



The central camp at Kolyma was a sort of an Auschwitz of the East in the former prisoner camp in Spassk

“Work is postponed if the temperature drops below 50 degrees, even though not in consideration of people but in regard of the few machines. Iron cannot bear more, it cracks and breaks.”

Stanislav Nurko,
abducted to the USSR

“In their eyes we wore a black mark of those released from Russian concentration camps where we had spent years and no one knew why. But in fear of being accused by the Big Brother, they simply registered us as people who served their time there as some kind of punishment.”

Geza Pasztor,
abducted to the USSR



Memorial of victims of Stalinism at the former prisoner camp in Spassk

The people abducted from Slovakia were placed into both prisoner labour camps (GULAG) as well as camps for prisoners of war (GUVPI). Regardless of the motives of the abductions, these deportations can be seen as an illegal action, contradicting international law as well as agreements between the Czechoslovak Exile Government and the Soviet Union.

ENDING

Some of the abducted people were repatriated gradually from 1945, while the rest returned only after Stalin's death in 1953, and the last only in 1956. Conditions in Soviet camps could not be compared with the situation in Czechoslovak prisons. Pursuant to the data of the Slovak Association of the Forcefully Abducted, around one-third of the abducted persons died in the USSR, the majority died as a consequence of abduction shortly after returning to their homeland. Those who survived could no longer fully integrate into society – the forced stay in the USSR became their permanent cadre flaw.

The Soviet Union was the only state of the anti-Hitler coalition to commit mass abduction of population from Europe. Contrary to the crimes of the Nazi Germany, these crimes have

never been condemned or punished. Quite the opposite, they were veiled by obligatory silence and taboo. Mass abductions of citizens from Slavic countries and their brutal treatment clearly showed not only the totalitarian nature of the Soviet regime but also the fact that Slavic solidarity was an unknown notion for them. After all, these crimes cast doubts also on the officially declared liberation mission of the USSR.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

Recommended websites:

www.upn.gov.sk; www.enrs.eu; www.gulag.cz



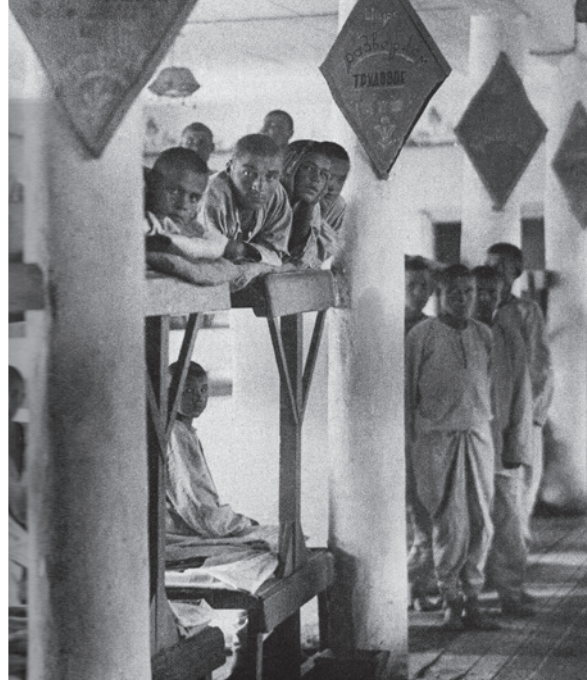
EUROPEAN NETWORK
REMEMBRANCE AND SOLIDARITY

ABDUCTIONS OF SLOVAK CITIZENS TO THE SOVIET UNION (1944–1945)

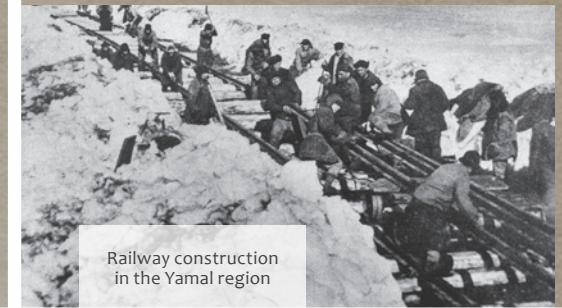
The years of 1944 and 1945 meant not only the end of WWII, but also the beginning of activities of the Soviet, Bolshevik regime in our territory. Its worst manifestation brought mass abductions of our citizens to prisoner and criminal camps or prisons in the USSR. From September 13, 1944, when Soviet agencies abducted the Generals Čatloš and Turanec, to December 1945, when the Red Army definitively left Slovakia, the cruel fate of modern-day slaves affected many thousands of our citizens...



Gate to the transit camp in the town of Kem near the White Sea



View inside of the prisoners' barrack



Railway construction in the Yamal region



"Arbeit macht frei" was replaced in the Soviet camps by mottos for five-year working plans



Fence between individual camps

THE BEGINNINGS

Abductions of Slovak, or rather Czechoslovak, citizens to labour, criminal or prisoner camps in the Soviet Union is one of the most tragic and, at the same time, most held-back chapters of our history. **The beginnings of the abductions are related to the infiltration of the Soviet influence – in the form of partisan groups – to the territory of Slovakia in the summer of 1944.** The first citizens deported to the Soviet Union were Generals Ferdinand Čatloš and Jozef Turanec, two key military personalities of the Slovak Republic. Other publicly known persons included the Chairman of the Slovak Parliament, Martin Sokol, the Chairman of the Highest Court of the Slovak Republic, Martin Mičura, the Slovak Emissary to Hungary, Ján Spišiak, the writer and legionnaire, Mikuláš Gáček, and the former Rector of the Russicum in Rome, Vendelín Javorka, S.J. The oldest known abducted person was 66-year-old Štefan Bornemisza from Sabinov. **The major part of the deportations is connected to the period of October 1944–April 1945,** when the Red Army took control of the Slovak territory, but they were still going on even in the autumn of 1945. The last known abducted person was Stanislav Nurko from Michalovce, who was arrested

by members of the State Security (ŠtB) on May 13, 1949 and then handed over to the Soviet authorities.

NUMBER OF THE ABDUCTED

The exact number of the abducted has never been calculated. **The list of documented names so far includes more than 6,000 names.** A separate category comprises around 3,000 members of the Slovak 1st Technical Division who were abducted from the territory of Hungary where the arrival of the Soviets found them. People were abducted en masse from September 1944 from the easternmost province of the former Czechoslovakia, Carpathian Ruthenia, where the Soviets interned almost 30,000 civilians. They continued in a similar tempo also in Eastern Slovakia. The south-east districts, belonging to Hungary after 1938, and the region of Spiš were the most affected. Fewer citizens were abducted from Central Slovakia, and only rare cases occurred in Western Slovakia.

MOTIVES

The primary motive for the abductions was an effort to provide a cheap labour force for the needs of the Soviet State. Other mo-

tives included vengeance against the Central European nations for their anti-communist attitude, or an effort to eliminate intellectuals who would pose obstacles to the prepared bolshevization of Czechoslovakia, or the simple intimidation of the population. Alongside the mass internment of men by Red Army units under the pretence of reconstruction work, the bodies of NKVD and special troops of the military counter-intelligence agency SMERSH specifically searched for citizens. In particular, they looked for former emigrants, "class enemies" or persons suspected of "contra-revolutionary" activities. Seldom were they helped by various denouncements by local supporters of the renewed Czechoslovak State (communists, partisans).

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE ABDUCTED

The social composition of the affected persons is thus related to the above motives. **The majority consisted of farmers and workers; however, a rather large part included intellectuals – teachers, officers, doctors, state employees, as well as students,** not forgetting political officials at various levels, members of the armed forces or citizens forced to do fortification work.