question. He was firmly against the independence of *Proletkult* as a mass cultural and educational organization. In the draft resolution of the First All-Russian Congress of *Proletkult* (5–12 October 1920) Lenin wrote: *Marxism has conquered its world-historical significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat by the fact that Marxism by no means rejected the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois era, but, on the contrary, assimilated and reworked everything useful in the more than 2000 years of human thought and culture development. Only further work on this basis and in the same direction, inspired by the practical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as its last struggle against all exploitation, can be recognized as the development of genuinely proletarian culture*⁴.

Lenin outlined the fundamental principles of proletarian culture:

1. *Not unique ideas, but Marxism.*
2. *Not the invention of a new proletarian culture, but the development of the best samples, traditions, and results of existing ethics from the world outlook of Marxism, and the conditions of life and struggle of the proletariat in the era of its dictatorship...*⁵

According to the decision of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and Vladimir Lenin, *Proletkult* became an integral part of the People's Commissariat of Education as a body that was supposed to implement the proletarian dictatorship in culture. *Proletkult* tried to defend its independence from state structures, but was obliged to fully submit to the Ministry of Education. In November 1920, Soviet leaders drew up instructions on the relationship between *Proletkult* and the People's Commissariat for Education at the meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP(b). *Proletkult's* duties included political and educational work, and the fight against bourgeois propaganda.

The People's Commissariat for Education developed an entirely new theory and practice of proletarian culture, reflecting the following theses based on:

1. Creating a culture of a new society;
2. Relation to the culture of the past;

³ Yudin M.V. (2018). Proletarskaya kul'tura glazami sovetskikh vozhd'ey (Proletarian culture through the eyes of Soviet leaders) // Bulletin of Slavic cultures. T. 50, 56-65.

⁴ Lenin, V.I. (1920). O proletarskoy kul'ture. Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy. (About proletarian culture). Full composition of writings, 5th ed, T. 41. Moscow: Politizdat, 1974, 336-337.

⁵ Ibid. 462.

3. The ratio of universal human and class values in culture.

In the first years of Soviet experiment, Soviet cultural life was characterized by creativity, amateur performance, a variety of opinions, art schools and trends, but at the same time, there was a tendency to strengthen the role of the state limiting creativity. On the one hand, the letter of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) On *Proletkult* spoke about the freedom of creativity and opinion. On the other hand, they strengthened administrative-party control over the organization. Ideologists did not contest the right of the Communist Party to manage the cultural activities of *Proletkult*. There was a gradual shift toward the command-bureaucratic methods of managing culture⁶.

II. The birth of the creative intelligentsia of Soviet Koreans

Liquidation of illiteracy for the Soviet leaders became one of the main tasks in building a new society and educating a *new Soviet man*. Authorities carried out a lot of work throughout the country to overcome the illiteracy and cultural backwardness of the peoples of the USSR. The local organs of public education and the Korean branches of the provincial committee of the RCP(b) headed ethics and educational work among the Koreans of the Far East. Koreans ranked first in illiteracy eradication among national minorities.⁷ In 1923, there were 224 Korean schools with 12 822 students, of which 40 state schools (2334 students) and 184 national schools (10 488 students) were located in Primorye. The number of Korean schools increased every year. Korean intellectuals excelled in public education, creating first Korean language textbooks. They translated school textbooks and works of Russian literature from Russian to Korean.⁸

The ranks of the Korean intellectuals grew exponentially after the opening of two Korean pedagogical colleges and a Korean Pedagogical (Teachers Training) Institute in Vladivostok. Graduates of these educational institutions went to work in schools, Korean publishing houses, becoming workers of Soviet public education.

The literature of the Soviet Koreans

In the 1920s-1930s, great opportunities for creative development in literature, music, and Art opened up for Koreans in the Soviet Far East. Among prominent Korean writers and poets there were famous fighters for the Korean independence, as well as writers and poets of the new generation, like Chae Kho Rim, Chin Woo Chak, Cho Myung Hee, Khan Anatoly, Jung Dong Hyuk, Cha Gang, Kim Vasiliy, Cho Dong Gyu, Kim In Sub, Tae Chang Chun, Chul Do Hyun, Oh Son Muk, Kang Chu Ryok, Yu Il Ryuong, Kang Te Su, Kim Hye Woon, Oh Chan Hwan, Ge Bon Woo, and others⁹.

⁶ Belova, T. (1991). *Kul'tura i vlast'*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Filosofskoye obshchestvo / Belova, T. Culture and power. Moscow: Philosophical Society Publishing House, 211.

⁷ Otchet o likvidatsii negramotnosti i malogramotnosti. GARF. Fond 1235. Opis' 120. Delo 61. Listy 2 – 9. (Report on the eradication of illiteracy. GARF. Fund 1235. Inventory 120. Case 61. Sheets 2 - 9.

⁸ Son Zh.G., Jin Sil. (2019). *Prosvetitel'skaya i obrazovatel'naya deyatel'nost' koreytssev na sovetskom Dal'nem Vostoke (1920-1930)* (Outreach and educational activities of Koreans in the Soviet Far East (1920-1930) // VIII FEFU International Korean Studies Conference Proceedings, Vladivostok, 17-18 May 2019 / Otv. Ed. M.P. Kukla. Vladivostok: Publishing house of the Far East. Federal. Un-ta, C. 71-81.

⁹ Rodina trudyashchikhnya. Literaturnyy al'manakh (na koreyskom yazyke) (로력자의 고향. 원동조선인문예작품집록. 구 월). Moscow-Khabarovsk: Far Eastern Regional Publishing House, 1934;

The poets Chae Kho Rim and Cho Myung Hee were widely known. Chae Kho Rim headed the Far Eastern Regional Union of Writers from 1934 to 1936. The magazine *Literary Almanac Homeland of Workers* [로력자의 고향] began to publish in Korean on Rim's initiative. This magazine featured stories, poems, plays, and songs by Korean writers. Unfortunately, it only came out until 1937. Currently, only two issues of this magazine have survived, from 1934 and 1937. Korean writers dedicated their works to oppressed Korea. They dreamed of a revolution in Korea and glorified their life in the USSR.

Cho Myung Hee is rightfully considered the founder of Soviet Korean literature. In 1925, he was one of the active organizers of the Federation of Proletarian Art in Korea. In 1929, fleeing the persecution of the Japanese authorities, Cho Myung Hee emigrated to the USSR. Here, in the USSR, he continued his literary activity. Cho Myung Hee wrote famous poems such as *Trampled Korea* [짓 밟인 고려], *Song of October* [십월의 놀애], *To my brother Che Ok* [아우 채옥에게], *May 1 demonstration* [오월일일 시위 운동장에게], and others¹⁰.

Soviet Koreans, with state support despite the economic difficulties that the USSR experienced from 1924 to 1937, prepared for publication and published more than 550 books. Among them were textbooks for schools, texts on agriculture, socio-economic and political themes. They made the first translations of works of Russian literature¹¹ in the same period.

The facts mentioned above prove that until August 1937, the Korean language and Korean literature in the Soviet Far East had experienced rapid prosperity and development. Even under the strict control of the party and state apparatus, Koreans retained their national identity. There was an active adaptation to Russian culture through language and literature and an interaction of two civilizations. The Soviet Korean culture was born before the forced resettlement of Koreans in 1937.

Korean theater

Since the mid-1920s, Far Eastern theatre life has been oriented towards the creation of a **Soviet theater**, developing a **creative methodology of socialist realism** in the dramatic, directorial, and acting terms. The Ministry of Education established the Directorates of Theater and Entertainment Enterprises at national and regional levels. All theaters of the USSR were subordinate to them. In addition to the traditional forms of drama and musical theaters that developed in the Russian Empire, new ones came into existence, e.g. national, village, collective farm, road theaters, a theater of working youth, and others.

Proletkult took active steps toward the creation of amateur art clubs. These clubs existed in almost all areas of compact residence of Soviet Koreans. There were school circles, clubs at enterprises, etc. in villages and townships. At the very beginning, the Korean theatre represented the amateur effort in a form of a traveling [booth] theatre. The actors were members of collective farms [*kolkhozniks*], fishermen, and students. They gave performances mainly in the fisheries. The exact date of the origin of the theater collective is unknown. We can assume

Rodina trudyashchikhsya. Literaturnyy al'manakh (na koreyskom yazyke) (로력자의 고향. 원동조선인문예작품집록. 구 월). Moscow-Khabarovsk: Far Eastern Regional Publishing House, 1937.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Son Zh. Korean-language textbooks (Hangul) published in the USSR (1920-1930) // 2019 International Conference on Multiculture and Education, (2019 ICME), 23 November 2019, Incheon, Korea.

that the period of activity of Korean actors participating in traveling [booth] theaters covers the period from the late 1920s to 1932.

National theatres appeared following Lenin's policy, according to which all peoples of the USSR had the right to develop their national cultures. In the Far East, this policy concerned *Eastern workers*, that is, the Chinese and Koreans.¹² National theaters were state-funded, and artists received wages and housing. The club at the tobacco factory in Vladivostok played a unique role in the history of the theater; an actress Choi Bong Do hailed from there. Additionally, such artists as Lee Ham Dec, Lee Ger Soo, Thai Dian Chun, and others came to this theatre from the Korean neighborhood of Vladivostok.

In September 1932, Soviet Korean activists created the Korean Regional traveling [booth] theatre, which was to fulfill the mission of an agitator and propagandist of a **new life and a modern international society on the Far East** among its national audience. The theatre lasted just over six months, and was disbanded because of bad governance, but re-created in July 1933. The theatre director was Choi Kil' Chun, and the art director was Wang Il' Chu. The Korean troupe included 18 members, of which 15 actors and three actresses, including five Komsomol members, two CPSU members, and one CPSU candidate member. The Young Korean Theater gave performances in newly erected buildings and collective farms [kolkhozes] in the Posyetsky District. In 6 months, the theater gave 18 performances, of which 11 were free of charge.¹³

The Soviet leadership was interested in the development of the Korean theater, attaching a unique role and significance to it. However, there were many organizational and economic problems. The Primorsky Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) revealed the unsatisfactory work of the People's Committee of Education and the Regional Department of Culture and Propaganda. This committee identified many shortcomings in the work of these organizations. Artists and theater workers received low salaries, there were no premises for the theater, regional administration of theaters displayed insufficient leadership and distorted funding policies. From year to year, the theater was not paid financial resources according to the approved subsidy: in 1934, authorities did not pay 200,000 rubles to the Korean theater. In 1935, the Korean theater was supposed to receive 164,000 rubles from the grant-in-aid, but in reality, the theater received only 92,000 rubles, and the salary of the head, director, and actors of the Korean theater was 50% lower in comparison to other theaters¹⁴. The executive authorities did not provide the Korean theater with appropriate working conditions.

Many of the decisions of the bureau of the regional committee of the CPSU (b) focused on correcting these adverse facts. In 1935, Soviet authorities decided to build a Korean theater in Vladivostok. In January 1936, the theater passed into the jurisdiction and maintenance of the Soviet People's Commissariat for Education, making it possible to acquire theatrical costumes, musical instruments, and literature annually. The authorities allocated for these purposes five

¹² Son Zhanna. Social and Cultural Adaptation of Korean youth in the Former USSR (1920s-1930s) // Korea Journal, vol.58, no. 2 (summer 2018): 141–168.

¹³ Son, Zh. Rossiyskiye koreytsy: vsesiliye vlasti i bespraviye etnicheskoy obshchnosti. 1920-1930. (Russian Koreans: the absolute power and rightlessness of an ethnic community. 1920-1930). Moscow: Grif & K, 2013, 229.

¹⁴ Postanovleniye Primorskogo obkoma VKP(b) o rabote koreyskogo teatra ot 25 sentyabrya 1935. (Resolution of the Primorsky Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the work of the Korean theater of September 25, 1935). RGASPI. F. 17, Op. 21, D.3640, L. 170

hundred rubles in gold¹⁵. Since that time, the Korean National Theater, the first and only theater in the USSR, had acquired the status of all-Union significance.

The merits of the theater were great. In three years of its existence, the theater staged plays reflecting the life and struggle of Korean working people for Korea's independence, such as *Tian-Fen-Don torch*, *North-East Highway*, *Chan Hak Mok*, *Chun Hyang Deung*. Theater staged performances on the participation of Korean workers in socialist construction in the Far Eastern Territory, such as *Key*, *Mezha*, *Skipper She San Sob*, etc.

In 1934, the theater performed in 5 districts of the Far Eastern Region; more than 47,500 people attended them. In the first half of 1935, 24,000 people attended performances¹⁶. Along with proletarian culture, the theater also developed ethnic drama. Contemporaries highly appreciated the activities of the Korean Regional Theater in the Far East, calling it *true culture-bearer*¹⁷. The theater played a massive role in cultural and educational work and morale-building activities among the Soviet Korean population. The performances recreated a truly ethnic image of the historical homeland in a new cultural space. At the same time, the Korean Theater promoted Russian and Soviet Art. The Korean theater has undergone many difficulties, but thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of its directors and theater actors, it still flourishes in Kazakhstan today. Korean theater was and remained the only drama theater in the world outside the Korean Peninsula.

Music of Soviet Koreans

The suppression of anti-Japanese demonstrations in Korea sparked new flows of political immigration to the Soviet Far East. Active national liberation struggle of the Yyben Liberation Army fighters based on Russian territory for the independence of Korea, as well as Korean and Chinese partisans who fought together with the Russians against the Japanese invaders in the Russian Far East, is reflected in the songwriting. The genre of historical songs, replenished with songs and marches of Korean partisans, Russian revolutionary songs, and songs of the Civil War, became widespread among Koreans¹⁸.

At the Korean Pedagogical College in Nikolsk-Ussuriisk, they trained elementary knowledge of European musical culture and taught to play European and Russian musical instruments. Through the efforts of Russian music teachers, Korean students mastered the necessary knowledge, which they later used in educational and social activities. Their practical skills, patriotic, and moral qualities were a testament to the inception of a phenomenon of Russian Korean intellectuals¹⁹.

Sovietization of Koreans and the building of a new proletarian life brought in significant modifications to the music culture of Korean people. Nevertheless, revolutionary marches and

¹⁵ Ibid. L.171

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Gilev Alexander. V Koreyskom teatre [In the Korean theatre] / Krasnoe znamya [Red Banner newspaper]. – Vladivostok, 1937, March 15.

¹⁸ Ten Chu. (1978) Pesennaya kul'tura sovetskikh koreytsev (Song culture of Soviet Koreans). (Doctoral dissertation, Kazakh. University, Alma-Ata).

¹⁹ Koroleva V.A. Muzykal'naya kul'tura Dal'nego Vostoka Rossii vtoroy poloviny XIX veka – 1922 goda: poiski regional'noy identichnosti // Observatoriya kul'tury. (Koroleva V.A. Musical culture of the Russian Far East in the second half of the 19th century – 1922: the search for regional identity) // Observatory of Culture. No. 1, 2015, 50.

songs split the Korean musical community. Famous Korean Folk Singer Yeon Sung Yeon²⁰ defended the interests of traditional performances of Korean melody and tried to preserve the national flavor. The revolutionary poet Cho Myunghee was his staunch opponent²¹. He criticized Korean conformist music as backward, unable to be at the forefront of moving progress. More and more often, the lyrics of the songs remained unchanged, but the melody changed. Famous singer Lee Ham Dok²² was one of the leading arrangers of old Korean songs in the Soviet-style, and today his tunes still reverberate among Russian Koreans.

During this transition period, older Koreans performed Korean national songs with a traditional melody. However, these songs were gradually ousted by authorities as anti-Soviet. In the process of assimilation of the Korean population into the Russian culture, the melody and rhythm of the songs changed. In Korean songs, there was a mixture of Soviet and Korean tunes. It was here that tunes manifested the combination of the two cultures.

The Art of the Soviet Koreans

There is very little information about the activities of Korean artists during this period. The Far Eastern press reported that the first art exhibition was held in May 1936, in which Korean artists also took parts, such as Byung Wor Young, Lee Woon Ho, and Kim Gregory²³. The newspaper *Songbon* in the Korean language, published notes about the artists of those years, such as Beck Alexandr, Kim Ki Sung, and Chon Pavel²⁴. This topic remains understudied.

Repressions concerning Korean intellectuals.

In the USSR, massive repressions began against Soviet citizens in the 1930s, including the Koreans, who were preventively convicted of espionage for Japan. Among the total number of victims of the Stalinist terror against Korean ethnic group (6385), I identified that 292 (4.6%) people were students of higher and secondary schools; 277 (4,3 %) people were teachers of universities, technical colleges, researchers, school teachers, most of them were teachers of the Korean language; 140 (2.2%) people were engineers and technical personnel; 24 (0.4%) people rural intelligentsia (agronomists, livestock specialists, etc.); 36 (0.6%) people were doctors and nurses; 31 (0.5%) people were art workers (artists, writers, painters, musicians); 5 people were religious workers. Still, I could not identify data on education and specialty belonging to a group of 957 Koreans (15%). Many Korean intellectuals were afraid of exposure and gave inaccurate information about themselves. They called themselves workers, collective farmers, *laborers*, or just *farmers*.

Among the workers of literature and art, Soviet authorities repressed many writers, and poets,

²⁰ Kim, Bo Khi. (2007). *Muzykal'naya deyatel'nost' rayonnykh koreyskikh Domov kul'tury v Sovetskom Soyuze*. (Musical activities of the regional Korean Houses of Culture in the Soviet Union. 소비에트 시대 고려인 소인 예술단의 음악 활동. 김 보 희). Seoul, Hanul Academy, 44.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 45.

²³ Songbong. June 12, 1936.

²⁴ Songbong. April 2, 1936

such as Choi Ho Rim, Cho Myung Hee, Oh Chang Hwan²⁵, Lee Ho Young²⁶, Oh Son Muk (Peter Alexandrovich), Kim In Sub²⁷, and Tsai Yong²⁸. The most famous of them was Choi Ho Rim - a journalist, teacher, poet, who worked in the editorial offices of the Soviet Far Eastern newspapers and magazines. Authorities arrested him on three occasions: the first time, he was arrested in 1935 on the territory of the Far East Region, then twice in Kazakhstan, where the Soviet authorities deported him in 1937.

*Choi Ho Rim*²⁹ was born in 1896; a native of Musan, Hamgen-Pukto province of Korea; higher education, non-party, arrested on September 9, 1936, in Vladivostok, on charges under Article 58-10 of the RSFSR Criminal Code, sentenced to 3 years in prison. He was serving a sentence in the Gulag. He was arrested again on December 14, 1939, by the Kzyl-Orda NKVD on charges under Art. 58-10, lived in Alma-Ata, worked as a journalist. October 26, 1940, sentenced to 8 years in prison and served a sentence in the Kraslag of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. He was released on November 16, 1947. He was arrested for the third time on November 2, 1949, on charges of participation in an anti-Soviet espionage organization and condemned to settle in the Krasnoyarsk Territory. From February to March 1950 to September 2, 1954, he was a worker at the B. Uluisk power plant. He died on May 25, 1960.

*Cho Myung Hee*³⁰ was born in 1899; a native of the village of Pekamin, Korea, instructor of the regional administration of the Union of Soviet Writers. He lived in Khabarovsk. The National Security Agency Department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs arrested him on September 18, 1937, on charges under Article 58-10 of the RSFSR Criminal Code. Authorities sentenced him to capital punishment by the decree of the troika of the NKVD for the Far East Region from 04.15.1938. He was executed on 05.11.1938 in Khabarovsk and rehabilitated on 07.20.1956.

*Oh Son Muk*³¹(1886–1938). He was born in North Hamgyong. In 1892, he moved with his family to Manchuria. In 1913, he began anti-Japanese activities. In 1915, he moved to Primorye, then worked in the Ural. In 1918, he participated in the establishment of the Union of Korean Socialists in Khabarovsk. After the Civil War, he was the executive editor of the Korean newspaper Songbon. Arrested on June 16, 1938, Convicted on October 9, 1938, to capital punishment – execution. He was rehabilitated on December 18, 1956.

*Pak Sergey Alexandrovich*³² was born on October 17, 1913, in the village Putsilovka, Suifun District, Primorsky Region, Korean, secondary special education, graduated from an art

²⁵ Koreytsy – zhertvy politicheskikh repressiy v SSSR. 1934–1938. Kn. 9 / Avt. i sost. Svetlana Ku-Degay. M.: Vozvrashcheniye. (Koreans are victims of political repression in the USSR. 1934–1938. Book 9 / Aut. and comp. Svetlana Ku-Degay). Moscow: Return, 2007, 116.

²⁶ Koreytsy – zhertvy politicheskikh repressiy v SSSR. 1934– 938. Kn. 4 / Avt. i sost. Svetlana Ku-Degay. (Koreans are victims of political repression in the USSR. 1934–1938. Book 4 / Aut. and comp. Svetlana Ku-Degay). Moscow: Return, 2004, 105.

²⁷ Koreytsy – zhertvy politicheskikh repressiy v SSSR. 1934–1938. Kn. 6 / Avt. i sost.: Svetlana Ku-Degay, Vladimir Kim. (Koreans are victims of political repression in the USSR. 1934-1938. Book 6 / Author and compiler: Svetlana Ku-Degai, Vladimir Kim). Moscow: Return, 2005, 274, 37.

²⁸ Ibid, 122.

²⁹ Koreytsy – zhertvy politicheskikh repressiy v SSSR. 1934–1938. Kn. 7 / Avt. i sost.: Svetlana Ku-Degay, Vladimir Kim. (Koreans are victims of political repression in the USSR. 1934-1938. Book 7 / Author and compiler: Svetlana Ku-Degai, Vladimir Kim). Moscow: Return, 2006, 265–321.

³⁰ Ibid, Book 1, 140

³¹ Ibid, Book 1, 202, 207.

³² Ibid, Book 2, 115.

college in Blagoveshchensk. An artist-teacher came from the peasant ranks. Non-party. He lived in Minusinsk. Drawing teacher in high school No1. He was arrested on October 29, 1937, charged with counter-revolutionary agitation, espionage. In 1937, he painted large portraits of Stalin, Dimitrov, Pushkin. On May 12, 1937, the Minusinsk newspaper Vlast Truda published a photograph: Pak against the background of his paintings. Soon, he was arrested "for distorting the image of Stalin." Sentenced on February 3, 1938, to capital punishment. He was shot on February 26, 1938 and rehabilitated on September 8, 1989.

Stalin's repressions destroyed a significant part of Korean intellectuals in the Far East, and in fact, preventively arrested every third Korean family. In many families, several people, mostly men, were subjected to repression. Students, teachers, scientists, engineers, doctors, artists made up 12.2% of all arrested. The intellectual base of the Soviet Korean society was mercilessly destroyed. In current conditions, it is difficult to measure the damage done to Koreans during the state terror. Destructive policy towards ethnic groups undermined the foundations of the formation of ethnic consciousness.

III. Research Method

In this article, I used historical and cultural methodology. I carried out the study of the social and cultural adaptation of Koreans as a phenomenon of public life based on the principle of historicism within the framework of a systematic approach. This principle allowed for displaying the Korean society as an integral part of the Soviet state. The systematic approach served as a foundation for a structural-functional analysis, which made it possible to obtain a complete picture of the internal structure of the Korean group and understand the dynamics of infrastructural ties.

I analyzed cultural and educational activities of Koreans from a cultural perspective, that is, I considered this activity not from its economic efficiency standpoint, but as a factor of socio-cultural development. I examined the tools and means for creating conditions for the development of Soviet Korean culture. I used the comparative method to identify the chronological landmarks in the process of building Soviet Korean culture.

Korean youth, in comparison with the adult population, more easily adapted to life in the USSR, and sought to take a worthy place in the existing socio-economic structure of the socialist state. For a long time, the adult population opposed the cultural reforms carried out by the Soviet government. In the USSR, immigrants from peasants and workers had more opportunities for career growth, and children from intelligentsia and wealthy families (kulak families) were persecuted by the authorities and subjected to repression. For the Soviet regime, the social status was the merit of social loyalty: the lower the rank, the higher the trust.

IV. Conclusion

What were the results of the development of Korean culture in the context of the development of the state national cultural policy in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s? The Soviet administrative system actively used the class approach and internationalist propaganda to destroy the traditional closeness of the eastern community on Soviet territory, involving the *working easterners* in Soviet public life.

I showed the dual policy of the Soviet leadership, headed by Joseph Stalin, using the history of Soviet Koreans as an example. On the one hand, the country's administration supported the socio-economic and cultural development of Koreans in the Far East. On the other hand, as the foreign policy situation on the eastern borders of the USSR deteriorated, namely the deterioration of relations with the Japanese Empire, political repressions were carried out against the Soviet people. Not only Koreans, but also people of other nationalities were preventively accused of spying for Japan, anti-Soviet propaganda, and terrorist activities.

Most Koreans, and especially young Korean people, accepted the Soviet regime, sincerely believing in the future of communist ideas. They had the opportunity to study free of charge at school and in higher educational institutions. Soviet Koreans had a chance to get any profession from a doctor to an artist or writer. They knew that there, beyond the Tumangan River, their compatriots had none of this. Soviet Koreans suffered intensely from a sense of powerlessness and lack of any opportunity to help their Korean homeland.

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