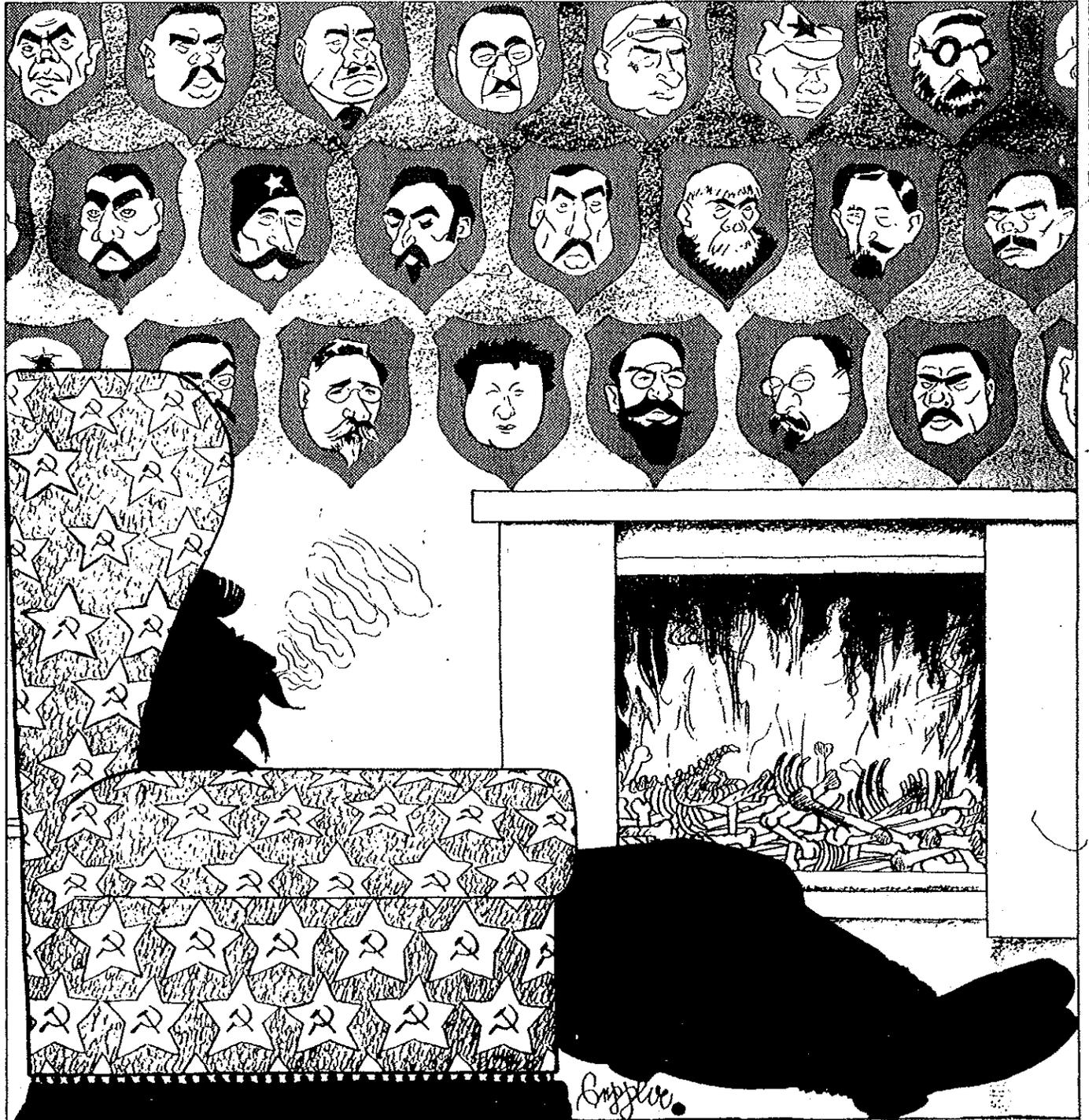


DIE BRENNESSEL

VERLAG FRANZ EHER NACHF. GMBH. BERLIN SW 68

„Väterchen“ in seinem Jagdzimmer

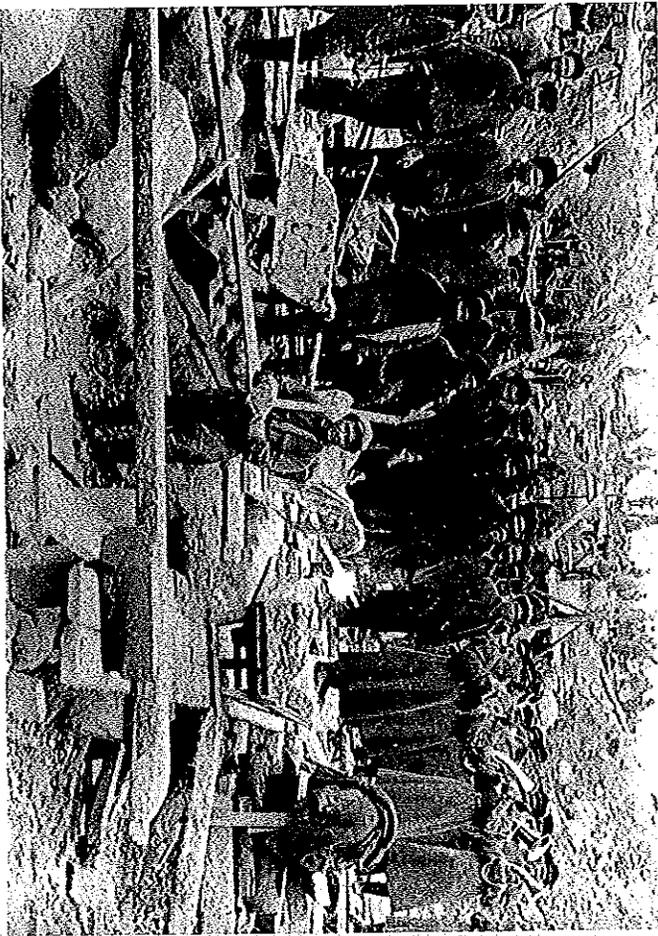


Träumerei an einem Moskauer Kamin

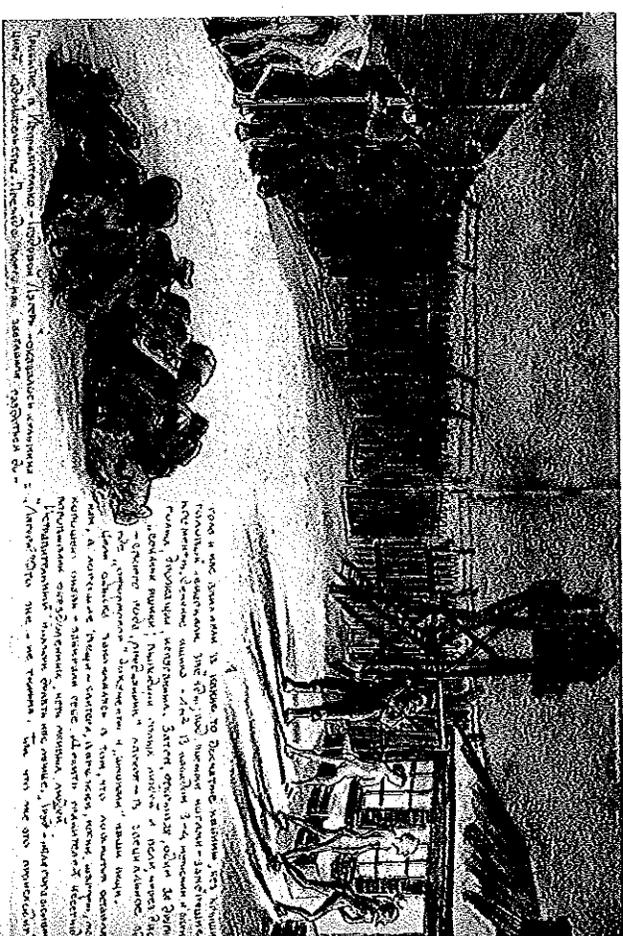
The Empire of the Camps [from *The Black Book of Communism* (1999)]



- 1) How did the Gulag system operate during the 1930s?
 - a. how many inmates? Who were they? Why imprisoned?
 - b. reasons for expansion? (Ezhov → Beria)
 - c. purposes & types of camps? (“flying camps”, “agricultural camps”, Baltic-White Sea Canal, Kolyma)
- 2) How many deaths & what caused these deaths (“statistics on the terror”)?
- 3) How & why did the Gulag change from late 1939 to summer 1941? (hint: think about events connected to WWII)
 - a. Soviet annexation of Poland? “cleansing”
 - b. Who arrested & why? [QUOTE, letter to Stalin]
 - c. Soviet annexation of the Baltics? “mutual assistance treaties”
- 4) Why the increase in arrests and prison sentences?
 - a. Criminalize different types of social behavior
 - b. Offensive against ordinary citizens?
- 5) How did Stalin use Nazi barbarism to his advantage after Operation Barbarossa began in late June 1941? Explain.

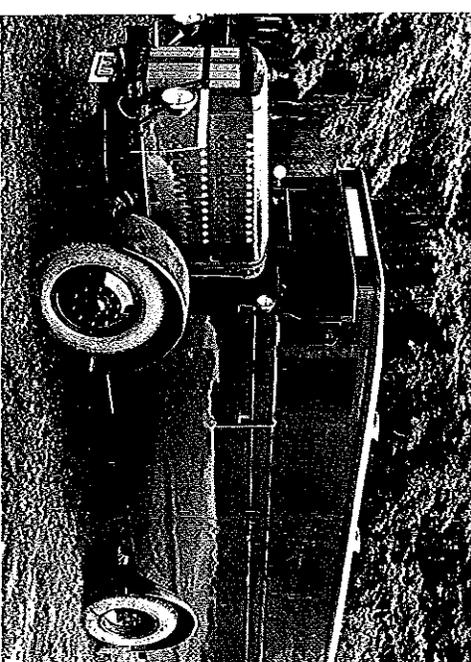
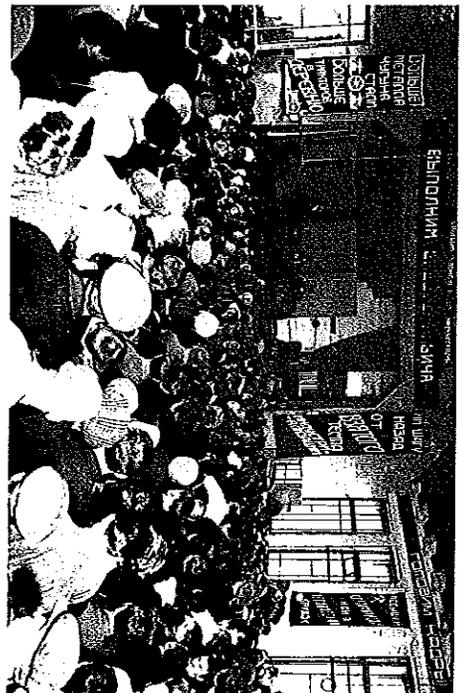


The Belomorokanal orchestra. Construction of the canal, an absurd enterprise, was intended to be part of the "reeducation" of the detainees. © D. R.



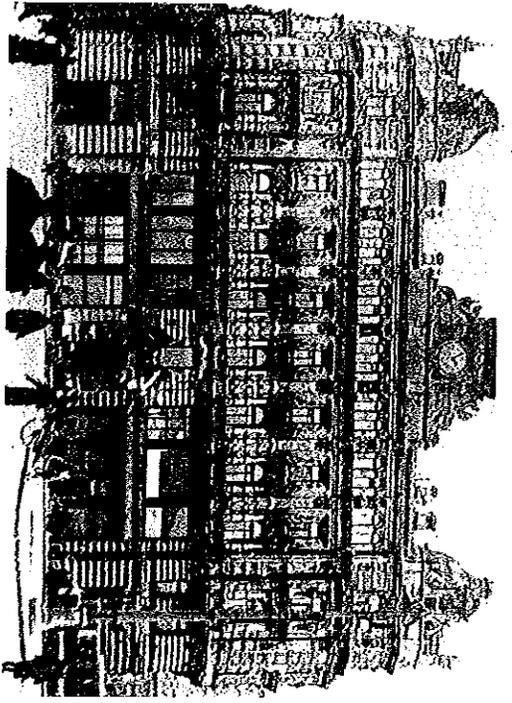
The backs of propaganda photographs were often used by detainees to draw attention to their plight and to portray life and death in the Soviet camps. This drawing by Evrosina Kemerovskaya portrays arrival in a "reeducation work camp" in Siberia in April 1943. © Dessin de Kemerovskaya

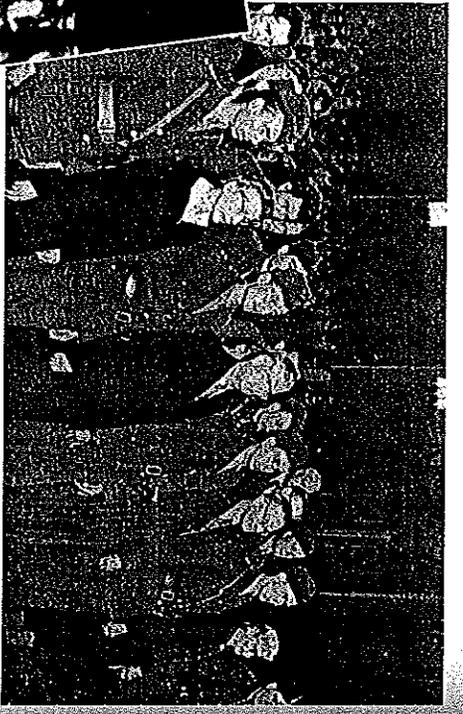
A purge session of the Party. Initially used as a means of ideological control over militant Party workers, the *chistka* (purge) became a ritual that could lead to the denunciation of anyone. Self-criticism sessions resulted more and more often in arrests a few days or weeks later. © Roger-Viollet



"Innocent Russia writhed in pain / Beneath the bloody boots / and the dark wheels of the Black Marias," wrote the poet Anna Akhmatova in her well-known "Requiem." Her own son was imprisoned and killed. These trucks, known to Muscovites as "black crows," took prisoners from the Lubyanka to Lefortovo and Butyrka prisons. The trucks were sometimes disguised as bakers' delivery vans. © Roger-Viollet

The Lubyanka, Moscow, about 1925. In the basement of the GPU headquarters were special rooms in which enemies of the regime were executed with a bullet in the neck. The building came to symbolize the arbitrary cruelty of the regime. © D. R.





In the State Court in Prague, Milada Horaková (second from left) was condemned to death on 8 June 1950 with three other defendants. They were hanged on 27 June 1950. © D. R.



Nikolaï Petkov, a democrat who fought in the resistance against the fascists, was deputy prime minister in the coalition government after the liberation of Bulgaria. Having resigned in protest against the terror, he was arrested and condemned to death after a show-trial on 16 August 1947. He was hanged on 23 September. © D. R.



Prague, August 1968. During the Soviet invasion the inhabitants of the city were quick to draw a comparison with the Nazi invasion of 1938. Here they greet the Soviet troops with mock Nazi salutes. © D. R.

*The Black Book of Communism (1999)
 from "A State against Its People"
 by Nicolas Werth*

11
 The Empire of the Camps

The 1930s, marked by repression against society on a hitherto unknown scale, also saw a huge expansion of the concentration-camp system. The Gulag Administration archives now available allow a close examination of the evolution of these institutions, revealing changes in organizational structure, periods of great activity, the number of prisoners, their economic status, the sort of crimes for which they had been condemned, and their division by age, sex, nationality, and educational background.¹ But many gray areas remain. In particular, although the Gulag bureaucracy kept efficient records of the numbers of inmates, little is known about the fate of those who failed to arrive at their destination; and this despite numerous individual testimonies.

By mid-1930 approximately 140,000 prisoners were already working in the camps run by the GPU. The huge project to dig a canal connecting the White Sea and the Baltic, which alone required more than 120,000 men, resulted in the transfer of tens of thousands from prison to camp. The number of people receiving some sort of custodial sentence continued to rise: more than 56,000 were sentenced by the GPU in 1929, and 208,000 in 1930 (this compared with 1,178,000 cases prosecuted by bodies other than the GPU in 1929, and 1,238,000 in 1931).² One can therefore calculate that in early 1932 more than 300,000 prisoners were laboring on the GPU projects, where the annual mor-

rality rate often reached 10 percent, as was the case for the Baltic-White Sea canal.

When the GPU was reorganized and renamed the NKVD in July 1934, the Gulag absorbed 780 small penal colonies and some 212,000 prisoners from camps that had been judged inefficient or badly run under the People's Commissariat of Justice. To increase productivity, and to match the image they were trying to create for the rest of the country, camps became bigger and more specialized. Huge penal complexes, each holding tens of thousands of prisoners, were to be a major factor in the economy of Stalin's U.S.S.R. On 1 January 1935 the newly unified Gulag system contained more than 965,000 prisoners—725,000 in work camps and 240,000 in work colonies, smaller units where less socially dangerous elements were sent, usually for a period of less than three years.³

In this fashion, the map of the gulags for the next two decades was drawn. The penal colonies of the Solovetski Islands, which contained some 45,000 prisoners, spawned "flying camps" that were moved to places where wood was to be cut: in Karelia, along the shores of the White Sea, and in the Vologda region. The large Svirslag group of camps, which held around 43,000 prisoners, had the task of keeping the Leningrad area supplied with wood for heating, while the Temnikovo camps fulfilled the same role for the Moscow area.

From the strategic crossroads at Kotlas, a railway was laid down along the "Northern Route" to West Vym, Ukhra, Pechora, and Vorkuta, with woodcutting operations and mines along the way. In the far north, the Ukhripchlag used its 51,000 prisoners to build roads, mine coal, and extract petroleum. Another branch snaked out toward the Urals and the chemical centers at Solikamsk and Berezniki, while to the southeast all the camps in western Siberia and their 63,000 prisoners provided free manpower for the great mining complex at Kuzbassugol.

Farther south, in the Karaganda region in Kazakhstan, the "agricultural camps" of the Steplog, containing some 30,000 prisoners, pioneered a project to cultivate the steppes. Apparently the regime there was less harsh than at the huge Dniudlag complex, which in the mid-1930s contained some 196,000 prisoners. After the completion of the Baltic-White Sea canal in 1933 it was detailed to construct the second great Stalinist canal, from Moscow to the Volga.

Another huge construction project was the BAM, the Baikal-Amur-Magistral, the railway that was to run parallel to the Trans-Siberian line between Baikal and Amur. In early 1935 about 150,000 prisoners from the group of concentration camps at Bamlag, organized into some thirty divisions, worked on the first section of the railway. In 1939 the Bamlag with its 260,000 prisoners was the biggest Soviet concentration camp of all.

Finally, after 1932 the Sevrostlag, a group of camps in the northeast, provided manpower for a center of great strategic importance, the Dalstro. Its task was the production of gold to finance purchases from the West of equipment for industrialization. All the gold seams were situated in a particularly inhospitable region—in Kolyma. Accessible only by sea, Kolyma was to become the region most symbolic of the gulags. Magadan, the capital and the port where all new arrivals disembarked, had been built by the prisoners themselves. Its single road, a vital artery that had also been built by the prisoners, served only to link these camps. The living conditions were particularly inhumane and are well described in the works of Varlam Shalamov. Between 1932 and 1939, the gold extracted by the Kolyma prisoners—who numbered 138,000 in 1939—rose from 276 kilos to 48 metric tons, which accounted for 35 percent of all Soviet gold produced that year.⁴

In June 1935 the government launched a new huge project that could be carried out only with penal labor—the construction of a large nickel production center in Norilsk, north of the Arctic Circle. At the height of the Gulag years, in the 1950s, the prisoners in the concentration camps in Norilsk would number 70,000. The productive function of this camp, known as a "corrective work camp," clearly reflected the internal structure of the Gulag: Its central organization was neither geographical nor functional, but entirely economic, with centers for hydroelectric production, for railway construction, for bridge and road building, and so on. For both the administration of the penal centers and the government ministries of industry, prisoners and work colonizers were just so much merchandise to be parceled out by contract.⁵

In the second half of the 1930s the Gulag population doubled, from 965,000 prisoners in early 1935 to 1,930,000 in early 1941. In 1937 alone it grew by 700,000.⁶ The massive influx of new prisoners so destabilized production that it fell by 13 percent from the previous year's. It continued to stagnate in 1938 until the new people's commissar of internal affairs, Lavrenti Beria, took vigorous measures to rationalize the work carried out by prisoners. In a note addressed to the Politburo on 10 April 1939, Beria laid out his program for the reorganization of the gulags. He argued that his predecessor, Nikolai Ezhov, had placed a much higher priority on hunting down class enemies than he had on healthy economic management. The normal food allowance for the prisoners, set at 1,400 calories per day, had been calculated for people who did nothing but sit around a prison cell all day.⁷ As a result, the number of prisoners capable of working had shrunk considerably over the previous years: some 250,000 prisoners were unable to work on 1 March 1939, and 8 percent of all prisoners had died in the previous year. To meet the production targets set by the NKVD, Beria called for an increase in food rations. In addition, he called for a halt to the early release of prisoners and to exemplary punishments of malingers or

"production disorganizers." He recommended the extension of the working day to eleven hours, with three rest days allowed per month, "to exploit, as much as possible, all the physical capacities of all the prisoners."

Contrary to popular belief, the Gulag archives demonstrate that the turnover of prisoners was quite high; 20-35 percent were released each year. This rotation can be explained by the relatively high number of sentences of less than five years, nearly 57 percent of all sentences in early 1940. But the arbitrary nature of the camp administration and the justice system, particularly where the political prisoners of 1937-38 were concerned, often meant that sentences were mysteriously extended. Release often did not mean freedom, but subjected to a whole series of measures such as exile or house arrest.

Also contrary to popular belief, the Gulag camps were not filled only with political prisoners—sentenced for "counterrevolutionary activities" according to the fourteen definitions of the infamous Article 58 of the penal code. The political contingent oscillated between one-quarter and one-third of all prisoners in the gulags each year. The other prisoners were not necessarily common criminals. Many were sentenced to camps for having committed crimes specially created by the Party, ranging from "destruction of Soviet property" to "breaking the passport law," "hooliganism," "speculation," "leaving one's work post," "sabotage," or even "nonfulfillment of the minimum number of working days" in the *kollehozy*. Most prisoners in the gulags were simply ordinary citizens who were victims of particularly harsh laws in the workplace and a growing number of regulations regarding social behavior. They were the result of a decade of repressive measures taken by the Party-state against ever-larger sections of society.⁸

A provisional balance sheet of statistics on the terror might run as follows:

- 6 million dead as a result of the famine of 1932-33, a catastrophe that can be blamed largely on the policy of enforced collectivization and the predatory tactics of the central government in seizing the harvests of the *kollehozy*.
- 720,000 executions, 680,000 of which were carried out in 1937-38, usually after some sort of travesty of justice by a special GPU or NKVD court.
- 300,000 known deaths in the camps from 1934 to 1940. By extrapolating these figures back to 1930-1933 (years for which very few records are available), we can estimate that some 400,000 died during the decade, not counting the incalculable number of those who died between the moment of their arrest and their registration as prisoners in one of the camps.

- 600,000 registered deaths among the deportees, refugees, and "specially displaced."

- Approximately 2,200,000 deported, forcibly moved, or exiled as "specially displaced people."

- A cumulative figure of 7 million people who entered the camps and Gulag colonies from 1934 to 1941 (information for the years 1930-1933 remains imprecise).

On 1 January 1940 some 1,670,000 prisoners were being held in the 53 groups of corrective work camps and the 425 corrective work colonies. One year later the figure had risen to 1,930,000. In addition, prisons held 200,000 people awaiting trial or a transfer to camp. Finally, the NKVD *komandantury* were in charge of approximately 1.2 million "specially displaced people."⁹ Even if these figures are heavily rounded down to bring them into line with estimates made by previous historians and eyewitnesses, which often confused the numbers of those entering the gulags with the numbers already present at a certain date, the data still give a good idea of the scale of the repressive measures against the Soviet people in the 1930s.

From the end of 1939 to the summer of 1941 the camps, colonies, and special Gulag settlements saw the arrival of yet another wave of prisoners. This was partly the result of the Sovietization of the new territories, and partly the result of the unprecedented criminalization of various sorts of behavior, notably in the workplace.

On 24 August 1939 the world was stunned to learn that a mutual pact of nonaggression had been signed the previous day between Stalin's U.S.S.R. and Hitler's Germany. The announcement of the pact sent shock waves through much of the world, where public opinion was totally unprepared for what appeared to be a *volte-face* in international relations. At the time, few people had realized what could link two regimes that apparently professed such opposed ideologies.

On 21 August 1939 the Soviet government adjourned negotiations with the Franco-British mission that had arrived in Moscow on 11 August. The mission had hoped to conclude a pact that would reciprocally engage all three of the parties in the event of a hostile action by Germany against any one of them. Since early that year, Soviet diplomats, led by Vyacheslav Molotov, had progressively distanced themselves from the idea of an agreement with France and Britain, which Moscow suspected were prepared to sign another Munich treaty to sacrifice Poland, leaving the Germans a free hand in the east. While negotiations between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the French and

British on the other, became bogged down in insoluble problems, especially the question of permission for Soviet troops to cross Polish territory, contacts between Soviet and German representatives at various levels took a new turn. On 14 August von Ribbentrop, the German foreign minister, offered to come to Moscow to conclude a momentous political agreement with the Soviet Union. The following day, Stalin accepted the offer.

On 19 August, after a series of negotiations begun in late 1938, the German and Soviet delegations signed a commercial treaty that looked extremely promising for the U.S.S.R. That same evening, the Soviet Union accepted von Ribbentrop's offer to visit Moscow to sign the pact of nonaggression already worked out in Moscow and sent ahead to Berlin. The German minister, who had been given extraordinary powers for the occasion, arrived in Moscow on the afternoon of 23 August. The nonaggression treaty was signed during the night and made public the following day. Meant to last for ten years, it was to come into effect immediately. The most important part of the agreement, outlining spheres of influence and annexations in Eastern Europe, obviously remained secret. The Soviet Union denied the existence of the secret protocol until 1989. According to the secret agreement, Lithuania fell under German control, and Estonia, Latvia, Finland, and Bessarabia would be given to Soviet control. The maintenance of some sort of sovereign Polish state was left unresolved, but it was clear that after German and Soviet military intervention in Poland, the U.S.S.R. was to recover the Ukrainian and Belorussian territories it had lost under the Riga treaty in 1920, together with part of the "historically and ethnically Polish" territories in the provinces of Lublin and Warsaw.

Eight days after the signing of the pact, Nazi troops marched into Poland. One week later, after all Polish resistance had been crushed, and at the insistence of the Germans, the Soviet government proclaimed its intention to occupy the territories to which it was entitled under the secret protocol of 23 August. On 17 September the Red Army entered Poland, on the pretext that it was coming to the aid of its "Ukrainian and Belorussian blood brothers," who were in danger because of "the disintegration of the Polish state." Soviet intervention met with little resistance, since the Polish army had been almost completely destroyed. The Soviet Union took 230,000 prisoners of war, including 15,000 officers.¹⁰

The idea of installing some sort of Polish puppet government was rapidly abandoned, and negotiations were opened on the fixing of the border between Germany and the U.S.S.R. On 22 September it was drawn along the Vistula in Warsaw, but after von Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow on 28 September it was pushed farther east, to the Bug. In exchange for this concession, Germany agreed to include Lithuania in the sphere of Soviet control. The partitioning

of Poland allowed the U.S.S.R. to annex vast territories of 180,000 square kilometers, with a population of 12 million Belorussians, Ukrainians, and Poles. On 1 and 2 November, after a farcical referendum, these territories were attached to the Soviet republics of Ukraine and Belorussia.

By this time the NKVD "cleansing" of the regions was already under way. The first targets were the Poles, who were arrested and deported en masse as "hostile elements." Those most at risk were landowners, industrialists, shopkeepers, civil servants, policemen, and "military colonists" (*osadnicy wojskowe*) who had received a parcel of land from the Polish government in recognition of their service in the Soviet-Polish war of 1920. According to records kept in the Special Colonies Department of the Gulag, 381,000 Polish civilians from the territories taken over by the U.S.S.R. in September 1939 were deported between February 1940 and June 1941 as "specially displaced people" to Siberia, the Arkhangelsk region, Kazakhstan, and other far-flung corners of the U.S.S.R.¹¹ The figures given by Polish historians are much higher, arguing for approximately 1 million deportees.¹² There are no precise figures for the arrest and deportation of civilians carried out between September 1939 and January 1940.

For later periods, archival documents contain evidence for three great waves of arrests and deportations, on 9 and 10 February, 12 and 13 April, and 28 and 29 June 1940.¹³ The return trip for the convoys between the Polish border and Siberia, Kazakhstan, or the Arctic regions took two months. As for the Polish prisoners of war, only 82,000 out of 230,000 were still alive in the summer of 1941. Losses among the Polish deportees were also extremely high. In August 1941, after reaching an agreement with the Polish government-in-exile, the Soviet government granted an amnesty to all Poles who had been deported since November 1939, but to only 243,100 of the 381,000 "specially displaced." In total more than 388,000 Polish prisoners of war, interned refugees, and deported civilians benefited from this amnesty. Several hundred thousand had died in the previous two years. A great number had been executed on the pretext that they were "unrepentant and determined enemies of Soviet power."

Among the latter were the 25,700 officers and Polish civilians whom Beria, in a top-secret letter to Stalin on 5 March 1940, had proposed to shoot.

A large number of ex-officers from the Polish army, ex-officials from the Polish police and information departments, members of nationalist counterrevolutionary parties, members of opposition counterrevolutionary organizations that have rightly been unmasked, renegades, and many others, all sworn enemies of the Soviet system, are at present being detained in prisoner-of-war camps run by the NKVD in the

U.S.S.R. and in the prisons situated in the western regions of Ukraine and Belorussia.

The army officers and policemen who are being held prisoner are still attempting to pursue their counterrevolutionary activities and are fomenting anti-Soviet actions. They are all eagerly awaiting their liberation so that once more they may enter actively into the struggle against the Soviet regime.

NKVD organizations in the western regions of Ukraine and in Belorussia have uncovered a number of rebel counterrevolutionary organizations. The Polish ex-army officers and policemen have all been playing an active role at the head of these organizations.

Among the renegades and those who have violated state borders are numerous people who have been identified as belonging to counterrevolutionary espionage and resistance movements.

14,736 ex-officers, officials, landowners, policemen, prison guards, border settlers (*osadniki*), and information agents (more than 97 percent of whom are Polish) are at present being detained in prisoner of war camps. Neither private soldiers nor noncommissioned officers are included in this number. Among them are:

- 295 generals, colonels, and lieutenant colonels
- 2,080 commanders and captains
- 6,049 lieutenants, second lieutenants, and officers in training
- 1,030 officers and police NCOs, border guards, and gendarmes
- 5,138 policemen, gendarmes, prison guards, and information officers
- 144 officials, landowners, priests, and border settlers

In addition to the above, 18,632 men are detained in prisons in the western regions of Ukraine and Belorussia (10,685 of whom are Polish). They include:

- 1,207 ex-officers
- 5,141 ex-information officers, police, and gendarmes
- 347 spies and saboteurs
- 465 ex-landowners, factory managers, and officials
- 5,345 members of various counterrevolutionary resistance movements and diverse other elements
- 6,127 renegades

Insofar as all the above individuals are sworn and incorrigible enemies of the Soviet regime, the U.S.S.R. NKVD believes it necessary to:

1. Order the U.S.S.R. NKVD to pass judgment before special courts on:

- a. the 14,700 ex-officers, officials, landowners, police officers, information officers, gendarmes, special border guards, and prison guards detained in prisoner-of-war camps
- b. the 11,000 members of the diverse counterrevolutionary espionage and sabotage organizations, ex-landowners, factory managers, ex-officers of the Polish army, officials, and renegades who have been arrested and are being held in the prisons in the western regions of Ukraine and Belorussia, so that THE SUPREME PENALTY BE APPLIED, DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD.

2. Order that individual files be studied in the absence of the accused, and without particular charges being lodged. The conclusions of the inquiries and the final sentence should be presented as follows:

- a. a certificate produced by the Directorate for Prisoner of War Affairs of the NKVD of the U.S.S.R. for all individuals detained in prisoner-of-war camps
- b. a certificate produced by the Ukrainian branch of the NKVD and the Belorussian NKVD for all other people arrested.
3. Files should be examined and sentences passed by a tribunal made up of three people—Comrades [Ysevolod] Merkulov, [Bogdan] Kobulov, and [Yvan L.] Bashtrakov.

Some of the mass graves containing the bodies of those executed were discovered by the Germans in April 1943 in the Karyn forest. Several huge graves were found to contain the remains of 4,000 Polish officers. The Soviet authorities tried to blame this massacre on the Germans; only in 1992, on the occasion of a visit by Boris Yeltsin to Warsaw, did the Russian government acknowledge the Soviet Politburo's sole responsibility for the massacre of the Polish officers in 1940.

As soon as the Polish territories were annexed, the Soviet government summoned the heads of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian governments to Moscow and imposed "mutual assistance treaties" on them, according to which they "invited" the U.S.S.R. to set up military bases on their territory. Immediately, 25,000 Soviet soldiers marched into Estonia, 30,000 into Latvia, and 20,000 into Lithuania. These troops far outnumbered the standing armies in each of the theoretically independent countries. The entry of Soviet troops in October 1939 marked the real end of the independence of the Baltic states. On 11 October Beria gave the order to "stamp out anti-Soviet and antisocialist

elements" in these countries. The Soviet military police then began arresting officers, civil servants, and intellectuals considered untrustworthy.

In June 1940, shortly after the successful German offensive in France, the Soviet government acted on the clauses contained in the secret protocol of 23 August 1939. On 14 June, on the pretext that there had been "acts of provocation carried out against the Soviet garrisons," it sent an ultimatum to the Baltic leaders, ordering them to form "governments prepared to guarantee the honest application of a treaty of mutual assistance, and to take steps to punish all opponents of such a treaty." In the days that followed, several hundred thousand more Soviet troops marched into the Baltic states. Stalin sent representatives to the capital cities: Vyshinsky to Riga, Zhdanov to Tallinn, and Vladimir Dekanozov, the chief of the secret police and deputy minister of foreign affairs in the U.S.S.R., to Kaunas. Their mission was to carry out the Sovietization of the three republics. Parliaments and all local institutions were dissolved and most of the members arrested. Only the Communist Party was authorized to present candidates for the elections on 14 and 15 July 1940.

In the weeks following the farcical elections, the NKVD, under the leadership of General Ivan Serov, arrested between 15,000 and 20,000 "hostile elements." In Latvia alone, 1,480 people were summarily executed at the beginning of July. The newly "elected" parliaments requested that their countries be admitted into the U.S.S.R., a request that was granted in early August by the Supreme Soviet, which then proclaimed the birth of three new Soviet Socialist Republics. While *Pravda* wrote that "the sun of the great Stalinist constitution will henceforth be shining its gratifying rays on new territories and new peoples," what was actually beginning for the Baltic states was a long period of arrests, deportations, and executions.

Soviet archives also contain the details of a large deportation operation carried out under the orders of General Serov during the night of 13-14 May, when "socially hostile" elements from the Baltic region, Moldavia, Belorussia, and western Ukraine were rounded up. The operation had been planned a few weeks previously, and on 16 May 1941 Beria wrote to Stalin regarding the latest project to "clean up regions recently integrated into the U.S.S.R. and remove all criminal, socially alien, and anti-Soviet elements." In total, 85,716 people were deported in June 1941, including 25,711 from the Baltic states. Yevolod Merkulov, the second in command at the NKVD, in a report dated 17 July 1941, tabulated the results of the operation in the Baltics. During the night of 13-14 June, 11,038 members of "bourgeois nationalist" families, 3,240 members of the families of former policemen, 7,124 members of families of landowners, industrialists, and civil servants, 1,649 members of the families of former officers, and 2,907 "others" were deported. The document makes clear

that the heads of these families had been arrested, and in all probability had already been executed. The operation carried out on 13 June was aimed exclusively at the remaining family members of those who had been deemed "socially alien."¹⁴

Each deported family was allowed 100 kilograms of baggage, which was supposed to include enough food for one month. The NKVD itself accepted no responsibility for providing food during the whole deportation process. The convoys arrived at their destination at the end of July 1941, most of them going to Novosibirsk and Kazakhstan. Some of them did not reach their destination in the Altai region until mid-September. No information is available on the number of deportees who died in transit, but one can imagine that the numbers were high. The journey took from six to twelve weeks, and the deportees were fifty to a wagon in the cattle trucks used to transport them, kept together with all their food and baggage in the same place. Beria planned a similar large-scale operation for the night of 27-28 June 1941. The choice of this date can be taken as further confirmation that the Soviet high command was not prepared for the German attack planned for 22 June. Operation Barbarossa delayed for several years the NKVD "cleansing" of the Baltic states.

A few days after the occupation of the Baltic states, the Soviet government sent an ultimatum to Romania demanding the immediate return of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the U.S.S.R.—another provision of the secret German-Soviet protocol of 23 August 1939. Abandoned by the Germans, the Romanians immediately gave in. Bukovina and part of Bessarabia were incorporated into Ukraine, and the remaining part of Bessarabia became the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia, proclaimed on 2 August 1940. Kobulov, Beria's assistant, signed a deportation order that same day for 31,699 "anti-Soviet elements" who lived in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia, and for another 12,191 in the Romanian regions that had been incorporated into Ukraine. Within a few months all these "elements" had been classified and filed in what was by then the tried and tested manner. The previous evening, on 1 August 1940, Molotov had given a triumphant speech to the Supreme Soviet regarding the German-Soviet pact, which had given the U.S.S.R. 23 million new inhabitants.

The year 1940 was also remarkable for one other statistic. It was the year when the number of prisoners in gulags and Soviet prisons reached their height. On 1 January 1941 the gulags contained more than 1,930,000 people, 270,000 more than the previous year. More than 500,000 people in the new "Sovietized" territories had been deported, in addition to the 1.2 million "specially displaced people" who had been counted at the end of 1939. Soviet prisons, which

had a theoretical limit of 234,000 inmates, held 462,000 people;¹⁵ and the total number of sentences passed that year saw a huge rise, climbing in one year from 700,000 to 2,300,000.¹⁶

This spectacular increase was the result of an unprecedented effort to criminalize different types of social behavior. In the workplace the date of 26 June 1940 remained imprinted on the minds of many because of the decree "on the adoption of the eight-hour working day, the seven-day working week, and the ban on leaving work of one's own accord." Any unjustified absence, including any lateness of more than twenty minutes, was henceforth treated as a criminal offense. Lawbreakers were liable to six months' uninterrupted "cor-rective work," the loss of 25 percent of their salary, and the possibility of a prison sentence of between two and four months.

On 10 August another decree increased the punishments for any act of "hooliganism," shoddy work, or petty theft in the workplace to as much as three years of imprisonment in the camps. In the conditions that then prevailed in Soviet industry, almost any worker could be prosecuted under this severe new law.

These decrees, which would remain on the statute books until 1956, marked a new stage in the criminalization of the labor laws. In the first six months after they came into effect, more than 1.5 million people received sentences; the fact that 400,000 of these were custodial sentences partly explains the huge increase in prison numbers after the summer of 1941. The number of "hooligans" sentenced to the camps rose from 108,000 in 1939 to 200,000 in 1940.¹⁷

The end of the Great Terror was thus marked by a new offensive against the ordinary citizens of the country, those who refused to bend to accommodate the new factory or *kolkhoz* laws. In response to the severe laws of the summer of 1940, a number of workers, if one is to judge by the reports of NKVD informers, fell into what were termed "unhealthy states of mind," particularly during the first few weeks of the Nazi invasion. They openly called for "the elimination of all Jews and Communists" and began to spread what the NKVD termed "provocative rumors." For example, one Moscow worker claimed that "when Hitler takes our towns, he will put up posters saying, 'I won't put workers on trial, like your government does, just because they are twenty-one minutes late for work.'"¹⁸ Any such comment was treated with extreme severity, as is indicated by the report of the military procurator general on "crimes and misdemeanors committed on the railways between 22 June and 1 September 1941." This report recorded 2,254 sentences against individuals, including 204 death sentences, 412 people were sentenced for "the spreading of counterrevolutionary rumors," and 110 railway workers were condemned to death for this crime.¹⁹

A collection of documents recently published details the mood of the Moscow population during the first few months of the war. What emerges most clearly is the total confusion felt by people during the German advances in the summer of 1941.²⁰ Muscovites seemed to fall into one of three categories: patriots, a large group of ambivalent individuals who latched on to rumors, and the defeatists, who wished for a swift German victory to get rid of the "Jews and Bolsheviks" perceived to have ruined the country. In October 1941, when factories were dismantled and moved farther east in the country, an "anti-Soviet disorder" broke out in the textile industry in the Ivanovo district.²¹ The defeatist slogans of the workers were quite revealing of the despair felt by much of the workforce, which since 1940 had labored under ever-harsher conditions.

The barbarism of the Nazis created some reconciliation between the Soviet government and the people, in that Germany classed Russians as sub-humans destined for extermination or slavery. After the German invasion there was a swift upturn in patriotism. Stalin very cleverly began to reaffirm traditional patriotic Russian values. In a famous radio address to the nation on 3 July 1941, he again used the language and imagery that had unified Russians for more than a century: "Brothers and sisters, a grave danger is threatening our land." References to the Great Russian Nation of Plekharov, Lenin, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Tchakovsky, Lermontov, Suworov, and Kutuzov were used to call for a holy war, the "Great Patriotic War." On 7 November 1941, while reviewing battalions of volunteers who were leaving for the front, Stalin called on them to fight according to "the glorious examples of our ancestors Aleksandr Nevsky and Dmitriy Donskoi." The former had saved Russia from the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century, and the second, a century later, had finally shaken off the Tatar yoke.