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Poles and Polish citizens in Soviet forced labor camps

The period up to 1939.

Practically since the beginning of Bolshevik Russia in the local labor camps they were also embeds the Poles. The vast majority of them lived in the Soviet Union and had his citizenship. This was due to the fact that established in March 1921. Border between the Polish and Bolshevik Russia had moved much further to the west than the Polish border before the partitions, which began in 1772. Poles living in the Soviet Union were mostly descendants of pre-partition Polish citizens. Their number amounted to approx. 1.5 million.

Deposition of Poles in the Gulag camps took on the largest scale in the years 1937-1938, ie during the so-called. "Operation Polish NKVD". This operation was the first and largest of the special operations late 30s directed against ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union. It was part of a campaign of repression referred to as the "Great Terror". Over the two years, the Soviets deported to concentration camps 29 thousand. Poles.

Period 1939-1944

In the period of 1939-1944 in Soviet Gulag camps closed the Poles and Polish citizens of other nationalities. This situation was a consequence of the Soviet attack on Poland on September 17, 1939., And concerned Polish citizens arrested in the eastern borderlands of the state occupied by the USSR to the outbreak of the German-Soviet war June 22, 1941. After the fall of the Polish state in Soviet hands were approx. 150 thousand. arrested. Arrests began immediately after entry into the Polish lands NKVD, whose task was listening for people that can be divided into several groups. In the first place were people who played an important role in pre-war Poland, among others politicians, local government and entrepreneurs. In addition, the NKVD arrested army officers and police officers who have not got into captivity. The arrests also included the pro-independence activists, local community workers, co-workers of the Polish intelligence and the police and people known for their negative attitude with respect to the Soviet Union or suspected of such an attitude. Among them were sent to labor camps about 40 thousand. people. All Polish prisoners of concentration camps during this period were first arrested and then convicted. Thereby embedding in the labor camp was not an administrative penalty as such. Deportation, but was of penal repression.

Most of the prisoners in this period went to the camps of Komi ASSR. Most convicts with the Polish were in Workutstroju, Pechorlag and Uchtizymłagu. Several thousand Polish citizens imprisoned in camps in Kolyma, while a few hundred in the camps located in other regions of the USSR. Of all the Polish citizens trapped in this period for the amnesty of 1941. Died several thousand people. The amnesty was announced on August 12, 1941. And was the outcome of an 30 July 1941 r. Of diplomatic relations between the Polish government-in-exile and the authorities of the USSR. Thanks to an amnesty for freedom came nearly 30 thousand. people in 1942. left the Soviet Union in the framework of the army created by gen. Anders. Despite the amnesty in the camps they were still approx. 10 thousand. Polish citizens.

Period 1944-1947

The third period influx of Poles and Polish citizens to labor camps began in 1944. Along with re-entering the lands of Polish Red Army. This took place after the severance of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish government in exile after being in April 1943. Germans announced that they had found the graves of Polish officers in the Katyn forest. Prompted the Polish government to the International Red Cross to investigate the graves became Stalin a pretext to accuse him of collaborating with the Germans and break relations with him.

Despite the legal situation of the Polish authorities they counted in 1944. It will be possible joint struggle of the Polish underground and the Red Army against the Germans. Their hopes proved

to be illusory, because the Soviets were planning to subjugate Poland, and pro-independence organizations were an obstacle to their achieving this goal. Therefore, in 1944. He has started another wave of repression in relation to Polish citizens. Closing the camps was one of the methods of conquest Polish. Within a few years approx. 15 thousand. people were railroaded to Soviet labor camps. Those arrested in this period are mostly soldiers coming from the Army and the National Armed Forces, as well as later formed independence organizations such as the Association of Freedom and Independence.

Persons arrested in this period were deposited in the subordinate NKVD camps for prisoners of war and concentration camps control of filter, where living conditions were almost the same as those in the camps. The only difference was that in the camps subordinated to the NKVD not deposited criminals. Polish citizens sent to prison in NKVD camps could last from several months to several years. Most of the prisoners had instituted processes, as in Soviet law did not exist the appropriate sections, allowing convict these people. During this period, the majority of Polish citizens imprisoned in camps BOROWICZ (6 thous.) And Stalinogorsk (6.3 ths.).

Generally, in the context of all shares deposition Poles and Polish citizens in Soviet labor camps of the Gulag and subordinate bodies control and filtration camps managed by the NKVD, it was covered by at least 84 thousand. people. They were the innocent victims of Soviet imperialism. Many of them died in the camps. Due to the lack of access to the relevant Soviet archives, it is not possible to precisely identify and count them.

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