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# Soviet prisoner of war camps in the territory of the Georgian SSR (1945-1954)[1]

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**Resumen.** Este artículo está basado en los materiales archivísticos guardados en los Archivos del Ministerio del Interior de Georgia. Uno de sus fondos más importantes está compuesto por los materiales del antiguo Archivo del Comité para la Seguridad del Estado (KGB) de RSS de Georgia. Los materiales que aquí se publican por primera vez describen en detalles la base legislativa de la organización de los campos para los presos militares, el uso de los presos como los constructores y agricultores, las condiciones de su salud y de alojamiento, y analizan el funcionamiento del campo y su papel en la economía de la Union Soviética.
**Palabras clave:** Presos militares, campos soviéticos, RSS de Georgia, Archivo KGB, NKVD, Gulag, Gupvi.

## [es] Los campos soviéticos para prisioneros de guerra en la RSS de Georgia (1945-1954)

**Abstract.** This article uses archival materials kept in the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. One of its main fonds is composed by former Soviet State Security (KGB) archive of the Georgian SSR. The materials used here describe in details the legislative base, POW-builders (facilities and scale), the exploitation of the POW workforce in agriculture, housing conditions of POWs as well as their physical conditions, and generate general conclusions regarding the conditions and functioning of the POW camps, revealing its role in the USSR economy and the assessment of the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus.
**Keywords:** Prisoners of war, Soviet camps, Georgian SSR, KGB Archive, NKVD, Gulag, Gupvi.

**Sumario.** Introduction: Soviet deportations and genocides. 1. Raising an issues and methodology. 2. Soviet camps: types and prisoners. 3. Legislative base. 4. The deportations of different nationalities to the Gulag and Gupvi camps: a brief overview. 5. POW-builders: facilities and scale. 6. The exploitation of the POW workforce in agriculture. 7. Housing conditions for POWs. 8. Physical conditions of POWs. 9. Conclusion. 10. References.

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## Introduction: Soviet deportations and genocides

Deportations were the basic repressive mechanisms used in the Soviet Union, together with mass murder, during Josef Stalin's rule. This might be understood in some cases even as genocides. During the almost 70 years of its existence, different nations and peoples suffered for their political, religious, and social views and were subjected to ethnic cleansing and forced labor.[3] But the violation of basic human rights was not a pure communist invention. Anne Applebaum offers a list of the main stages of human history in the introduction of her monumental book on the Gulag[4], when the exiles of unwanted people were considered as "obligation to society". She appealed to the examples of ancient Rome and Greek, mentioned Socrates and Ovid, as well as the experiences of Great Britain, France and Portugal to testify that[5]. In order to accomplish a historical and geographical image and to draw near to the Russian reality, let's recall the case of the philosopher and publicist Petr Yakovlevich Chaadayev who was a forced migrant and a house arrestee under constant police supervision. Between the early 17th century and the 20th century, district prison divisions were considered to be the predecessor of the camp system. During the Tsarist regime they were in charge of the Main Administration of Prisons of the Ministry of Justice and were administered with the district offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs[6]. In the 1920s Cossacks and later kulaks were deported from their lands. Deportations and genocides were ranked as one of the most effective measures against political opponents and civilians by Soviet government. Neither age nor sex were considered to be obstacles to repressions – the oldest deported person from Beregszász was 76 (Molnár, 2017, p. 251), and the youngest was a one-year-old Polish baby transferred to the camp No. 531 at Verkhnaya Pisma (Rogut, 2017, p. 193).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees indicates high numbers of the victims of Soviet deportations, such as 380.000 Poles, 366.000 Volga Germans, 363.000 Chechen, 200.000 Meskhetian Turks, 183.000 Crimean Tatars, 172.000 Koreans, 134.000 Ingush, 92.000 Kalmyks, 72.000 Karachays, 27.000 Balkans, 36.000 Romanians, 36.000 Greeks, and 843.000 other Germans – 3.089.000 in total (cited in Laar, 2017, p. 25). In spite of the above, till the final collapse of the Soviet Union, different European governments preferred not to perceive the situation in an acute way, that may be account for differently: a lack of information on what really happened in Soviet Russia, "low reliability of the information provided by members of the former Russian elites and other refugees", and a fascination with Communism, not surprisingly resulting in an unbelievable acceptance by Allied governments of the Soviet historical lie on Katyń massacre (Rydel, 2017, pp. 29-32). Jan Hornik also

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3 Erzsébet Molnár indicates that according to survivors of Soviet repressions in Transcarpatia and literary sources, the primary reason for deportations was the ethnic cleansing of Hungarian and German population (Molnár, 2017, p. 246).

4 Applebaum, 2003.

5 Ibid., p. 12.

6 M. B. Smirnov, *Sistema Ispravitelno Trudovykh Lagerei V SSSr, 1923-1960: Spravochnik*, Moskva, Zvenia, 1998.

indicates that the research on the Gulag "started only after the fall of communism in the 90s" (Hornik, 2015, p. 73), and Attila Simon makes emphasis on the scares research on the "malenkaya rabota"[7] by Central-European historiography (Simon, 2017, p. 165).

Our research topic is relevant in historical, military and political terms. The attitude of the state towards prisoners of war (POWs), as well as the idea of forming new places of deprivation of liberty in order to place them there, and use their physical and professional capacities were consistent with domestic policy of the country and revealed different sides of the social organization. In general, the study of camps, and in this particular case, the study of prisoner-of-war camps reveals foreign political, economic, ideological and personal levels of the social organization, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, which is particularly important to study complex structural and multilateral totalitarian systems.[8]

As regards POWs, the camp and hospital system were formed for them after the Battle of Stalingrad[9]. Between 1941 and 1945, 4377.3 thousand military officers became POWs (more than 580.000 died). Following the destruction of the Kwantung Army, their number increased by 639.635[10]. According to the documentary sources, there were 72 receptive and distributive centers, more than 500 camps, 214 special hospitals and 322 camps for handling of repatriation of POWs, where more than 4 million POWs and approximately 300 thousand internees got throughout the USSR and other states[11].

## 1. Raising an issue and methodology

One of the peculiarities of the totalitarian systems is censorship and concealing information[12]. It concerns archival proceedings as well. As a rule, most of the archival fonds are classified as "Secret" and "Top secret" under undemocratic governancethat complicates the study of historical and humanitarian issues[13]. The Soviet regime was no exception. The state archives were not accessible to researchers for a long time.

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7 "A little work" – deportation of population with the pretext of doing a little work in order to repair damage of the war. According to Zalán Bognár: "Armed forces arriving in Hungary – The Red Army and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) –, used these two words frequently, claiming that nothing more than some brief work on the territories beyond the front, or even only a short identity check, are to be expected, and, in some cases, they even promised a certificate after that "little work" – and, thus, they took masses of the civilian population to do years of forced labour in the Soviet Union. With these lies, they deceived hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians so as to prevent any incidental acts of protest, resistance or attempts of escape (Bognár, 2017, p. 142).

8 Curtis, 1979.

9 Porshneva, Dolinova, 2003.

10 *Voennoplennye v SSSR 1939-1956: Dokumenty i materialy* (Russian Edition), by T.V. Tsarevskaia, ed. by M.M. Zagorul'ko, comp. by M.M. Zagorul'ko, S.G. Sidorov, Logos, 2000.

11 Ibid., p. 11.

12 Arendt, 1974/1998; Calleja, 2012.

13 For example, the Soviet state security organs had special instructions regarding operative correspondence. In particular, the following terms were introduced: series «К» – Top secret/ Extremely urgent, letter «А» – Secret/ urgent, letter «Б» – Non-secret/urgent and letter «В» – Secret/Not-urgent. All these terms, except the letter «Б», had to be put in the upper right corner, and certified by the corresponding signature and the seal stamp of state coat of arms beneath the letter. In addition, such package had to be sewed up in the middle and sealed up. If it was impossible to sew up the package, it was sealed with five stamps: one – in the middle, and four in the corners.

Therefore, it was logically noted in the articles by M. N. Potemkina and A. E. Lubetskij that it was impossible to study the issue regarding the POW camps, as well as other scientific facts[14]. The authors emphasized the importance of the research topic and their relevance "under the criterion of humanity in the modern civilization" and noted a number of significant Russian and foreign studies related to the issue[15]. The cited article is dedicated to the life of foreign POWs in Chelyabinsk oblast. It is a study of the practical side of the theoretical issue regarding camps. M. A. Orlov's article on the history of the camp No. 503 in Kemerovo Oblast is also interesting in this respect[16].

The death of POWs in the concentration camps is an issue of special interest. According to some data, 5.7% of French, 4.2% of Dutch, 5.6% of Luxembourgers, 6.2% of Yugoslavians, 7.7% of Danish, 8.8% of Belgian citizens, 29.1% of Romanians, and 56% of Italians died in the camps (Moullec, 2001). In special literature numerous articles are dedicated to the study of nationalities of prisoners of war: Germans, French, Spanish, Hungarians, and others. Julia Landau researches the role of foreign prisoners which together with deportees and migrants constituted the workforce in the Kuznetskii Bassein – Germans, Polish, Japanese, Chinese, Austrian, Slovakians, and Ukrainians – who worked in the mines. During the Great Terror, most of them were accused of being agents of the foreign intelligence services and by 1937 out of a total of 1.000 foreigners, only 43 survived (Landau, 2015). From 1945 to 1947, 20 percent of German Internees died (Schmidt, 2017, p. 136). Tamás Stark states the number of 600.000 Hungarians who suffered in Soviet camps, of whom more than 40% were civilians, 20% died in transport and one third was killed of forced labor; at least 200.000 of prisoners did not return to Hungary (Stark, 2000). As Ramona Staveckaite-Notari notes, in the course of 1948-1955, 372 Lithuanian prisoners and 72 children died, with the largest mortality rates in Primorye Oblast – 31.5 per cent, Perm Oblast – 26.4 per cent, Magadan Oblast – 22.1 per cent, and Kazakhstan –16.5 per cent (Staveckaite-Notari, 2017, p. 210, 218). Gaël Moullec refers to French prisoners who served in SS or had a Nazi past and were sent to camp No. 186 located near Odesa with subsequent repatriation to France. With time, the number of released French prisoners was decreased and constituted 19 in 1948, 12 in 1949, 1 in 1950, 18 in 1951, 4 in 1952, 7 in 1953, and 0 in 1954. In total, according to the *special documents* from the Moscow archive, 23.136 French prisoners were registered, 1.325 of whom died and 23.136 returned to their homes (Moullec, 2001). Another reason of the death was the participation of prisoners in uprisings. During the uprising at Gorlag (Norilsk), 104 prisoners were shot, at Rechlag (Vorkuta) 62 inmates were killed and more than 300 prisoners were injured, and at Kengur (Kazakhstan) dozens of prisoners lost their lives (Staveckaite-Notari, 2017, p. 217).

The archive is one of the most important institutions that protects documentary historical information. N. M. Markdorf and A. A. Dolgolyuk emphasized the importance of the archival materials related to the research topic in respect of the reconstruction of historical processes in their article, which is dedicated to the fate of the Germans from Russia[17]. Researchers emphasize the importance of the study of the archival materials for adjoining fields of history, like Museology[18]. Consequently, the

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14 Potemkina, Lyubeckij, 2017.
15 Ibid., pp. 160 – 161.
16 Orlov, 2014.
17 Markdorf, Dolgolyuk, 2016.
18 Ibid., p. 263.

issue of free access to archival materials is very important. Both the cited article and V. M. Kirilov's work[19], emphasize that the archival materials in the Russian Federation are not accessible[20]. This issue is so important and at the same time hindering for the historical institutions that V. M. Kirilov emphasizes "The new stage of the historiography: 2004-2006, in the respect of political repressions"[21]. Similar fonds in Georgia, including fonds of the State Security Committee of the Georgian SSR, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the Georgian SSR and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR are open and fully accessible to researchers[22]. During the review of a wide range of documents related to the fate of the Germans from Russia, N. M. Markdorf and A. A. Dolgoluk pointed out in the cited article that the archival materials regarding this issue are preserved in different agencies (the regional archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, based on the citizens' residence, Federal Security Service archives) that complicates to put the materials together. We share researchers' view in this respect and deem that studies based on separate regions can contribute much to the reconstruction of the general picture of the POW camps. A specific study of individual POW camps may have scientific significance to restore the entire picture of the organization and management of the camps. This is the reason of our interest in this issue. It aims both at studying the POW camps in the Georgian SSR and involving POWs in planned constructional and agricultural work. We were also interested in the living and health conditions of POWs.

The only study concerning the POW camps in the territory of the Soviet Georgia was published in 2019 by Vladimir Motrevich. All data cited by the investigator is based on the well-known guidebooks in the field. The novelity of our study is that it is completely based on the archival materials, which are preserved in the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia[23].

Until 1990, the Archive of the State Security Committee of Georgia combined the files of the Special Committee of Georgia (Cheka), the State Political Administration (GPU), the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the Committee for State Security (KGB). In the late 1980s the central USSR administration realized that radical changes would be taking place throughout the Soviet Union. Therefore, it did its best to keep the documents which were preserved in the archives of the Security Committees of the Union Republics secret. Several acts have been conducted in Georgia to account for the actions implemented by the central authorities. Among them was a rally which was organized at the beginning of September 1990. Some of the protesters managed to break through the KGB guard and broke one of the doors to enter the KGB building. According to former KGB employees, the protesters were looking for secret documents concerning the activities of KGB informants. They could not find the informant files, but they found the financial documents in the

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19 Kirillov, 2016.

20 On the basis of both the new law on Archival Fonds passed in 2004 and mutual order #375/584/352 on accessibility of the files on repressed people passed by the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Federal Security Service on July 25, 2006.

21 Kirillov, 2016, p. 242.

22 On the history, structure and projects of the MIA Archive of Georgia: Dżachua Ivane, Łuarsabiszwili Wladimer, Tuszuraszwili Omar: "Archiwum MSW Gruzji – przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość", Przegląd Archiwalny, 8, 2015, pp. 91-108; Omar Tušurašvili, Vladimir Luarsabišvili: "Archiv Ministerstva vnitre Gruzie", *Securitas imperii,* 31 (2), 2017, pp. 234-251.

23 Official web-site of MIA Archive of Georgia: http://archive.security.gov.ge/indexeng.html

accounting department. The documents provided the list of those people who had received a financial support for their cooperation.

Simultaneously with the events, the secret materials were collected and classified in the Georgian KGB. Its employees were told that these activities were conducted only as a precaution. The documents were put in special sacks, sealed, described and moved to bunkers, which were to be used during war or a state of emergency. The sacks were placed in the appropriate rooms of the bunkers according to departments. There were around 800 sacks in all. These were operational records, secret and private cases, as well as all those inventory materials that had secret classification at that time. The Fifth Department of the Security Service stood out from all the rest. It combined records of secret cooperation, reports and information cards, and a special card-index where the files of famous people were kept. To a degree, the manipulation of public opinion and control over society were conducted with the help of these agents. For this reason, it would have been a great blow to the Soviet system of the names of these informants became public.

On September 19, 1990, 800 sacks of secret documents preserved in the basement of the KGB were taken to Russia. This operation was headed by the deputy KGB chairman, General Eduard Voitsitsky. His instructions were followed by the head of the KGB counter-intelligence department Igor Giorgadze. Giorgadze formed a special group tasked with transferring archival holdings in secret. The members of this group were employees who were fanatically devoted to the Soviet Union and to Communist ideology. The sacks were taken in military vehicles directly to Vaziani airport. Afterwards they took these sacks to Vitebsk by air and later to Smolensk, and deposited them there.

On October 28, 1990, the election of the Supreme Council was held in Georgia. This was the first multi-party election throughout the Soviet Union. As a result, the political bloc "Round Table-Free Georgia," lead by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, came to power. The same year negotiations started with the central USSR administration in Moscow about returning those secret documents which had been taken from Georgia. Although Moscow refused, Georgian special services were proposed the alternative of sending working groups to Smolensk to work on the documents.

The major goal of going to Smolensk was to destroy revealing documents that could be used for blackmail or destabilization in Georgia. Two such working groups went from Tbilisi to Smolensk in 1991. As a result of the work conducted by these groups, every protocol and reference that might make it possible to identify an agent was removed from the files. The selected documents were put in the sacks. Afterwards the sacks were put in cars and drove around 200 km away from Smolensk in a factory. The documents were put in the blast-furnace and destroyed. Around half of transferred materials were destroyed.

Due to the mentioned events, a series of important questions, related to the nationality of POWs, as well as the context of their arrival in the Georgian SSR and concrete dates of repatriation can not be established.

## 2. Soviet camps: types and prisoners

Historically, there were different reasons for the establishment of the camp sistems in various countries. In case of Hitler's Germany, the main motive was the destruction

of political opponents, while in case of Bolsheviques' Russia, apart from the already mentioned, namely extermination, the economic exploitation is to be mentioned. From here the different typologies of the concentration camps – based on the concrete ideas of their creation. Jan Stanisław Ciechanowski offers a new classification based on the criteria of the regime, such as concentration camp with high repressive level of political enemies, concentration camp with low repressive level of political enemies, concentration camp without a represive nature (created not for political enemies but for practical aims, like camps for refugees, repatriates, or for filtration; Ciechanowski, 2005, p. 78).

Lenin and Trotsky were the organizers of the first camp system in the Bolsheviques' Russia – it was Trotsky who on August 8, 1918 issued a directive to set up in Murom, Armavir and Sviazhsk camps for different groups of citizens which were not sentenced to death, and Lenin as early as in January, 1918 indicated the necessity of cleansing of the Russian land of all harmful elements (Lenin, 1962, p. 204). Richard Pipes indicated the reasons of ignorance of pre-Stalin camps by historians: "There are at least two reasons […] One is the prevalent myth […] that in contrast to Stalin, Lenin was an intelectual who resorted to cruelity only from necesity […] The other has to do with the scarcity of original sources" (Pipes, 2014, p. 141).

The People's Commisariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) had different subdivisions which took a decisive role in the administration of prisoners of war and internees. Both Gulag and Gupvi were established in order to organize and divide the forced labor and perform an ethnical cleansing of the representatives of different nationalities. The Gulag camps were mostly located in Asia and in the Ural region, meanwhile the Gupvi was located in the European parts of the Soviet Union.

### 2.1. The Gulag – Main Administration of Camps (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerey*)

The Main Administration of Camps or the Gulag had its facilities throughout the Soviet Union: from the White Sea islands to the Black Sea coast, from the North Polar Circle to the Central Asia valleys, and from Murmansk to Vorkuta and Kazakhstan. The Administration of Soviet Camps, which was established on the basis of an order passed by the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union on April 7, 1930, next year received a status of the Main Administration and was referred to as the Gulag. The Gulag was not the first punitive organ, however. There were numerous and different kinds of repressive systems not only in the Soviet era but also prior to that, long before the victory of the proletariat dictatorship.

The long and complex history of the formation of the Gulag began in 1917. Its point of reference was the February Revolution, 1917, when subsidiary offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were abolished and the Main Administration of Prisons of the Ministry of Justice was renamed as the Main Administration of Detention Places. The functioning of the punitive system was in force and became perfect after the October Revolution. It was getting more and more inhuman forms based on the principles of covering expenditures and new ways of upbringing prisoners. A report prepared by the Society "Memorial" provides a comprehensive description of the evolution of the places of detention as a system. Therefore, the material is not given in this text. In 1929 -1953, approximately 18 million prisoners suffered in the Gulag

system, and another 6 million prisoners were exiled in the Kazakh Desert or in the regions of Siberia forest[24].

In 1940, the Gulag consisted of 53 camps, 425 corrective labour colonies, 50 colonies for minors (In 1935-1940, 155.506 adolescents aged 12 to 18 years were kept, of whom 68.927 were convicted), 90 children houses (with 4.595 children), corrective labor bureaus (with 312.800 individuals) (Zemskov, 1991, pp. 13, 17). In an overview article on Stalin's Gulag, John Keep revises the number of people sentenced to death, to camps and to exile provided by Zemskov (1989) and Popov (1992) and points the number of more than 18 millions repressed individuals taking in consideration Bacon's data (Keep, 1997, pp. 97-98). Keep also discusses the death rates of prisoners according to different authors – Zemskov, Dugin, Bacon, Wheatcroft and Rosefilede, and concludes that the precise number may be discovered in the papers of subordinate Gulag organs (Ibid., pp. 99-100).

### 2.2. The Gupvi – The Main Administration for Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees (*Glavnoe Upravlenie po delam Voennoplennykh i Internirovannykh*)

The Administration for Affairs of Prisoners was established on September 19, 1939 and after some period, in July 1940 was renamed into Administration for Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees. In 1945, due to its increased importance, its status was elevated and it was converted into Main Administration with the same functions. With years, the following decrease of status became evident – first Gupvi was renamed back into UPVI and in 1953 it was liquidated and the prisoners were sent to MGB prisons.

### 2.3. MGB special prisons

These were places where the most dangerous Soviet and foreign prisoners for the Soviet Union were held. They were considered of being "potential enemies" of the country and were forced to the very hard work, with special and rigorous vigilance (Iordache, 2019a, p. 49).

Part of the repressed Lithuanians were held in MGB special prisons: out of 414 prisoners kept in the Aleksandrovskoye, 10 were Lithuanians, out of 508 prisoners in Verkhneurals, 21 were Lithuanians, and out of 391 prisoners in Vladimir Special Prison, 26 were Lithuanians (Staveckaite-Notari, 2017, pp. 215-216).

## 3. Legislative base

Different decrees and orders issued during and after the Second World War regulated the organization and management of the camps, as well as the living conditions of prisoners and the amount of works to be done. All regulatory documents may be grouped as central decrees (part 3.1 of the present article), issued by central organs of the Soviet Union and reflecting the basic administrative directives of the camps, decrees related to nationalities (part 3.2), which reflect the tragic destiny of the representatives of different nationalities in Soviet camps, and decrees related with the

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[24] Applebaum, 2003, p. 2.

release and repatriation of foreign citizens (part 3.4). The separate part of my article (3.3) describes decrees related to an organization of POW camps in the territory of the Georgian SSR.

### 3.1. Central decrees

The presence of POWs in the camps was regulated by law, including Decree No. 342 passed by the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs in 1941 and Decree No. 1798-800C passed by the USSR Council of People's Commissariat dated July 1, 1941. "The regulations about the presence of POWs in the NKVD camps" was attached to the decrees. Terms of having a 2,5 meters high wooden fence, barbed wire, prohibited zone, etc. were stipulated by the regulation[25]. Resolutions about POWs and their labor use were regulated by normative legal acts issued by the NKVD and the Main Administration for Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees, and by "Regulation about POWs" issued by the USSR Council of People's Commissariat. One of the legislative bases of the issue that we are interested in was Decree No. 2728-124C/C issued by the USSR Council of Ministers dated December 23, 1946. On the basis of the regulation, POWs were sent to the industrial enterprises of the West Siberia.

On September 19, 1939, Decree No. 00308 on the organization of the POW camps was issued by the NKVD. The order was signed by the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR and the Commissioner 1st rank of State Security L. Beria. On the basis of the "Regulations about POWs", the administration of the management of POW camps was to be created, as well as the administration staff (including the head, commissar, deputies) was to be approved, 8 camps were to be formed (in Ostashkov, Yukhnovo, Kozelsk, Putyvl, Kozelshchyna, Starobelsk, Yuzhe and Oranki) and the number of POWs was to be determined. Besides, typical staff membership, the instruction for the management of the camps and day schedule, heads' and commissars' salaries, procurement processes for demanding provisions, stuffs and sanitary items and their timely delivery, mechanism of financing the administration, protection and guarding the depositories were to be determined by the Regulation[26].

The NKVD order issued on June 24, 1941 regulated the organziation of the camp No. 99 in Spassk with two sections – one for the prisoners of war, and another for civilian internees. The approximate number of people sent to camp was 66.000, represented by more than 40 different nationalities, of whom 4.875 Germans, 827 Romanians, 532 Japanese, 221 Austrians, 155 Poles, 146 Finnish, 100 Czechoslovakians, 60 Hungarians, 59 Italians, 56 Moldavians, 16 French, 14 Spanish, and 9 Yugoslavians died (Iordache, 2019b, p. 83).

### 3.2. Decrees related to nationalities

In this part of the article, I present several official documents which regulated the arrests and deportations of foreign citizens into Soviet camps, in particular of Poles, Hungarians, Germans, and Spanish nationalities.

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25 Potemkina, Lubetskij, 2017, p. 163.

26 *Voennoplennye v SSSR...*, pp. 71-73.

### 3.2.1. Polish citizens

Order No. 220169 of Stalin, dated July 31, 1944, regulated the disarmament and liquidation of Polish Home Army. This order was followed by Commander Order No. 75, issued on August 2, 1944, by Marshall Konstantin Rokossovsky (Rogut, 2017, p. 187).

### 3.2.2. Hungarians

According to the Order No. 0036, issued by the Military Council of the Fourth Ukrainian Front, Hungarians and Germans of military age should be arrested and sent to the prisoner of war camps (RGVA F. R-32885, Op. 1. D. 243, pp. 35-37, cited in Molnár, 2017, p. 245).

### 3.2.3. Germans

Decree No. 7161 of the State Defence Committee of the Soviet Union regulated the deportation of Germans as a hostile nation to the USSR, engaged in espionage and intelligence activities. Order No. 00520 issued by the Military Council of the Fourth Ukrainian Front regulated the mobilization of 17-45 years old German men and 18-30 years old women. NKVD Order No. 00315, issued on 18 April defined the base for the internment of Germans in the camps on the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany.

### 3.2.4. Spanish

The Order of the People's Commisar for Internal Affairs, issued on June 26, 1941, regulated the imprisonment of Spanish pilots and sailors in the camp No. 5110/32 of Norilsk.

## 3.3. Decrees related to an organization of POW camps in the territory of the Georgian SSR

The Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia preserves several decrees about the organization of the POW camps in the territory of the Georgian SSR. On the basis of the NKVD Order No. 00426 passed on April 30, 1945, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR and Commissar 3rd rank of the State Security Karanadze was tasked with organizing two POW camps: camp No. 1 – in Navtlughi station of the Trans-Caucasus railway near the factory No. 31 for 2.500 prisoners and camp No. 2 – in Tbilisi for constructing accommodation of the factory No. 31 for 500 prisoners[27].

On the basis of the NKVD Order No. 00526 passed on May 18, 1945, commissar 3rd rank of the State Security G. Karanadze was tasked with organizing a POW camp near Chiaturmarganets Trest for 750 prisoners[28]. On the basis of the appendix to the NKVD Order No. 00651 passed on June 8, 1945, four camps out of the NKVD

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[27] MIA Archive of Georgia, Section I, f. 15, f. 45-342, p. 4.

[28] Ibid., p. 10.

industrial camps for the prisoners of war and internees were to be placed on the Georgian SSR. These were: Avchala No. 236 (approved limit of 3.750 prisoners), Trans-Caucasus No. 181 (approved limit of 10.500 prisoners), Ochamchire no. 146 (approved limit of 3.500 prisoners) and Tkibuli No. 518 (approved limit of 5.000 prisoners)[29].

On the basis of the NKVD order No. 00766 passed on June 29, 1945, departments of the NKVD POW camps were to be organized in the Allied Republics, including in the Georgian SSR, and in particular, a department of the camp No. 4 in Kutaisi for 1.000 prisoners[30]. On July 7, 1945, the NKVD Order No. 00794 on labor use of POWs in industrial and agricultural enterprises was issued[31], according to which, camp No. 382 was to be organized in Zugdidi for 1.600 prisoners (with its sections, including section No. 1 near Soviet tea enterprise in Tsalenjikha for 300 prisoners; No. 2 – near Soviet tea enterprise in Didi Chkoni for 300 prisoners; Soviet tea enterprise in Narazeni for 400 prisoners; Soviet tea enterprise in Khetseri for 300 prisoners and Soviet tea enterprise in Tsulukidze for 300 prisoners), at the Supsa station for 2.000 prisoners (with its sections, including section No. 1 – at the Ureki station of the Trans-Caucasus Railway for 1,000 prisoners; No. 2 at the Soviet tea enterprise in Makharadze district for 500 prisoners; No. 3 – at the Gumbrini station for 500 prisoners; No. 4 – in Tsalka for constructing power knot in Khram Hydro for 500 prisoners; No. 5 – at the cement factory of Georgia for 500 prisoners; No. 6 – in the Navtlughi station for constructing quarters for 1,000 prisoners; No. 7 (in the village of Bolnisi, near Samtrest for 300 prisoners under the camp No. 236).

On the basis of Order No. 00819 dated July 12, 1945, section No. 5 of the NKVD POW camp No. 146 was created at the Ochamchire station (near the Enguri paper factory for 300 prisoners)[32]; On the 27th of July, section No. 6 was created in Sochi (for the railway administration of the North Caucasia for 500 prisoners)[33]; On the 28th of July, section No. 4 of the Ochamchire camp with the limit of 1.000 prisoners[34]. On August 25 of the same year, section No. 12 (in Tbilisi for constructive works of the Executive Committee of the Tbilisi Urban Council for 1.200 prisoners), section No. 6 (in Poti, near Kolkhidmsheni for 1.500 prisoners), section No. 7 (in the village of Bakhmaro for 1.300 prisoners) were created. In addition, it was planned to increase the limit of prisoners from 500 to 1.500 in section No. 4 of the camp No. 236 near Khram Hydro[35].

According to the statement of the Main Administration for Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, by the 1st of February, 1947, there were 6.848 Hungarian POWs throughout the Georgian SSR, of whom 6.695 prisoners were in the POW camps and 153 – in the special hospitals[36]. In the statement of the Main Administration for Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding prisoners of war from the former European countries and Japan army, it was noted that by the 1st of January, 1949,

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29 Ibid., pp. 54-56.
30 Ibid., pp. 86-88.
31 Ibid., p. 95.
32 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
33 Ibid., pp. 117-120.
34 Ibid., p. 122.
35 Ibid., p. 137.
36 *Voennoplennye v SSSR…*, p. 139.

there were 11 Georgians among the prisoners, 6 of whom were transferred to the Gulag camps, 3 were released based on their places of residence, and 2 were registered as internees[37].

### 3.4. Decrees related with the release of prisoners. Repatriations

On October 1944, the organs responsable for repatriation were established. Their main task was to repatriate Soviet citizens and sent foreign citizens back to their countries. The mentioned was regulated by the Resolutions No. 30-12, dated January 6, 1945 ("On organising the reception of and provisions for repatriated citizens") and No. 31-13, dated January 6, 1945 ("On the order of repatriation of the federal prisoners of war and interned citizens"). Between 1945 and 1952, 3.413.290 foreign citizens returned to their homes. The total number of repatriated foreign citizens was 4.059.786. Among basic resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union which regulated the repatriation of different nationalities, are Resolutions No. 1521-402 of May 13, 1947 ("On the repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war and internees"), No. 1099-393 of April 5, 1948 ("On the repatriation of Hungarian and Romanian prisoners of war"), No. 3387-1415 of August 6, 1949 ("On the repatriation of German internees and internees of other nationalities in 1949"), No. 5545-2120 of December 8, 1949 ("On the repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war of Yugoslavian citizenship to Hungary"), and No. 4287-1804 of October 17, 1950 ("On the repatriation of prisoners of war and internees who are citizens of Hungary and Romania") (Lavinskaya, 2017, pp. 103-104, 106).

#### 3.4.1. Polish citizens

The release of Polish citizens from different camps (inspection-filtration, prisoners of war and internments, labor battalions, corrective labor and special camps) started in 1945 and was based on:

- Order No. 00315, issued by NKVD on April 18, 1945, as well as NKVD Directive No. 103, issued on June, 29, which released the soldiers of the Home Army together with the prisoners arrested for less serious crimes (started in January, 1946; in total, 3,464 people were returned to Poland; Rogut, 2017, p. 193);
- Order No. 001301, issued on October 29, 1945 released 12,289 interned Polish citizens (Rogut, 2017, p. 201);
- Top secret Resolution No. 2641-816, issued by the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union on July 26, 1947, and MVD[38] Command Order No. 00839, issued on August 4, 1947, that marked the second phase of releases (Rogut, 2017, p. 201);

The rest of Polish citizens, who were serving the full term of their sentence returned to Poland between 1954-1958 (Rogut, 2017, p. 199).

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37 Ibid., p. 175.

38 Ministry of Internal Affairs.

### 3.4.2. Lithuanians

From the total number of 150,000 Lithuanians only 19,000 returned to their homes in 1958 (Staveckaite-Notari, 2017, p. 218).

### 3.4.3. Hungarians and Romanians

The repatriation of Hungarian prisoners and internees started in 1947. The Repatriation Directorate and Ministry of Internal Affairs indicate different numbers of repatriated Hungarians, 186.495 and 200.722, respectively. The difference – 13.856 individuals – according to Lavinskaya, "can be explained by the fact that the Ministry of Internal Affairs classified foreign prisoners of war and internees by their ethno-nationality, while the Repatriation Directorate classified them by their citizenship, so that the headcount of people received and sent further differs in this regard" (Lavinskaya, 2017, p. 107). In 1948, 93.803 Hungarian prisoners of war were released and repatriated via camp in Máramarossziget, together with Romanians via camp in Focşani (Lavinskaya, 2017, p. 111).

#### 3.4.3.1. Hungarian prisoners of war with Yugoslavian citizenship

Approximately 600 Hungarians with Yugoslavian citizenship were held in camp No. 36. On March 3, 1950, 442 individuals were transferred to Debrecen transit station and 123 remaind in the camps. On October 2, 1950, 94 from them were also transferred to Debrecen, and 30 individuals preferred to stay in Romania (Lavinskaya, 2017, pp. 120-126).

### 3.4.4. German internees and internees of other nationalities

In 1949, between September and December, 37.986 people were repatriated to Hungary (see Resolution No. 3387-1415) (Lavinskaya, 2017, p. 114). In November 1949, 893 foreign citizens were released, including: 7 Romanians, 875 Hungarians, 874 internees (340 women and 17 children), and 11 Austrians (Lavinskaya, 2017, p. 117). Christina Morina indicates the number of 700.000 of two million German prisoners of war who returned from Soviet camps and of 23.000 who remained there as 'war criminals' (Morina, 2004). According to Andreas Hilger, "Presumably, the majority of survivors were repatriated by 1946/1947, but some left USSR as late as 1949" (Hilger, 2017, p. 39). By January 1949, 400.000 Germans were still in Soviet camps and even in 1949-1950 several thousands of them were sentenced (Hilger, 2017, p. 40). From 1944 to 1956, 35.000 German civilians were sentenced, of whom 4.200 were sentenced to death and 3.000 were executed. From 1948, 7.000 German civilians were sent to Gulag camps. In October 1953, 5.400 Germans and in December 1953, another 4.800 were released (Hilger, 2017, pp. 41-42).

### 3.4.5. Spanish citizens

During 1954-1957, 50 sailors and pilots were sent back to Spain (Iordache, 2019b, p. 90). In total, 7 expeditions from September 28, 1956 till May 21, 1959, carried 2.774 repatriates, including 1.911 adults (Serrano, 2011, p. 329).

## 4. The deportations of different nationalities to the Gulag and Gupvi camps: a brief overview

### 4.1. Polish citizens

According to Dariusz Rogut, based on the types of the camps where repressed individuals were sent, all deported Poles can be divided into five groups: the first, formed by the soldiers of the Independent Underground State, sent to the prisoner of war and interment camps (more than 10.000 Poles); the second, of civilians suspected in clandestine activities, sent to inspection-filtration camps (more than 18.000); the third, formed by people accused of criminal acts against Soviets, sent to corrective labor camps (21-25.000 Polish prisoners); the fourth, of forcibly conscripted into the Red Army and sent to Red Army labor battalions (almost 5.000), and the fifth, formed by Polish citizens found in German-organized labor battalions (Rogut, 2017, pp. 189, 191-192, 196, 198).

### 4.2. Czechoslovak citizens

During WWII and once it was over, two clearly defined episodes of the represión of Czechs and Czechoslovakian citizens may be detected. Jan Hornik, from the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes offers a detailed report of the mentoned events. He distinguishes three periods of persecution: first, the beginning of the 1920s and the 1930s, characterized by the repression of farmers and intellectuals, reaching its peak in the years of the Great Terror, with the total number of 1.000 repressed individuals (including 700 deaths); second, in the course of WWII, including members of the Czech legion, Jews from the transport to Nisko (including 1.500 Czech citizens out of 5.000; 700 were sent to the Gulag), and the victims of Katyn massacre; and third, started after May 1945. In different time periods, the total number of persecuted Czechoslovakian citizens was approximately 30.000 (Hornik, 2015).

One of the basic obstacles for calculating the approximate number of the repressed Czechoslovakians is the role of the Communist regime which aimed to build a purely Slavic Czechoslovakia. The collaboration between Edvard Beneš and Stalin governments can be considered as one of the major factors not only for the reshaping of the ethnic constitution of the region, as Atilla Simon put it, but also for an ineffective repatriation of Czechs, Germans and Hungarians after WWII (Simon, 2017). Paradoxically, Soviets performed a decisive role in the repatriation of different nationalities to Czechoslovakia and, despite of different memorandumes and telegrams, signed and sent by oficial representatives of Czechoslovakian government refusing the repatriation of Germans and Hungarians, in 1946 together with 75 Czechs and Slovaks, 220 Germans and 309 Hungarians crossed the Soviet-Czechoslovakian border (Simon, 2017, p. 176). By 1949, the majority of the deported Hungarians were back to their homes, forming approximately the half of the civilians deported from Slovakia, forming other half Slovaks, Germans and Rusyns – approximately 3.500-4.000 repressed individuals deported for "malenkaya rabota": Simon indicates the fragmentary nature of sources with the mixed data of civilian deportees and prisoners of war, the fact that complicates the calculation of the total sum of all repressed individuals, ranging from 16-20.000 to 69.000 (Simon, 2017, pp. 180-181).

### 4.3. Lithuanians

In the course of the years 1944-1947, 69.5050 Lithuanians were sent to the Gulag and 54 transfers with more than 1.000 prisoners were realized in the period of 1954-1952. Those deported in 1944 were sent to filtration and Gulag camps, meanwhile all deportees from 1946 were transferred to Gulag camps. 83.2 percent of all Lithuanians were considered political prisoners and held in labor camps. In 1952, out of a total of 258.000 prisoners of special camps, 23.000 were Lithuanians. In total, during the years 1944-1953, 150.000 Lithuanians were deported and sent to Soviet camps (Staveckaite-Notari, 2017).

### 4.4. Hungarians and Germans

After the Second World War, 1.2 million Hungarians were arrested and 900.000 of them became prisoners of Soviet camps. The deportations were carried out in four waves. The prisoners of wars were frequently accompanied by civilians, as in case of 3.000 prisoners which arrived in Máramarossziget included 960 civilians (of whom 580 were women). In the report prepared by Swiss Embassy, at the Gödöllő camp 40.000 internees were kept. 150-170.000 civilian men and boys were taken to prisoner of war camps. For "malenkaya rabota" 260-330.000 civilians were deported. All deported individuals from the Hungary may be divided into three groups with the concrete goal: supplementing the number of prisoners of war (210-260,000), ethnic cleansing (60-80.000 Hungarians), and Interning Germans (50-70.000) (Bognár, 2017).

In Focşany camp, in the spring of 1945, 35.000-40.000 Hungarian and German prisoners were kept (among the total number of 150.000-190.000 found in the camp). In 1945, 21.000-27.000 people were sent to Soviet Union. The rest had dissappeared from registers and their fate is unknown (Benkő-Annamária Papp, 2017, p. 134).

In 1941, the total number of Germans in Transcarpathia was 13.222. By 1946 this number decreased due to two different reasons: some left the region before the appearance of the Red Army, and others were deported by Soviets – the first vawe may be detected in the autumn-winter period of 1944 and involved men aged between 18 and 50 (see Order No. 0036 of 13 November 1944), the so-called "Mobilised Internee", recruited in the Central Europe and in the Balkan States; second started on December 21, 1944 (see Decree No. 7161 of the State Defence Committee and Order No. 00520), the so-called "Arrested Internees", recruited in the Eastern provincies of the German Reich. In 1945, 28.098 Transcarpathians were held in prison or labour camps (Molnár, 2017). In April 1945, 138.200 Germans were arrested, 97.487 were planned to send to work in the coal mining and metal industry and 5.000 died, according to the letter of Beria to Stalin, "[…] during the last "operations" and on the transports" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 133). The total number of "Mobilised" and "Arrested Internees" in 1945 consisted of 288.459 Germans, meanwhile in 1950, according to the "Information about internees of western nationality from 20 January 1950", the number of German internees was estimated as 3.727 individuals (Schmidt, 2017, p. 136). Andreas Hilger notes that according to Soviet statistics, 2.4 million German soldiers were captured by the Red Army, meanwhile post-war German calculations define the number as 3.1 million (Hilger, 2017, p. 39).

### 4.5. Spanish citizens

In the period of 1937-1945, several groups of Spanish citizens were transported to the Soviet Union. The biggest group was formed by 2.895 evacuated children between March of 1937 and October of 1938, accompanied with the groups of 55 teachers, 38 instructors, and 37 assistants (including doctors and nurses), distributed to 16 children houses in both Russia and Ukraine (197 of them were sent to camps during the Second World War; Iordache and Güell, 2013, p. 263); another group was formed by the representatives of political emigration, arrived in 1939 – 891 people, mostly communists, who came from the French interment camp Midi or from the North of Africa: workers were sent to factories and militaries to different academies, such as Frunze Academy or Voroshilov Academy; three groups of aviators arrived between August of 1938 and January of 1939 – 192 people, 185 of whom were sent to the Gulag camps; 192 sailors arrived in 1939, the representatives of the "División Azul" arrived in 1941-1943 (75 individuals), and those deported from Berlin in 1945 – 44 people (part of them had left for France). The total number of Spanish citizens arrived in USSR was 4,506, 452 of whom were sent to the labor camps, from 115 to 118 – died (Serrano, pp. 45-47, 342-343). From 1940, the represantatives of different groups were repressed: 8 pilots in April of 1940, 2 teachers at the beginning of 1941, 48 sailors, 25 pilots and a teacher were sent to the labor camp of Norilsk in 1941, 17 were arrested between 1944-1949, one pilot, 2 political exiled and one child were arrested in January 1948 (Iordache and Güell, 2013, p. 262). The total number of the repressed Spanish citizens from 1940 till 1956 is 346 (including 193 children, 4 teachers and instructors, 9 political exiled, 40 pilots, 64 sailors, and 36 republicans captured in Berlin by the Red Army in 1945; Iordache, 2019b, p. 75).

## 5. POW-builders: facilities and scale

Although POWs were captivated for labor use inside the camps, most of them were involved in the activities of different external organizations. These organizations were referred to as "agricultural organs" in official documents. On the basis of the NKVD Order No. 00675 dated April 6, 1943, an agreement would be drawn up between the organizations and the camps. Bilateral obligations were included in the agreement in detail[39].

Many enterprises were built with the help of POWs. On June 1, 1945, the Central Committee Bureau of the Communist Party (b) passed a resolution on organizing sections of the camps for the NKVD POWs in 17 regions of the Georgian SSR[40]. A list of the sections is presented below:

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39 Orlov, 2014.

40 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 19, f. 61, p. 63.

Table. 1. A list of the sections of the camps.

| № | List of the newly established sections of the POW camps of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs |
|---|---|
| 1 | Poti city, Road construction in Kolkhidmsheni |
| 2 | Bolnisi district, Soviet economy of Samtrest in Bolnisi |
| 3 | Gurjaani district, Soviet economy of Samtrest in Mukuzani |
| 4 | Kvareli district, Soviet economy of Samtrest |
| 5 | Tsalenjikha district, Soviet tea economy in Tsalenjikha |
| 6 | Gegechkori district, Soviet tea economy in Didi Gegechkori |
| 7 | Zugdidi district, Soviet tea economy in Narazeni and Khetseri |
| 8 | Tsulukidze district, Soviet tea economy in Tsulukidze |
| 9 | Makharadze district, Soviet tea economy in Nasakirali |
| 10 | Tskaltubo district, "Sakmagnititi" Trest |
| 11 | Lanchkhuti district, "Sakmagnititi" Trest, the village of Supsa |
| 12 | Mayakovski district, Sairme construction |
| 13 | Chokhatauri district, Bakhmaro construction |
| 14 | Tsalka district, Khram Hydro Construction: a) the village of Barmaksizi, b) №2 mine, c) Power knot, d) the village of Badianka |
| 15 | Tbilisi district, Oil exploration works, Norio |
| 16 | Stalini district, Tbilisi Hippodrome |
| 17 | Orjonikidze district in Tbilisi city, Saburtalo construction |

We present a review of the materials that are preserved in the MIA Archive of Georgia and show the scale of construction works, which were conducted by the POWs in different regions of the Georgian SSR.

According to the resolution passed by the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of the Georgian SSR on the 25th of January, 1946, Georgia Power ("Sakenergo") was instructed to begin construction of a big electrical substation in Navtlughi and manage to put it into service by the second quarter of 1946[41]. The resolution comprised 8 paragraphs. The first seven paragraphs were about organizational events of drawing up a working draft (including drafts for open part, for foundation of equipment and devices of the transformer workshop, for close distribution device, and for the control panel building construction), the issues regarding allocation of railway lane, as well as devices and materials of construction works (making steel constructions for substations) for transmission lines between Navtlugi big and small substations and release a building in Navtlugi, which since 1942 was

[41] MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 20, f. 15, pp. 16-17.

transferred in temporary ownership to the tank workshop No. 66. The eighth paragraph obliged comrade V. Saladze, the director of the factory No. 31 to keep 700 POWs in the camp near the factory for Georgian metallurgy construction. The POWs were to implement this large-scale project.

In 1946, L. Beria, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR sent a letter to the Minister of the Internal Affairs of the USSR S. Kruglov[42]. L. Beria asked the Minister to give instructions for organizing a POW camp for 1.000 prisoners in Krasnobak forest economy in Gorky Oblast in order to produce timber for the construction of metallurgical factory in Trans-Caucasus. The reason for the appeal was a letter, which L. Beria received from comrade P. Yudin, C. Charkviani and I. Tevosyan[43]. The letter said that the construction of the Trans-Caucasian metallurgical factory was hindered by the lack of timber, and that there was not enough work force for producing timber.

The main labor force for the construction of hydro power station in Chitakhevi was POWs (in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th sections). At the beginning of February of 1948, according to the resolution passed by the Council of Ministers of the USSR, this facility was given workers from the school No. 37 of factory and plant trainings. The workers underwent only three-month trainings. Therefore, they didn't have relevant qualification and could not work independently. For this reason, the POWs joined to a group of specialists. The process was protested by the head of the camp No. 236 who demanded a complete isolation of the POWs from other workers[44].

According to the decision made by the Union Government, the construction of Gantiadi-Bagnari hydro station was to be completed in the first half of 1948. However, only 25 percent of the entire road work had been accomplished by the 25th of May: land works had not been accomplished on the valley, the road foundation was to be made along the eight kilometers (what was made was of poor quality. Therefore, it was impossible to use the road in bad weather), arrangement works were not begun on the highway. Although 220 POWs were involved in the road construction, workers and equipment (one bulldozer and five cars) were not sufficient due to a large-scale task. The lack of workers was caused by hard working conditions. Therefore, it was difficult to provide sufficient number of workers. V. Chankotadze, the head of Khram Hydro Construction considered it necessary to organize a POW camp on the spot for 400 prisoners and lodge them in the tents[45].

According to the Resolution No. 00911 passed by the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR on the 30th of July, 1945[46], the Main Administration for Constructing the NKVD Aerodromes was to organize the NKVD checking and filtration camp No. 0331 for 7.500 prisoners in Kutaisi. The camp was to have three sections for 2.500 prisoners each. The head of checking and filtration camp became lieutenant colonel Kobeshavidze. According to the information provided by our colleagues from the Institute of National Remembrance of Poland, Polish POWs were in these sections. The nationality of POWs who were to be transferred to the Kutaisi

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42 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 20, f. 198, p. 45.
43 Ibid., p. 46.
44 Ibid., p. 4.
45 Ibid., pp. 12-15.
46 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section I, f. 15, f. 45-342, pp. 123-124.

camp is not noted in the document. We continue working in this direction in order to find Polish POWs.[47]

## 6. The exploitation of the POW workforce in agriculture

The POW workforce was exploited not only in the construction industry but also in agriculture, and it was not a new method. This practice appeared during World War I. In early 1915, a special project on the exploitation of the POW workforce in agriculture was developed at the joint meeting of the units of the Department of Land Planning and Administration. The POW workforce was distributed between personal and peasant farms[48]. Another important document was a regulation dated March 17, 1915 on "Sending POWs to private industrial enterprises". In addition to field and agricultural works, the POWs were tasked with caring for livestock, chopping wood and working by profession (as a carpentry, blacksmith, etc.). They worked 6-15 hours a day, depending on the season[49].

According to the document preserved in the MIA Archive of Georgia, it was decided to organize a POW camp for 800 prisoners in Luxemburg district, Georgia in order to cultivate vineyard and carry out field works for spring timely[50].

## 7. Housing conditions for POWs

Special literature offers information on how the government regulations regarding the requirements for repairing houses and service buildings of the POW camps were ignored. For example, administrative organs were to complete organizing a section of the camp No. 199 by the 1st of August, 1944. This task was not accomplished by the end of September, however. The same happened in case of the section No. 4 of the camp No. 511 where a new power supply was to be constructed urgently[51].

The MIA Archive of Georgia preserves a letter of the instructors of the Industrial Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR Zodelava and Zedgenidze to the Deputy Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of the Georgian SSR for Fuel and Energy V. B. Gogua and Deputy Manager of the Industrial Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of the Georgian SSR B. Akimenko[52]. The letter said that the residential fund and various farms of the sections in the camps No. 441 and No. 236 were inspected. The inspection results are presented below:

The roof and bath were not repaired and disinfection camera was not installed in the section No. 1 of the POW camp No. 441 (Economic organ Khram Hydro Construction, head T. Chankotadze). There was not enough living space for 455 prisoners in the section of the camp (Living space for 1.330 prisoners were 1.750 square

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47 On repression of Polish citizens in Georgian SSR, see: *Wielki Terror w Sowieckiej Gruzji 1937-1938. Represje Wobec Polaków.* (Edition of the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2016. ISBN 978–83–8098–080–8).

48 Sheveleva, 2008.

49 Kalakina, 2013.

50 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, c. 30, p. 3.

51 Orlov, 2014, p. 276.

52 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 20, f. 380, pp. 1-3.

meters, i.e. 1.3 square meters instead of 2 square meters for per prisoner). There were no clothes dryers, no enough supply of fuel. There was a lack of living space for 213 prisoners in the section No. 2 (There were 812 square meters for 519 prisoners, i.e. there were 1.2 square meters for per prisoner). There were no clothes dryers and enough supply of fuel. In the section No. 3 there were no clothes dryers and enough supply of fuel. The residential fund of the section No. 4 was not prepared for winter. All outside and five inside walls of the barrack were not daubed[53].

The situation in the POW camp No. 236 was as follows: In the section No. 1 (serving for Tbilmsheni, Inzhmsheni and Sakmsheni) there was not living space for 32 prisoners (There were 2.736 square meters for 1,400 prisoners, i.e. 1.8 square meter for per prisoner). 30 percent of beds were not converted from 3-tier to 2-tier beds. There were no clothes dryers and vegetable supply was not sufficient (There were 50 tonnes, i.e. 2-month supply). Bathrooms were not warm. These remarks were made against the section No.1 (economic organ – factory No. 31, head V. Saladze): The camp was organized in the building that was for bathing, was not repaired, and water was coming from the roof. There was not living space for 230 prisoners (There were 540 square meter for 500 prisoners, i.e. 1.08 square meter for per prisoner. Beds were not converted from 3-tier to 2-tier). There was no storage room for vegetables and a dryer for the top clothes. The bathroom was not warm. In the section of the camp No. 3 (economic organ Tbilmsheni, head Moreti) there was not living space for 518 prisoners (There was 983 square meters for 1,010 prisoners, i.e. 0.98 square meters for per prisoner). There was a fuel supply for only one day. In the section No. 4 (There were Japanese POWs, economic organ - Trest Inzhmsheni, administrator Gurgenidze) there was not living space for 194 prisoners (There were 612 square meters for 500 prisoners, i.e. 1.2 square meters for per prisoner). There was no dryer for the top clothes. The bathroom was not warm. There was not a storage room for vegetables. In the section No. 8 (economic organ Sakshakhtmsheni, administrator Mariakhini) buildings were repaired and the camp was ready for winter. However, there was not enough living space for 142 prisoners (There were 1.050 square meters for 667 prisoners, i.e. 1.6 square meters for per prisoner). There were 50 tonnes of vegetables that was enough for only three months). There was not dining room (tables and chairs) and warm bathroom in the camp. General sanitary condition of the camp was considered satisfactory. In the section No. 11 (economic organ Chitakhev Construction, head Tsagareli) buildings of the residential fund were not repaired and the camp was not ready for winter. There was not enough space for 324 prisoners (There were 1.760 square meters for 1.264 prisoners, i.e. 1.4 square meters for per prisoner). Beds were not converted from 3-tier to 2-tier in 13 barracks. There were no dryers for the top clothes. The vegetable section was stocked up with delays. Food calories accounted for only 60-70 percent of the established norms[54].

## 8. Physical condition of POWs

Special literature provides a comprehensive information regarding frequent morbidity and mortality of the POWs in the camps. For example, in Chelyabinsk Oblast

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53 Ibid., p. 1.

54 Ibid., pp. 2 -3.

despite the unsatisfactory medical and sanitary conditions of foreign POWs, their health conditions were not registered until 1944. The inspection revealed 12.480 diseased and 1.303 weakened prisoners (in total 41,833 prisoners)[55]. The situation was so serious that a lazaret and a special hospital were organized in the oblast. Between 1944 and 1949, 2.200 prisoners died in the hospital. Mostly these were patients with tuberculosis and dystrophy[56]. According to other researches, 114 Japanese prisoners of war died of third-degree alimentary dystrophy in Poziete hospital[57]. 296 POWs were weakened and 80 prisoners had to lay in hospital in Nizhny Tagil. They were mostly sick with typhus and dysentery. They spread diseases among the camp employees too[58]. 2.003 diseased and disabled prisoners were registered in Kemerovo oblast[59]. According to Dariusz Rogut, between 1944 and 1946, out of the total number of Polish prisoners from 1.6 to 55 percent died in different camps (Rogut, 2017, pp. 202-203).

The situation was similar in the camps throughout the Georgian SSR. On December 6, 1944 the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR G. Karanadze sent a letter to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of the Georgian SSR K. N. Charkviani. The letter provides a comprehensive description of the condition of sick prisoners of war, who were transferred to special hospitals in Tbilisi and Telavi on November 4, 1944[60]. This contingent of the diseased was so large that the hospitals were overloaded. 1,230 sick POWs were transferred to the Tbilisi hospital, 499 of whom died between November 4 and December 1, 1944. 20 diseased died per day. The main cause of death was epidemic typhus. The spread of the infection reached such a scale that not only POWs but also five medical personnel died between November 4 and December 1. Effective treatment was hindered by the factors like overloaded hospital, lack of medical personnel, inadequate assistance from the People's Commissariat for Public Health of the Georgian SSR and lack of necessary equipment and vehicles. These factors supported further spread of the disease (i.e. increased mortality).

As regards the overloaded hospitals, noteworthy is that by the 1st of December, 1944, there were 1.230 patients in the hospital, which was equipped only with 1,000 beds. There was not enough space for all the patients and basic hygiene norms were violated in the hospital, which is crucially important to prevent further progression of infectious pathological process.

In addition, the number of medical staff (including both the seniors and middle-ranking personnel) decreased due to high contagiousness of the disease and typhus epidemic[61].

As regards the POWs who were brought from Georgyevsk in echelons, and particularly from the camp No. 147 to the hospital in Telavi, besides weakened POWs and those with gastrointestinal diseases, there were prisoners who were suspected of having typhus. The suspicion was justified and by the 1st of December there were

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55 Potemkina, Lubetskij, 2017, p. 164.

56 Ibid., pp. 164-165.

57 *Inostrannye Voennoplennye v kuzbasse v 1940-e gody. Dokumenty i materialy.* Kemerovo, Kuzbass: Vuzizdat, 2002.

58 Porshneva, Dolinova, 2003, p. 129.

59 *Inostrannye Voennoplennye*..., 2002.

60 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 18, c. 163, pp. 89-91.

61 Ibid., p. 90.

152 diseased with typhus, 120 of whom were POWs and 32 hospital employees. 28 POWs and one hospital employee died[62]. Like the Tbilisi hospital, the main cause for spreading infection in Telavi was overloaded hospital, lack of medical personnel, inadequate assistance from the People's Commissariat for Public Health of the Georgian SSR, lack of clothing and bedding and insanitation[63].

There were more patients in Telavi hospital than in Tbilisi hospital. In Telavi there were 1.327 patients instead of 1.000. Part of the medical personnel got sick here too.

It seems that the epidemic has reached a dangerous scale and spread beyond the special treatment places, which is testified by the letter that was sent by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of the Georgian SSR K. Charkviani to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR S. Kruglov on November 24, 1944[64]. The letter said that large parties of the POWs were brought to Georgia to get involved in the construction of the Transcaucasian metallurgical factory. Most of the POWs were weakened and sick with various epidemic diseases. The POWs were sent to special military hospitals but there were too many patients that hindered the process of effective medical treatment. For example, 2.000 patients were sent to the hospital which was equipped with only 1.000 beds. In addition, on the day this letter was sent, i.e. on the 24th of November, another echelon with 1.300 POWs arrived. One more echelon with 800 prisoners was on the way. The situation was critical because of the real danger of spreading typhus in Tbilisi. Therefore, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR demanded to cease the process of sending POWs from the camps in Georgia, and to send the echelon that was on the way elsewhere.

In response to K. Charkviani's letter S. Kruglov's telegram was received, which said that an order was issued, according to which the process of sending sick POWs to Georgia was to stopped, and the echelon with 800 POWs would not arrive in Georgia[65].

## 9. Conclusion

The long presence of POWs in the camps was caused by both political and economic goals. Professionals of various fields were sent in exile to different areas not for deprivation of liberty but for the development, strengthen and support of the Soviet planned economy. The POWs who had higher qualification than other Soviet citizens were in extremely poor conditions. In this respect, noteworthy are those 9.500 POWs who were sent from Germany to work for the Kuzbas coal industry. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR allowed to send the same amount of disabled people to Germany[66].

There were camps for the POWs of different nationalities in the Georgian SSR. The article is made based on the documents that were not studied and reviewed by the researchers and historians. Therefore, we think that the study and review of the archival materials like these documents can contribute much to the study and anal-

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 91.
64 MIA Archive of Georgia, Section II, f. 14, d. 18, c. 193, pp. 132.
65 Ibid., p. 133.
66 *Inostrannye Voennoplennye...*, 2002.

ysis of the issue regarding the POWs. This issue is important not only due to high number of the POWs in the camps but also it is important to reconstruct history of different countries, as in the case of Polish POWs who were in the POW camp in Kutaisi of the Georgian SSR. We will continue archival study in this respect and hope to get further information regarding Polish POWs presence in the camps of the Georgian SSR.

Both the importance and amount of work conducted by POWs show that POW workforce was particularly important for the development of the economy in the USSR. However, their living and health conditions, as well as medical treatment didn't meet appropriate standards. The fact that both residential and non-residential buildings and constructions were referred to as "residential fund"[67] in the official documents shows that the state neglected the living conditions of the POWs. The widespread of infectious diseases and the general unsatisfactory state of the POWs could not ensure their capacity for work, as well as significant successes in the field of the Soviet economy. It seems that the realization of the plan drawn up by the state required better preparation and work by the bureaucratic staff. These two factors didn't work properly in Soviet reality.

As regards the Georgian SSR, according to the archival sources, POWs constantly arrived in the country. In most cases they were weakened and ill. Therefore, they were not able to perform the tasks imposed upon them. Nevertheless, the list of the constructions, including a 100-square-meter big electric power substation in Navtlugi, the Transcaucasian Metallurgical Plant, Chitakhevhes, Gantiadi-Bagnarihes road construction and other is impressive. This confirms the importance of POW workforce in construction.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the study of the condition and functioning of the POW camps is important not only for an analysis of the USSR economy potential but also for the assessment of the entire Soviet bureaucratic apparatus. As well, the study and analysis of those cultural values that were used in the Soviet period may facilitate the study of the mental processes of totalitarian thinking in the 20th century.

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