THE GREAT TERROR BEYOND THE USSR.
POSTWAR SOVIET DEPORTATIONS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, AND THE BALKANS (1940S-1950S)

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This article analyzes the transformation of Soviet national policy in the postwar period, using the example of the spread of ethnic cleansing and mass deportations as an element of control over national regions and ideological pressure on society from the internal policy of the USSR to the external one, organizing these practices in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe. The second part of the article examines the historiographical debates on the extension of Great Terror to the postwar period. The third part presents an analysis of national operations and their spread beyond the USSR. The final part presents an analysis of the Hungarian case, ethnic deportations from the Balkans, and mass deportations of the Hungarian and German populations from the Transcarpathian region of western Ukraine and Romania.

Keywords: *Soviet National Policy, Postwar Deportations, Eastern European Studies, Ethnic Cleansing, Great Terror*

1. Introduction

The phrase Great Terror traditionally evokes a semantic association with the Soviet Union and the 1930s, when political persecution and mass deportations became an integral part of Stalinist national policy (Martin 2001). At the same time, this repressive apparatus extended its gaze to the titular nation itself, intensifying ideological pressure and pursuing "enemies of the people" (Naimark 2001), including from within its own ranks. Contrary to the established terminology, however, the Stalinist regime carried out several major campaigns of terror, most prominently in the national territories of the USSR (Naimark 2001) and, in some cases, even beyond its formal borders (Perović 2018). The persecution of Moldovans, Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and various ethnic groups from the territory of Yugoslavia, Central and Eastern Europe, for example, remains significantly less studied than other cases, largely eluding scholarly attention for a

number of reasons. Chief among them is the comparatively localized character of these acts of repression, limited in scope by time, place, and scale. However, even major cases (such as post-war deportation from Hungary) remain understudied or underrepresented due to the critical lack of historical evidence, as these processes were not documented well being carried out during and post-war times by military groups (Weiner 2001). Furthermore, the legal frameworks for recording foreigners in sites of deportation, as well as the juridical justifications for such deportations, long distorted perceptions of the actual extent of postwar purges beyond Soviet borders in the so-called "allied states" of the Warsaw Bloc (Fejtő 1971).

These processes acquired particular significance in the postwar decade, when the Soviet Union sought to consolidate its hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe by establishing zones of control and ideological subordination. In Yugoslavia, Hungary, and other countries of the socialist camp, practices of repression and political purges often replicated Soviet models (Djokić 2003) while adapting to local political and ethnic contexts (Katičić 1989). Mass deportations, the elimination of "nationalist elements," and the branding of opposition groups as "agents of imperialism" became integral to the broader mechanism of strengthening communist party rule and fostering an atmosphere of constant fear (Katičić 1989; Todorova 2009). Unlike the large-scale campaigns of the Great Terror in the USSR, the postwar repressions in the Warsaw Pact countries were more selective in character, yet they proved no less destructive for ethnic minorities, intellectual elites, and interethnic relations (Khlevniuk 2010). Analyzing these "localized terrors" thus makes it possible to situate them within the transnational history of Stalinism and to broaden our understanding of repressive mechanisms beyond the borders of the Soviet Union (Tismaneanu 2003).

A particularly important issue in the study of postwar repressions concerns the classification and registration of deported persons. Unlike the USSR, where the GULAG produced large-scale, formalized reports, in the Warsaw Pact countries a substantial portion of repression victims effectively "fell out" of official statistics. Civilian deportees from Hungary and other states in the region were often classified as prisoners of war or internees, which complicated efforts to establish their actual numbers and ethnic composition (Standeisky 2004). Yet despite these formal legal categories, the majority of such individuals became victims of ethnic cleansing, political pressure, and forced resettlement. This specificity compels researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative methods, drawing not only on official documentation but also on personal memories and testimonies in order to reconstruct the true scale of repression in postwar Eastern Europe.

In the historiography of postwar repressions in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Hungary, scholars typically distinguish between two main categories of

Figure 1. Order No. 0060 of December 22, 1944, of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Front on the deportation in the territories occupied by the Soviets. Retrieved from online collection Karol Hucko, GULAG: People and Deportations, or similar online archival collections like https://gulag.online

deportees: prisoners of war and civilians (Várdy 2007). However, as T. Stark has noted, many civilians deported to the USSR were officially classified as prisoners of war, which obscures their ethnic background and political status (Stark 2003). This circumstance leads to a systematic underestimation of the scale of ethnic cleansing and political repression directed against the Hungarian population.

According to open access data and historical documents, most Hungarians who became victims of the Soviet regime passed through prisoner-of-war camps. In Transcarpathia, for example, after its occupation by Soviet troops, *Order No. 0036* extended POW status to all Hungarian and German males between the ages

of 18 and 50.[1] The order was later updated, including male teenagers starting from 17 years old, and female teenagers and women aged 18-30 (Gal, Balog, Gaidash, Imrekh 1995). This resulted in the mass deportation of civilians who, despite never having served in the military, were interned and sent to labor camps in the USSR. It could be considered the first wave of deportations among Hungarian ethnicities, adding up to the wide persecution of Hungarians, Ukrainian Hungarians and Hungarian Germans in 1944, for instance (Sheresh 2019). While mass-deportations for forced labor would be second wave. And, finally, the deportations after 1956 the final, last wave of political deportations.

Thus, while a portion of deported Hungarians were formally counted as prisoners of war, the majority were in fact victims of ethnic cleansing aimed at suppressing the Hungarian national element in postwar Eastern Europe. This underscores the necessity of revising traditional categories of repression and of accounting for the specific character of postwar deportations in Warsaw Pact countries. Framing Soviet national policy exclusively within the paradigm of *"internal colonization"* proves fundamentally misleading: it not only fosters distorted interpretations of historical events, but also produces asymmetrical historical narratives between the communities subjected to violence and the state power that perpetrated it.

2. Great Terror After the 1930s: Historiographical Debates and Archival Testimonies

Historiographical debates on the Great Terror have long focused on the "high" political trials of 1937-1938; however, increasing attention is being paid to the extent to which repressive practices continued and transformed after the end of the mass campaigns (Khlevniuk 2010; Werth 2007; Khlevniuk 2005; Khlevniuk 2003). Scholars note that although the formal "national operations" of the NKVD were officially discontinued, the logic of suspicion, extrajudicial practices, and ethnopolitical control persisted into the 1940s, particularly in the annexed regions of Western Ukraine, the Baltics, and Bessarabia (Khlevnyuk 2004).

Oleg Khlevnyuk, and later Vladimir Baghdasaryan, criticized then existing works on the Great Terror as being largely ideological, written in unwieldy and out-of-date language (Khlevnyuk 2004). Baghdasarian urges historians to discuss the problem of the persistence of Stalinist propaganda. In his view, the presence of such motives is a real threat to the development of research unencumbered by

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[1]   Military Council of the 4th Ukrainian Front (1944, November 13). *Resolution No. 0036 on the registration and detention of Hungarian and German males of conscription age in Transcarpathian Ukraine* [Постановление военного совета 4-го Украинского фронта № 0036 о регистрации и задержании венгерских и немецких военнообязанных на территории Закарпатской Украины]. «Russian State Military Archive» (RGVA), fond and opis' unknown.

political bias (Iashchenko 2005). In his study The Great Terror of 1937-1938 as a Problem for Scientific Historiography, Khlevnyuk argues that critical writing on the subject of repression begins only after archives have been declassified and free access to documents has been granted (Khlevnyuk 2004).

The debate over the periodization of Terror remains open. Some authors consider 1938 a clear endpoint, emphasizing the massiveness and unique character of the campaigns (Conquest 1990). Others highlight the institutional continuity of repressive practices: a reduction in scale did not imply a cessation of repression per se, but rather its transformation into more "administrative" forms. From this perspective, postwar repressions (the Doctors' Plot, the deportations of Chechens, Ingush, and Crimean Tatars) are seen as a direct continuation of Stalinist logic of "preventive violence" (Getty and Naumov 1999).

The opening of the archives in the 1990s played a particularly important role in these debates. NKVD–MGB documents revealed that, already in the early 1940s, mass arrests and deportations continued, especially in the newly annexed border regions. Archival evidence also shows that many officials involved in the "national operations" of 1937-1938 retained their positions into the 1940s, highlighting the institutional continuity of the apparatus of terror (Davies & Harris 2005). In addition to Western scholarship, Ukrainian historians such as Serhii Plokhy and Russian scholars like Vadim Polian have also emphasized the persistence of repressive practices and the role of institutional continuity in the Soviet security apparatus (Plokhy 2015; Polian 2004).

Another line of research focuses on the personal and collective testimonies of victims. Publications by *Memorial*[2] and other human rights organizations have revealed that the memory of the repressions of the 1940s was preserved within the families of the repressed just as vividly as memories of the events of the "Great Terror".[3] In victims' recollections, there is often no clear boundary between

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[2]   The work of Memorial and affiliated human rights organizations has been indispensable for the study of Soviet political repressions. Through the dedicated efforts of historians, researchers, and volunteers, Memorial collected personal testimonies, archival documents, and other primary sources that might otherwise have been lost, ensuring the preservation of crucial historical evidence despite state policies that restricted access to archives and, in some cases, led to the destruction of NKVD and MVD records in contemporary Russia. Unfortunately, in 2021, Memorial was officially designated as an extremist organization under Russian law, and many of its staff and collaborators have faced legal persecution. Despite these challenges, much of the core historical data now available on victims of repression was assembled thanks to the commitment of local communities and volunteers, highlighting the essential role of civic engagement in safeguarding historical memory. For further details, see: https://memo.ru/en-us/ (last access: 25.10.2025)

[3]   *Database of victims of political repression*. 2018. Moscow, Memorial Society. URL: https://memo.ru (last accessed: 25.10.2025)

"1937" and the postwar deportations: for them, these events represented a single logic of a coercive state, in which distinctions between periods were secondary (Applebaum 2004).

The events of the 1930s are also reflected in recent Russian historiography, which has focused on the history of minorities, in particular the persecution of scholars at universities in the capital and the German operation of the NKVD of 1938 (*Belkovets 1995; Chentsov 1998)*. Some works focus on the mid-1930s, crystallizing specific cases of ethnic discrimination in the context of mass repression and analyzing individual political case (*German 2004*). American historian Terry Martin also wrote about ethnic cleansing, linking the start of the series of "operations" to German cleansing operations in Ukraine during the 1933 terror (Martin 2001). This was followed by a wave of Polish, Latvian and other purges. The national intelligentsia was the first to be targeted. In 1935, for example, employees and students of the German department of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute were accused of using racist and mystical words, arrested and sentenced to various punishments, which has been reflected in historiography (Wiebe 2009; Hayasaka 2012).

Western European scholarship has played a foundational role in shaping our understanding of Great Terror. Early works, such as Robert Conquest's The Great Terror (Conquest 1968), provided a pioneering account of the purges, estimating that approximately 681,692 people were executed and 116,000 died in the Gulag system during 1937-1938. Conquest's work introduced the term "Great Terror" and framed the mass repressions as a central mechanism of Stalinist state power. Subsequent research, including that of Nicolas Werth (Werth 1998), expanded on this foundation by examining the scale and impact of Stalinist repression across the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, offering detailed analyses of both executions and deportations. Historians Hermann and Plewe, in their work on the Volga Germans, describe a real "witch hunt", the Soviet government seeing every German as a potential spy. They cite data showing that during the national operations in Ukraine (1937-1938), over 55,000 people were arrested, of whom about 40,000 were sentenced to capital punishment (shooting).

In Central Europe, historians have focused on the localized experiences of nations under Soviet influence or direct occupation. Hungarian scholarship, for instance, has explored the legacy of the Red Terror of 1919, emphasizing how patterns of political repression and ethnic targeting persisted in postwar Soviet-controlled contexts. In the Czech lands, studies have documented the effects of Stalinist policies on individuals and communities, including dekulakization, arrests, and the targeting of ethnic minorities, highlighting how regional variations of the Great Terror reflected local political and social dynamics (Iashchenko 2025).

Eastern European scholars have similarly contributed critical perspectives that illuminate the continuity and adaptation of Stalinist repression in specific national contexts. Ukrainian historians have examined the systemic impact of mass arrests, deportations, and collectivization campaigns, situating these events within broader frameworks of state violence and ethnic targeting.[4] Their research demonstrates that, even after the peak of the Great Terror, repressive practices continued into the 1940s and beyond, affecting both annexed territories and core Soviet regions («Historical Journal», 2025). Hungarian and Czech researchers have further emphasized local variations in the implementation of these policies, while Russian scholars, such as Khlevniuk (2004) and Polian (2004) have highlighted the institutional continuity of the NKVD and MGB, demonstrating how personnel structures and centralized plans ensured the persistence of repression across time and space. It is important to note that scholars from the Baltic states began expanding the discourse on repression as early as the late 1980s, laying one of the intellectual foundations for the democratic transition by foregrounding the collective memory of Soviet-era crimes committed against their populations. (Iashchenko 2025). At the same time, however, research is also predominantly published in the 21st century (Tannberg 2016) due to the availability of the source base and the liberalization of the academic agenda, at least in the European landscape (Mälksoo 2006). To date, a large number of studies have certainly been presented specifically on the materials of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The studies pay attention to the ethnic factor of mass repressions (Naimark 2003), deportations (Rahi-Tamm 2018) and massacres, including a substantial focus on the history of women in repressive situations (Lazda 2005) and history of childhood and education (Rahi-Tamm 2017). This seems important for the Baltic States for two reasons, first of all. The first occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviets in 1939 resulted in mass deportations and shootings of men.

While historians from the Baltic states, Poland, and Ukraine have highlighted the specific experiences of ethnic groups, Russian scholarship has often downplayed or avoided acknowledging the existence of ethnically motivated, institutionalized violence, instead emphasizing a more universalist perspective, that all people in the Soviet Union were vulnerable to repression. While this interpretation is not entirely incorrect, it does not fully capture the reality of the period, as discussions of mass repression in this framework tend to focus almost exclusively on the internal regions of the USSR, overlooking the

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[4]   *Fighting Soviet myths: The Ukrainian experience*. (n.d.). Harvard Ukrainian Studies Journal. URL: https://www.husj.harvard.edu/articles/fighting-soviet-myths-the-ukrainian-experience (last accessed: 25.10.2025)

targeted persecution of ethnic minorities in borderlands and annexed territories (Iashchenko 2025).

Thus, ethnic groups from the territories of the occupied countries are barely represented in the historiographical discussions of Russian scholars. Moreover, reducing all discussions of repression in the Soviet Union to the issue of Great Terror again leads to significant gaps in the discussion of ethnic cleansing in the 1940s. As a result, the semantic fragmentation of historiography in relation to these issues reaches a maximum degree, demonstrating completely polar assessments: from the articulation of genocide by Russian Germans to denial by Russian scholars of any ethnic grounds during Stalinism. Due to the fact that the more massive repressions took place in the 1930s and 1940s (Rieber 2000), the focus of Russian historiography is accordingly shifted to the period of mass repressions, especially Great Terror, which is studied in the most detail (Iashchenko 2025, 48-49). However, together, these regional studies provide a nuanced understanding of Great Terror as both a centralized phenomenon and a set of locally mediated practices, showing how repression extended across the Soviet Union and into Eastern and Central Europe, with lasting social and institutional consequences.

Despite these achievements, a divide persists in the historiography. Russian scholars often emphasize institutional and quantitative analyses of archival materials, highlighting the systematic nature of the repressions, whereas Western researchers pay greater attention to personal memory, social dynamics, and comparative analyses with other totalitarian regimes. In addition, works by Eastern European authors (for example, Polish, Ukrainian, and Balkan historians) demonstrate that local contexts strongly modified the manifestations of terror, creating variations that archival documents alone can only partially reconstruct.

Thus, contemporary research integrates three main lines of analysis: institutional-archival, experiential-subjective, and transnational-comparative. The opening of archives after 1991 made it possible to establish the factual continuity of the repressive system, clarify the scale and methods of terror, and, when combined with oral histories and localized studies, reveal the complex interaction between state and society, as well as the long-term consequences of repression for collective memory and identity in the post-Stalinist period. Importantly, modern historiographical approaches are gradually shifting from viewing the Great Terror as an exclusively short-term "outburst of violence" toward a broader understanding of the Stalinist system as a long-term model of political and ethnopolitical control. Diverse historical evidence and historiography debates, considered together, indicate that while the forms and scale of violence changed after 1938, its systemic character remained.

3. Regional Specifics or National Operations? Soviet Ethnic Policing of New Regions.

In the traditions of the Soviet regime, ethnic cleansing and demographic policies were justified as part of preparation for geopolitical transformations (Martin 2001). One example of this can be seen in the western territories of Ukraine, where nearly all "national policy" was carried out under the aegis of "territorial cleansing" in preparation for the annexation of Polish lands.

In the traditions of the Soviet regime, mass population movements and demographic interventions have been considered by many contemporary scholars not merely as a byproduct of war and repression, but as a tool for shaping the "socio-ethnic" map of new territories. In this context, Terry Martin's classic article emphasizes that Soviet nation-building policies could develop into practices that outwardly resemble "ethnic cleansing," when the regime deliberately altered the ethnic composition of borderlands and annexed territories for political and state objectives (Martin 1998).

For the Soviet leadership during the Stalinist period, ethnic cleansing and mass deportations were long-standing instruments of domestic policy, reflecting state-building and the unification of national and ideological diversity under the definition of the Soviet people and the Soviet person, speaking Russian, identifying with the Russian heritage, and relying on the ideas of the Communist Party and, specifically, the leader, Joseph Stalin. Any deviation from the prescribed course was considered counter-revolutionary and anti-state activity, equated with terrorist and extremist acts, falling under the legal framework of the RSFSR Criminal Code, Article 48 (enemy of the people, treason, counter-revolutionary activity, etc.). The Soviet regime viewed the greatest threat in the ethnic unity of the so-called national territories of the USSR (Snyder 2010). This definition encompassed all of Central Asia, the entire Caucasus, Ukraine, Belarus, the occupied Baltic countries, and certain ethnic regions included within the RSFSR (such as the Volga German Autonomous Republic, Tatarstan, etc.).

Most ethnic cleansings and mass deportations were carried out within the framework of "national operations," meaning that even the Stalinist regime not only pursued ideological and national persecution as the primary objective of such acts of violence and injustice but did not attempt to deny that the motivation for these cleansings was national (Werth and Panne 1999). Although individual operations often had secondary objectives – economic and geopolitical – for example, *donor regions of Ukraine and Central Asia* experienced artificially created famine, mass arrests, and deportations simultaneously due to institutionalized racism at the core of Soviet ideology and the critical economic need for resources for the metropole. As a result, the interests of ethnic minorities were irrelevant to the ruling authorities (Iashchenko 2025).

In the case of newly occupied territories such as Western Ukraine, Transcarpathia, and the Baltic countries, the geopolitical factor played a secondary role, since distrust, animosity, and hatred toward ethnic minorities led to the so-called policy of resettling new regions (Polian 2004). The USSR organized mass deportations from the newly captured regions and actively settled them with Russian citizens, achieving the complete Russification of the area. Reshaping populations was one of the most prominent tools used by Soviet regime in the regions with low percentage of Russian residents (Gross 2002). Countries of Baltic region undergone this demographic policing from the USSR, resulting in critical decline of native ethnicities for decades to come (Rahi-Tamm 2017).

The same distrust formed the basis for harsh measures, mass persecutions, and deportations within the Warsaw Bloc, when the Stalinist regime, fearing the loss of control over non-Russian territories (Kotliarchuk 2025), resorted to intimidation measures as well as Russification through education and a pro-Soviet political system and elite, completely eliminating opposition.

Thus, one of the central directions of the discussion concerns intent and motivation: were the deportations and "cleansings" a *deliberate state strategy of ethnic unification*, or were they more often the result of a combination of repression, economic coercion, and mass flight? Pavel Polian, in systematizing data on forced migrations, shows a complex picture: in some cases, the movements were organized from above, but in others, a significant portion of people left "of their own accord" under the pressure of Sovietization, terror, and interethnic tension; therefore, the analytical distinction between "forced" and "partially voluntary" migration flows remains a subject of lively debate (Polian 2004).

Another important strand of research focuses on regional and institutional mechanisms: which agencies, which local elites, and which legal norms ensured the implementation of deportations and population replacements? Archival discoveries in recent decades have made it possible to reconstruct the role of the NKVD, local party committees, and planning institutions in carrying out "national operations" and mass expulsions, thereby strengthening the argument about the centralized nature of many forced resettlement campaigns, albeit with noticeable regional variations (Bilokin 2002).

Historiography is also rich in disputes over terminology and assessments: some authors use the category of "ethnic cleansing," others prefer "forced migration," "resettlement," or "repression," while still others propose mixed concepts that take into account both ideological and practical incentives. The practical use of such semantic elaborations lies in the possibilities of legal and political-moral assessment (bloody deportations as a crime against humanity or as an element of

military/political strategy), which makes the choice of terminology not only academic but also normatively significant.

At the heart of historiographical debates lies the question of whether the mass deportations and ethnopolitical operations of the Soviet period can be classified as "ethnic cleansing" or even genocide (Iashchenko and Carteny 2024) and genocidal politics (Snyder 2010). Proponents of the concept of "ethnic cleansing" emphasize the deliberate nature of policies aimed at radically changing the ethnic composition of certain territories, the systematic destruction or displacement of entire population groups, and the use of repression as a tool of demographic engineering (Martin 1998; Pohl 1999). These authors view such actions as a strategic element in expanding control over border territories and preparing for future geopolitical changes, which allows the practice to be correlated with international concepts of crimes against humanity.

At the same time, critics of applying the categories of "ethnic cleansing" or "genocide" point to methodological and source-based limitations. Getty and Naumov (1999), as well as Polian (2024), note that many operations combined political, social, and economic motives; it is not always possible to unambiguously identify an ethnic component. For example, deportations of "class unreliable" individuals or military collaborators included members of various ethnic groups, which complicates direct classification as genocidal. The critical approach emphasizes the need to distinguish ideological objectives, administrative measures, and unintended consequences, as well as to account for local variations and institutional decisions on the ground.

Another strand of the debate concerns mixed concepts that combine political and ethnic incentives (Weiner 2003). According to these authors, Soviet policy often simultaneously had ideological, economic, and ethno-political motives: deportations and repressions could be used to consolidate control, eliminate political opponents, and create demographically "loyal" regions (Hirsch 2005). This approach allows one to avoid a simplistic binary classification of "genocide/not genocide" and focuses on the complex system of motivations and consequences. However, critics note that excessive generalization of these factors can blur the understanding of the state's degree of responsibility for mass human rights violations.

The discussion about the terminological framework is directly linked to the question of the legal and moral classification of Soviet policy in multinational regions. Some scholars insist on applying the category of "ethnic cleansing," emphasizing the intentional nature of policies aimed at displacing or eliminating specific ethnic groups (Martin 1998). Other authors prefer less legally charged terms, "forced migration" or "deportation", arguing that the term "ethnic cleansing" was codified in international law in the 1990s and may retrospectively distort

the perception of Soviet practice (Polian 2004). In turn, Hirsch (2005) and Weiner (2003) point to the necessity of a combined approach, which takes into account both the ideological component (the construction of a "Soviet nation") and the practical one – *social control and the elimination of "unreliable elements."*

The practical value of such semantic distinctions lies in the fact that they allow mass relocations to be interpreted in different ways: either as crimes against humanity, requiring moral and legal evaluation, or as elements of a state strategy of mobilization and control under a totalitarian regime. This choice of terminology affects not only academic interpretation but also contemporary political discourse in Eastern Europe, where issues of recognition, condemnation, and rehabilitation remain the subject of heated debate (Shcherbak 2019).

Finally, terminological and conceptual ambiguity has significant implications for contemporary research on memory and legal evaluation. The choice between "ethnic cleansing," "repression," or "forced migration" directly affects the interpretation of historical events in public discourse and textbooks, as well as the processes of rehabilitating victims. Historiography shows that, although strict legal classification requires caution, the analytical value of different terms lies in their ability to allow researchers to assess the scale, intentions, and consequences of Soviet repressive campaigns in different ways, providing a comprehensive understanding of the historical process.

An important place is occupied by research into the consequences for collective memory and regional politics: for the western regions of modern Ukraine and neighboring territories, issues of "cleansing" and resettlement continue to shape the agendas of memory, rehabilitation, and historical responsibility. Empirical studies show that repression and deportation not only changed demographics, but also laid the groundwork for long-term conflicts over identity, which are evident in contemporary discussions about borders, belonging, and historical justice.

An important direction of contemporary research concerns the long-term consequences of demographic policies for collective memory and identity. For the western regions of Ukraine, as well as for Poland, Lithuania, and Belarus, deportations and ethnic "cleansings" became not only part of a traumatic historical experience but also a basis for shaping "memory politics" in the post-Soviet period (Baran 2004). In Ukrainian historiography, it is emphasized that deportations and resettlements radically changed the social structure, increasing distrust toward state institutions and forming so-called "ghost communities" (Iashchenko 2025), groups that lost connection with their native territories but preserved their memory through cultural practices and family narratives (Shcherbak 2019).

A particular strand of historiographical debates is devoted to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe that came under Soviet influence after the Second

World War. Research here shows that demographic policy, repressions, and forced migrations were viewed as part of a broader strategy of consolidating the "socialist camp" and maintaining political control. In the Romanian and Hungarian context, the connection between ethnic policy and intra-party struggle is especially emphasized: deportations and resettlements were often used to neutralize potential opponents of the regime, as well as to redistribute resources in favor of loyal groups (Tismaneanu 2003). Historiography highlights that the ethnic factor here intersected with social and class aspects, giving the repressions a complex character.

The Yugoslav case occupies a special place in the debates, as Tito, after the break with Moscow in 1948, implemented his own policy regarding national minorities, often combining repressions with limited forms of cultural autonomy (Ramet 2006). Researchers note that the experience of Yugoslav federalism demonstrates a relative flexibility of ethnopolitical practice compared to the Soviet "rigid" approach. Nevertheless, the deportations of German, Hungarian, and Italian populations in the early postwar years remain the subject of lively debate: some authors view them as a forced response to wartime collaboration, while others interpret them as ethnic cleansing aimed at restructuring the ethnodemographic composition of Vojvodina and Slovenia (Todorova 2006).

Special attention is also paid to the Czechoslovak experience, where the mass deportation of Sudeten Germans after 1945 is considered a classic example of ethnic cleansing, legally legitimized under the Potsdam Agreements (Cornwall 2018). In Czech historiography, debates continue over the extent to which this deportation was imposed by the Soviet Union as part of a broader regional strategy, or whether it reflected Prague's domestic policy aimed at creating a nationally homogeneous state. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the cultural and memorial aspects of this deportation, including in the context of pan-European discussions on minority rights and cross-border reconciliation. Overall, the analysis of Balkan and Central European material shows that terminological and conceptual approaches ("ethnic cleansing," "forced migration," "repressions") are closely linked to political contexts and national historiographical traditions. Unlike the centralized Soviet narrative, interpretations here are more dependent on local political and cultural conditions: from nationalist projects in Romania and Hungary to federalist experiments in Yugoslavia and the "legally sanctioned deportation" in Czechoslovakia. This comparative context enriches the understanding of Soviet practices and allows them to be situated within the broader European experience of forced migrations and ethnopolitical transformations in the 20th century.

4. Fame and Fear. Post War Realities of Deportations and GULAG Imprisonment of Ethnic Minorities from Balkans, and Central-Eastern Europe

4.1. Repressive Terminology and Ideological Justification in Post-War Soviet Deportations beyond the USSR

The post-war period witnessed the continuation and transformation of Soviet repressive practices, particularly affecting ethnic minorities in annexed and border regions. Deportations, internments, and GULAG imprisonment were used not only to punish perceived collaborators or political opponents but also to consolidate ethnic and political homogeneity in strategically significant territories. International dimension of Soviet repressions against ethnic minorities gained significance in the post-war context. As the USSR sought to consolidate influence in Eastern Europe and position itself as a leader of the socialist bloc, the treatment of minorities such as Poles, Baltic peoples, and ethnic Germans drew attention from international observers and diasporic communities abroad (Snyder 2010). This global scrutiny placed the Soviet state in a paradoxical position: while promoting narratives of anti-fascist liberation and socialist solidarity, it simultaneously implemented policies of ethnic persecution that undermined its international image. This contradiction continues to inform contemporary debates on the legacy of Soviet repression and its impact on European collective memory.

Recent scholarship in memory studies has emphasized the intergenerational transmission of trauma among deported groups, particularly through oral histories and cultural practices (Etkind 2013; Hirsch 2012). The memories of deportation, imprisonment, and social stigma have not only shaped group identities but also influenced political mobilization in the post-Soviet period, where demands for recognition, restitution, and historical justice remain salient. These memory dynamics illustrate how the legacies of post-war repression extend beyond the Soviet era, continuing to structure relationships between ethnic minorities and successor states, as well as shaping broader understandings of justice, belonging, and state violence in the twentieth century.

The persistence of deportations and forced migrations in the broader Soviet bloc demonstrates how practices first systematized under Stalin remained a central instrument of governance even after the war. In the USSR, groups such as the Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars, and Volga Germans remained in exile well into the Brezhnev era, their restricted legal status marking them as "special settlers" deprived of full civil rights (Bugai 2005).

Similar dynamics were replicated in Warsaw Pact countries, where deportations and population transfers were used to secure political loyalty and redraw

ethnic frontiers. In Poland, the post-war years witnessed the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Silesia and Pomerania, the forced resettlement of Ukrainians during Operation Vistula in 1947, and the suppression of Lemko and Boyko communities (Davies 2005; Subtelny 2009). Hungary and Romania also pursued policies that displaced ethnic Germans, Hungarians, and other minorities, aligning national security with the Soviet-led model of demographic control.

4.2. Hungarian Case of Mass-Deportations and Yugoslavs in GULAG.

The spread of the Stalinist regime's repressive national policies beyond the borders of the Soviet Union coincided with the liberation of new territories by Soviet troops. Attention should be paid to the first cases of persecution of Hungarians and Germans in the Carpathia region of Western Ukraine, as the justification used there for persecution – *collaborationism* – became a new term replacing "anti-revolutionary sentiments," which the USSR had used for ethnic cleansing earlier. The ideological transformation during the war of the justifications for the persecution of ethnic minorities, which began with the Volga Germans, Poles, and the peoples of the Caucasus, was also actively used for persecution in the territories of Central European states, in Eastern European countries, and in the Balkans. Traditionally, the largest cases are associated with Hungary, Poland, and Romania, and to a lesser extent with Yugoslavia.

During the in-war period, as the Red Army advanced across Eastern Europe while pushing back Nazi Germany, the Transcarpathian region (encompassing parts of present-day Ukraine and Romania) became a site of systematic repression and deportation of ethnic minorities, particularly Hungarians and Germans. Soviet authorities, including the 4th Ukrainian Front and the NKVD, implemented measures of collective punishment, forcibly interning thousands of military-age men and other civilians. Archival evidence and survivor testimonies indicate that the initial wave of these deportations began in late 1944, targeting Hungarian men as part of the broader Soviet strategy to secure political and territorial control over Transcarpathia (Dupko2018). Estimates of the number of deported individuals vary, with archival data suggesting approximately 16,000 victims, while eyewitness accounts recorded around 10,500, and some secondary sources citing up to 40,000, of whom a significant proportion perished under harsh conditions (Molnár, Bakura, Dupko, Kovács,Kovács & Tóth 2009). This first wave of persecution laid the groundwork for post-war ethnic cleansing policies and the full incorporation of Transcarpathia into the Soviet sphere.

It is important to note that under the guise of fighting collaborators, the Soviet Union actively used this accusation to organize a mass witch hunt, expanding the scope of persecution from adult men of military age to women, teenagers,

and families (for more details, see the development of the regulatory framework in Appendices 1-3).

The deportations and forced labor practices known as the *"Malenykij Robot"* reflected the broader Soviet approach to ethnic and political control, combining coercion, surveillance, and systematic deprivation. Ethnic Hungarians and Germans were transported to labor camps in the Donets Basin and other regions of the USSR, facing severe physical hardship, overcrowding, and inadequate provisions. Subsequent scholarship, based on archival documents and social surveys conducted by institutions such as the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and individual researchers like Erzsébet Molnár, highlights the deliberate targeting of these communities as part of the Sovietization process in 1944-1945. These actions, while framed by Soviet authorities as security measures or war reparations, constituted the first stage of organized post-war persecution of Hungarians in the region, leaving enduring demographic and social consequences that shaped collective memory and interethnic relations in Transcarpathia (Molnár, 2010).

In January 1945, *the Soviet State Defense Committee issued Order 7161*[5], mandating the deportation of ethnic Germans from occupied territories, including Hungary, for forced labor. When quotas were not met, ethnic Hungarians were also targeted. The NKVD's Main Department for Affairs of POWs and Internees (GUPVI) oversaw the deportations, managing a network of labor camps similar to the GULAG system.

Deportees were transported in freight cars to transit camps in Romania and Western Ukraine. Survivor testimonies indicate high mortality rates due to harsh conditions, including epidemic dysentery, severe weather, and malnutrition. Once in the Soviet Union, many were assigned to approximately 2,000 labor camps, particularly in regions like Central Russia, Siberia, and the Ural Mountains.[6] These camps were notorious for their brutal conditions, contributing to the high death toll among Hungarian forced laborers. Rought estimates suggest that between 250,000 and 600,000 Hungarians were deported to the Soviet Union during this period.[7] However, due to inadequate record-keeping and the clandestine nature of

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[5] Order No. 7161 mandated the mobilization and deportation of all able-bodied ethnic Germans aged 17-45 (men) and 18-30 (women) from Soviet-occupied territories, including Hungary, to the USSR for forced labour as part of war reparations.

[6] Hungarian National Museum. (n.d.). Malenki Robot Memorial. URL: https://mnm.hu/en/museums/mnm-malenkij-robot-emlekhely (last access: 25.10.2025)

[7] Sciences Po. (n.d.). The Soviet Massive Deportations – A Chronology. URL: https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/soviet-massive-deportations-chronology.html (last access: 25.10.2025)

the operations, the exact number remains uncertain. Many deportees perished *en route* or in transit camps, their deaths unrecorded (Várdy 2002).

However, the deeper work with international archives show that the traditional estimation was quite lower than the reality. Statistical analyses of the Hungarian deportations to the Soviet Union reveal the scale and human cost of the **Málenkij robot**. Archival research conducted after the regime change in Hungary in 1989 allowed historians to document more precisely the fates of prisoners of war and civilian internees. According to Mihály Korom, 800-900 thousand Hungarian soldiers fell into enemy captivity across the USSR, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, of whom 570-620 thousand were held by the Soviets. Including the territories reincorporated after the war (Transylvania, Southern and Upper Hungary, and Subcarpathia), Lajos Fürr estimates the number of captured soldiers on all fronts at 1.3-1.4 million (Fürr 2000). Tomáš Stark further reports that approximately 600-700 thousand Hungarians were held in Soviet captivity, with 330-380 thousand surviving and returning home, while 270-370 thousand perished in captivity (Stark 2006). Civilian deportations were also significant: about 200 thousand men from the Carpathian basin, including 100 thousand from Hungary, were forcibly sent to labor camps in the USSR (Menczel 2000).

These figures underline the immense human toll of Soviet forced labor policies. Many internees died even before reaching labor camps, with 70-100 thousand perishing in transit through 56 POW camps established in 47 settlements across Hungary, while 120-140 thousand were eventually released (Menczel 2000). Archival research by Eva-Mária Varga has been crucial in bringing previously inaccessible Russian sources into Hungarian historiography, helping to clarify the number of deportees and providing detailed evidence of their living conditions in the GULAG system (Krausz and Varga 2013). The data indicate that wood-supplying factories and remote labor camps in Siberia and the Ural Mountains, to which many Hungarians were sent, were among the deadliest in the GULAG network, with harsh working conditions, malnutrition, and exposure to extreme climates contributing to high mortality rates. Overall, these statistics illustrate not only the large-scale exploitation of Hungarian labor but also the lethal consequences of the Málenkij robot, which resulted in the systematic suffering and death of tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers alike.

The Balkan and Romanian cases of postwar repressions highlight the systemic use of collective punishment against ethnic minorities. In Romania, Transylvanian Hungarians and ethnic Germans were subjected to mass deportations, forced labor, and internment in the Danube Delta and other remote regions. The practice paralleled Soviet applications of the "principle of collective guilt," extending punishment to entire communities regardless of individual responsibility.

Archival materials document that thousands of civilians, including those from Braşov, Timişoara, and Focşani, were transported to labor camps, often under the pretext of "war reparations." The repressive measures in Romania mirrored those in Soviet-controlled territories, with civilians indiscriminately targeted regardless of personal guilt. These deportations, frequently justified as security measures, served both punitive and economic purposes, feeding labor shortages in heavy industry and infrastructure projects (Romsics 2000).

In the wider Balkans, similar mechanisms of repression unfolded. In Vojvodina, Yugoslavia, Hungarian, German, and Croatian minorities faced mass executions and deportations in 1944-45, events remembered as the "southern reprisals" (Bognár 2010). Estimates suggest that tens of thousands were either summarily executed or sent to forced labor camps, while survivors were stripped of civil rights and property. Scholars such as Tamás Stark and Zoltán Bognár emphasize that these acts were not spontaneous but coordinated responses rooted in both wartime revenge and Stalinist ethnic policies (Dupko 2008). The Balkan and Romanian experiences reveal how Soviet-style deportations were adapted locally, reinforcing systems of persecution that blurred the line between ethnic cleansing and political repression (Rózsás 2009).

The repressive apparatus in the Balkans following World War II extended well beyond Romania's borders, involving Yugoslavia's treatment of ethnic minorities and the forced labor system orchestrated under Soviet influence. According to Dupko, ethnic Hungarians, Germans (including Transylvanian Saxons), and Croats living in Yugoslav territories experienced internment, deportation, and collective punishments akin to those occurring in Soviet-occupied Transcarpathia. The political logic in these cases rested on the notion of collective guilt, whereby entire ethnic communities were deemed "complicit" regardless of individual conduct, a principle legitimized by decrees and postwar boundary settlements. Dupko documents that in Vojvodina and other parts of Yugoslavia, tens of thousands of civilians were stripped of civil rights, had their property confiscated, and many were deported to either internal camps or to Soviet labor camps as forced labor. The repression also included summary executions and violent reprisals, particularly in 1944-45, under the euphemism of "cleansing" or "retribution" for wartime collaboration, real or alleged (Dupko 2008, 148-153).

On *the specific case of Croatians in the Soviet GULAG*, Dupko provides testimony and archival traces, though the material is less extensive than for Hungarians and Germans. There are accounts of Croatian prisoners being sent to Soviet labor camps after the war, particularly among those caught up in broader campaigns of deportation for either military or political reasons. One diary-style narrative describes Croatian captives among mixed ethnonational groups

transported to Siberian camps, enduring brutal conditions, extreme cold, inadequate food, separations from families, high mortality. Although Dupko emphasizes that the archives yield fewer named individuals for Croatians, the evidence confirms that Croatian civilians and POWs were not exempt from Soviet forced labor policies or from the "Malenkij Robot" style deportation system employed throughout Eastern Europe.

The ethnic deportations of Germans, Hungarians, and other minorities after World War II were not confined to the Soviet Union but extended across Central and Eastern Europe. As Dupko (2008) shows, the People's Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine, under the leadership of Ivan Turyanytsia, played an active role in implementing Soviet directives such as MVD Order №1034 of 15 January 1946, which mandated the deportation of ethnic Germans accused of collaboration or membership in organizations like the Volksbund (Dupko2008, 145-147). Earlier, Council resolutions №3233 and №3234 of August 1945 had already ordered the removal of returning Germans and Hungarians, accused of being "occupiers." By March 1946, 1,969 Germans from Transcarpathia were deported to the Tyumen region, followed by another 701 in 1949, where they were forced into logging work until 1955. Overall, more than 4,000 Germans from the region were displaced, often under brutal conditions that led to mass mortality (Dupko 2008, 47-151).

Beyond Transcarpathia, deportations followed a regional pattern across the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Reports to Stalin and Molotov by NKVD head Lavrentii Beria recorded that by January 1945, a total of 67,930 Germans had already been deported from "Balkan countries," including 10,935 from Yugoslavia and 33,073 from Romania (Matkovich-Kretz 1993). Later statistics estimate the number of Germans mobilized for forced labor from the Balkans and neighboring states at over 551,000, with women making up more than half of those deported (Dupko2008). Yugoslavia alone deported over 70,000 ethnic Germans, while Romania's deportations reached more than 400,000. These numbers underscore the systemic application of the principle of collective guilt, which turned entire ethnic communities into targets of mass displacement and forced labor. Historians, such as Tamás Stark, emphasize that a significant share of the deported perished in Soviet camps, with mortality rates reaching a third or even a quarter of the total deportees (Stark 1994).

The post-1944 expulsions and deportations in the Balkans formed part of a regional pattern of collective punishment that combined local initiatives with Soviet directives. In Yugoslavia and neighboring Romania large numbers of ethnic Germans, Hungarians and other minorities were rounded up, stripped of civil rights and in many cases sent either to internal transit camps or deported east for forced labor; Soviet reporting consolidated these operations into a wider plan of

mobilizing "reparative" labor from occupied territories. Archival returns quoted by Dupko show Beria's January 1945 tally of 67,930 Germans deported from the Balkan countries (including 10,935 from Yugoslavia and 33,073 from Romania), and later NKVD returns and local resolutions document mass mobilizations of civilians into logging, mining and industry across the region. The Yugoslav case must be read alongside local dynamics of revenge and social cleansing, the ethnic German minority in the Banat and other areas suffered both from wartime collaborationist structures and from postwar summary measures that blurred the line between judicial process and collective expulsion (Zakić 2017). The lethal consequences of these policies are clear when set against the broader history of the Gulag: deportees sent into the Soviet forced-labor system were often assigned to the most dangerous extractive industries and timber operations, where mortality rates were particularly high (Iashchenko 2025).

Although less numerically visible in the sources than Hungarians or ethnic Germans, Croatians, both POWs and civilians suspected of collaboration, also appear among those transferred into the Soviet forced-labour system and endured the same brutal conditions. Dupko presents testimonies and archival traces indicating Croatian internees among mixed convoys to Siberian and Urals camps, with diarists reporting extreme cold, epidemic disease, food deprivation and very high early mortality in transit and the first months in camp. This evidence aligns with the general pattern documented for foreign and minority internees in the Gulag: once processed into the camp network, national origin provided little protection from assignment to remote logging battalions and coal or metal works, precisely the sites that produced the highest death rates in the camp system (Dupko 2008). Given the fragmentary nature of surviving lists and the selective survival of testimonies, Dupko's archival work is especially valuable for identifying individual Croatian cases and situating them within the broader logistics of deportation and forced labor across Eastern Europe after 1944.

The organization of prisoner-of-war and internment camps in Transcarpathia, established under NKVD oversight from late 1944, reflected both the logistical needs of the Soviet military administration and the harsh realities of confinement. Facilities such as the large SPV camp in Svalyava, with a capacity of nearly 8,000, or the transit point in Perechyn, often held detainees beyond their intended limits, forcing overcrowded and unsanitary conditions (Duplo, Korsun 2013). Prisoners, primarily ethnic Hungarians, Germans, and Croats, were subjected to forced marches across mountain passes, inadequate rations, and brutal interrogations conducted by SMERSH operatives. Testimonies and archival reports cited by Dupko indicate that the weakest often perished during transit or from disease within the camps, while executions of suspected "anti-Soviet elements" were carried out

secretly, their bodies buried in unmarked graves near camp sites. The dual use of these facilities, both as sites of preliminary filtration and as recruitment grounds for Soviet-aligned armies, further underscores their coercive function in dismantling and reshaping the occupied societies of Eastern Europe.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, it is crucial to recognize the consequences of these national policies of the USSR brought in European countries. The deportations carried out in the aftermath of World War II fundamentally transformed the social, cultural, and economic fabric of Central and Eastern Europe, leaving a deep and enduring imprint on post-war societies. By uprooting communities from their ancestral lands, these forced movements generated long-term economic hardship, widespread property loss, and social stigmatization, embedding patterns of mistrust and fragmentation that persisted across generations. At the same time, political authorities in Visegrad countries sought to frame these displacements as justified measures, often portraying them as responses to wartime collaboration or instruments of national purification. This divergence between official narratives of security and unity and the lived realities of the displaced produced a layered and contested collective memory, marked by silences, distortions, and competing interpretations of historical responsibility, highlighting the enduring tension between state-sanctioned history and personal experience

The long-term impact of these repressive practices continues to shape both scholarly debates and contemporary political discourse, particularly in regions where the scars of deportation, forced labor, and post-war reprisals remain visible in the collective psyche. The persistence of fragmented memories, held in family stories, scattered archival traces, and isolated community commemorations, demonstrates that these experiences were not fully absorbed into national narratives, nor adequately reconciled within post-communist memory regimes. Instead, they occupy a liminal space between personal trauma and official silence, revealing the limits of post-war justice and the selective nature of state-sponsored remembrance. This unresolved tension underscores the necessity of re-examining national historiographies that still rely heavily on Cold War-era frameworks, which often obscure the transnational and Soviet-driven dimensions of ethnic repression in Europe.

Ultimately, acknowledging the broader system of Soviet national policies and their local adaptations allows for a more accurate understanding of the shared mechanisms of repression that connected Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Transcarpathia, and other regions across the Balkans. The deportations, mass mobilizations, and forced labor campaigns were not isolated national episodes, but

components of a coordinated strategy that reshaped demographics, redistributed political loyalties, and redefined the boundaries of belonging in post-war Europe. Bringing these histories into dialogue with one another not only restores the experiences of marginalized groups, Hungarians, Germans, Croats, and others, but also highlights the interdependence of regional traumas. In doing so, this analysis contributes to ongoing efforts to reconstruct a more nuanced and inclusive historical memory, one that confronts the full extent of Soviet-era violence and offers a framework for understanding its enduring consequences in the present.

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Appendixes
Appendix 1

Figure 2. Order No. 2 on the Registration of the Hungarian and German Populations of Transcarpathia Liable for Military Service. Source: Transcarpathian Hungarians and Germans: Internment and Deportation Processes 1944–1955. Collection of Archival Documents and Materials 2011. Uzhhorod: Karpaty Publishing House.
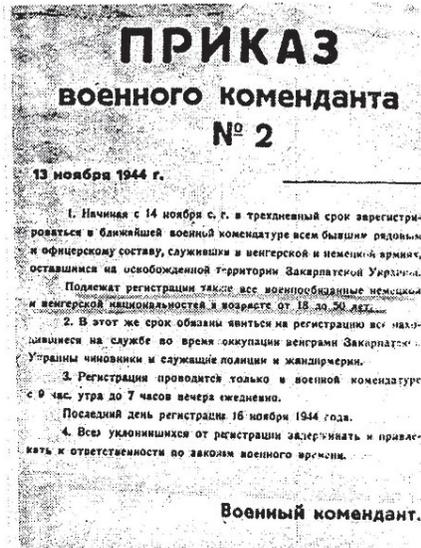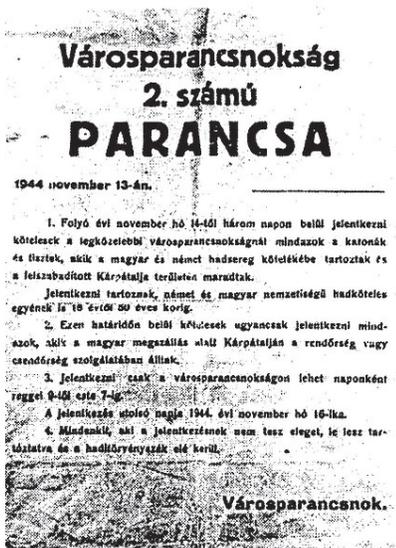
Author's commentary [Iashchenko Iuliia]: This document stipulates the obligation of all German and Hungarian citizens between the ages of 18 and 50 to appear and register. The document serves as the basis for further ethnic cleansing of the Hungarian population in Ukraine, Transcarpathia, Romania, the Balkans, and Hungary. This document demonstrates the broad scope of measures that will be taken if, within three days, all those subjects to control do not report: trial and punishment in accordance with the laws of wartime (expected - murder). The document itself does not provide any gender or other contexts, assuming the registration and filtering of all persons liable for military service.

Appendix 2

Figure 3. Axis invasion of Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia, Historical photograph. Image Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia. USHMM.

Figure 4. Conflict in Post-War Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslavia, Historical photograph. Image Source: The National WWII Museum. The National WWII Museum.

Appendix 3

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ КОМИТЕТ ОБОРОНЫ

ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ
от 16 декабря 1944 года № ГКО-7161сс

ОБ ИНТЕРНИРОВАНИИ ТРУДОСПОСОБНЫХ НЕМЦЕВ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ РУМЫНИИ, ЮГОСЛАВИИ, ВЕНГРИИ, БОЛГАРИИ И ЧЕХОСЛОВАКИИ

Государственный Комитет Обороны постановляет:

1. Мобилизовать и интернировать с направлением для работы в СССР всех трудоспособных немцев в возрасте — мужчин от 17 до 45 лет, женщин— от 18 до 30 лет, находящихся на освобожденных Красной Армией территориях Румынии, Югославии, Венгрии, Болгарии и Чехословакии.

Установить, что мобилизации подлежат немцы как немецкого и венгерского подданства, так и немцы — подданные Румынии, Югославии, Болгарии и Чехословакии.

Figure 5. GKO7161ss, Postanovlenie Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta Oborony ot 16 dicembre 1944 "Ob internirovanii trudospobnykh nemtsev…", Moscow, 1944; Source: consulted online at NKVDTomsk archive, https://nkvd.tomsk.ru/content/editor/DOCUMENTS/ArhiwnDokuments/ SSSR/SSSR_1918_1988/124-16-12-44-Postanovlenie-Gosudarstvennogo-Komiteta-oborony-7161ss.pdf

The document declared the following:
"STATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE DECREE No. 7161ss
dated December 16, 1944. Moscow, Kremlin
The State Defense Committee decrees:
1. To mobilize and intern for work in the USSR all able-bodied Germans of the following ages: men from 17 to 45 years old, women from 18 to 30 years old, who are located in the territory of Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia.
To establish that Germans of German and Hungarian nationality, as well as Germans who are citizens of Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, are subject to mobilization.
2. The NKVD of the USSR (Comrade Beria) shall be responsible for the mobilization.
The NKVD of the USSR shall be entrusted with the organization of assembly points, the reception of those being mobilized, the formation and dispatch of echelons, and their protection en route. Send those mobilized to the USSR in echelons as Germans arrive at the assembly points.
3. Assign Comrades Malinovsky and Vinogradov to Romania, Comrades Tolbukhin and Biryuzov to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia."

Appendix 4

Figure 6. GULAG Map. The map showing the logistics of deportation from Hungary to the USSR (the same routes were often used for the Balkans as well). Digital map, accessible via the Gulag Online project. Source: Karol Hucko, GULAG: People and Deportations, https://gulag.online/people/karol-hucko?locale=ru

Appendix 5

Figure 7. GULAG Map. The map illustrates the GULAG camps where Hungarian and other ethnic prisoners were kept in the USSR. Digital map, accessible via the Gulag Online project. Source: GULAG: Camps and Stories from Central Europe, https://gulag.online/articles/mapa-taborovych-sprav-gulagu-a-pribehu-ze-stredni-evropy?locale=ru