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## History, Russia

### Siberia - inhuman land



*Memorial to the Murdered in the East  
fot.Cezary p (GNU Free Documentation License)*

#### **"God give us the grace of forgiveness, but protect us from sin oblivion"**

History of Siberia casts a dark shadow on this austere land. For Russia - first the tsarist and then also the Bolshevik - it was always a place of exile components side effects: criminals, common criminals, but political opponents, patriots conquered nations, and by the communist authorities - including their own citizens deemed class enemies and defenders of religion. ..

SIBERIA, SYBIR is a conventional name for all the places where Poles were sent in the repression used by the tsarist and later - those with a longer post-revolutionary Soviet Union. Katyn - Kolyma - Krasnoyarsk - Irkutsk - the Donbas -Workuta - BOROWICZ - Diaglewo - steppes of Kazakhstan - along with hundreds of other places deeply etched in public memory.

SYBIRAKAMI exiles determined. In this context, the first Sybirakami can be called Polish prisoners of the army Stefan Batory, taken to the Russian captive during the battles of the Republic of Muscovy. This fact was recorded Chronicles of War from 1582. Over the next century prisoners were sent next, and the reason for the exile was the need to colonize the newly connected lands and their effective colonization. Poles were the tsarist government asset, because they had the ability to build fortresses and fortifications. While in the seventeenth century Russia, leading quite numerous wars with Polish, he sent captured as a result thereof prisoners to Siberia, to make them colonizers, whereas in the eighteenth century rendition took longer purely political. Each national uprising, every act of disobedience against Russia, then the Soviet empire, were expanding the ranks of Siberians in the coming years:

- 1768 -1772 - participants of the Confederation of Bar exiled ukase Tsarina Catherine II of Russia to Siberia in an amount of about 10,000,

## RECOMMENDED

- o 1794 - participants of the Kosciuszko uprising exiled to a Siberian penal servitude,
- o 1830 - even before the outbreak of the November Uprising some members of the Patriotic Society is arrested and deported, and after the fall of the uprising were sent about 50,000 soldiers and civilians,
- o 1863 - are exiled participants of the January Uprising in the amount of about 250,000,
- o 1887 - after the process of involvement in the assassination of Tsar Alexander III shall be exiled to Siberia brothers Bronislaw and Jozef Pilsudski, Polish Marshal later.

Among the political exiles were m.in .: Adam Mickiewicz, Tomasz Zan, John Burl, Peter Wysocki and Father Piotr Ściegienny.

Soon after the October Revolution, a special system of camps (gulags) - initially for prisoners and refugees, and since 1919 - as well as forced labor camps. Winning by Polish independence in 1918. And the war Bolshevik of 1920. Stopped but the next two decades the forced deportation to the old Russia, (and actually already then the USSR), but the ordeal of many Polish families began anew after losing the 1939 defensive war. and Bolshevik attack on 17 September. Already in 1937-1938, the first group of Poles were exiled from the border areas of Belarus and Ukraine on the uninhabited steppes of Kazakhstan. But the biggest deportation operation made the Soviet authorities in February, April and June 1940 and May-June 1941. It happened following the conclusion by Hitler and Stalin in August 1939. Collusion assuming the division of Polish and extermination of the Polish nation. Although the Russian army, according to this agreement, then retreated across the river Bug, however, the abandoned areas abducted together industrialists, landowners, politicians, government employees, intellectuals, military and police officers. They directed them to the east of the USSR, but also a significant group were killed on the spot, in temporary camps hidden in the woods. So in 1940 they killed Polish officers in Katyn, Ostashkov, Starobelsk, Kozelsk, Kharkiv, Miednoje.

Not very accurate record indicates that as a result of deportations, arrests and other actions during World War II and after the war - in Siberia were over 1.5 million Polish citizens. Of these, many were murdered, died of starvation, disease and murderous, forced labor. Among the Siberians were soldiers from defensive war 1939 soldiers from the fronts in the west and the east, the soldiers fighting underground various organizations and civilians - including old men and children.

#### Deportations in the years 1940 - 1941

In 1939-1941 in eastern Poland Polish, occupied by the Soviet Union, there were significant intense political, economic and social measures to Sovietization of these lands. In this process the great role played by terror, by which it sought to destroy any manifestations or only potential resistance and intimidate the population, and one of the components of this terror were deported. In 1940-41 the Soviet authorities have made four major operations deportation of Polish lands: in February, April and June 1940 and May-June 1941. The total number of casualties among Polish citizens who in 1939-1941 were under Soviet occupation still is not fully known. In total, they cover not less than 570,000 people, and some sources even number nearly 1 million Poles.

Prof. Andrzej Paczkowski wrote: *"It is believed that in less than two years of Soviet power in the lands taken away from Poland persecuted in various forms - from shooting, through prison camps and exile, after working half forced - more than 1 million people, so every tenth citizen Republic, who has lived or was in that territory. No less than 30 thousand. people were shot, and the mortality rate among inmates and deported estimated at 8-10 per cent., or died probably 90-100 thousand people."* ("The Black Book communism" - A. Paczkowski) Poles under foreign and private violence").

The first of these deportations began on the night of the 9th to 10th February 1940. For a group of particularly dangerous from the point of view of Moscow's policy was military settlers - the soldiers of the Polish Army of 1920. Who borderlands received nadziały land - and the civilian colonists - farmers Polish who purchased the land in the east of the parceling of large estates. Because the reluctance of the population were surrounded by Ukrainian and Belarusian taken action against them can be also used as a propaganda act of justice for the Ukrainians and Belarusians. In addition to military settlers and colonists, deportation also included a number of representatives of other groups, especially the Forest Service employees. According to the NKVD to the northern circuit Russia and western Siberia had been carried out around 140 thousand. people (other sources say up to 200 thousands). He deported entire families. The arrest of such a large number of people carried in one night, surprised the Poles. To pack exported were given from a dozen to up to tens of minutes. Sometimes and so that they did not allowed to bring anything. The deportation was held in terrible conditions, which for many was tantamount to a death sentence. Deportees were transported in wagons with barred windows, which was loaded with 50 people, and sometimes more. Journey to a place of exile lasted sometimes for several weeks. The conditions during transport were horrendous, and even then the temperature dropped to -40<sup>0</sup> C. People died from cold, hunger and exhaustion. Some tried to escape during transport. One succeeded, while others were killed by bullets guards. After reaching the place of exile nightmare does not end. Exiles now waiting for slave labor at clearing the taiga, in the mines, gravel pits and quarries, disease and constant hunger.

Another deportation started during the night of 12 on April 13, 1940 on. This included mainly families of those previously victimized in various forms (arrested by the NKVD, imprisoned in POW camps, sentenced to stay in the labor camps) or illegally escaped abroad. Soviet authorities applied the favorite here by yourself and often applied the principle of collective responsibility, freeing itself from people that may have personal reasons for hostility, particularly those who are opinion leaders can play in their community. Those deported were settled mainly in Kazakhstan, he sent them to work in collective farms and sowchozach. About 8 thousand. people were placed in a working-class housing estates belonging to various industrial companies and barracks in the construction of railway lines. Next to the families of persons arrested for real or alleged participation in the activities of the Polish underground, they were deported to the Soviet Union a family of Polish officers, family, police officers, prison officers and gendarmes, landowners, manufacturers and Polish officials. They were mostly women, children and elderly people, from towns, just not prepared to work hard on the farm, to live in primitive conditions and harsh climate.

The third deportation, on the night of 28 June 29, 1940. Took refugees from Polish central and western (ie. *Bieżeńców*), who in September 1939. Fear of persecution by the Germans arrived at the east Polish from western and central provinces. Shipments of exiles were sent to the central and northern Ural and Volga areas. As a result of the Soviet-German agreement 66 thousand. people returned to areas occupied by the Third Reich and the fate of the rest became the expulsion of Russia.

The fourth wave of deportations took place in May and June 1941. Under the directives that have been issued by the NKVD, the deportation had this time to be included members of organizations recognized as counterrevolutionary and their families were policemen, prison guards, landlords, merchants, industrialists, senior officials and local government and members of their families, former officers, family members of those convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes and fugitives, as well as persons suspected of criminal activity. 22 May 1941 r. Started from the area of the so-called displacement. Western Ukraine.

14 June 1941 r. Operation deportation took over Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In less than a week from scrimmage in the Baltic countries, on the night of 19 on June 20 there was deportation of the so-called Polish population. Western Belarus. Last rail transports were leaving yet June 22, the day of the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. Strong bombing railway junctions meant that five trains got stuck in Minsk and its surroundings. As a result of the bombings in stopped trains killed or wounded a total of approx. 25% of people transported in them. The convoy fled, leaving deported to their fate.

Thomas Lane, author of the book "Victims of Stalin and Hitler", divides the victims of Stalinist deportations into two categories: *"Deported able to hit the two types of places. The so-called deported the first category were sent to the northern part of European Russia around Arkhangelsk, Kotlas and Vologda to the River Pechora and western and eastern region of the Urals, the northern and southern Siberia and north of Magadan in the area kolymskim the Soviet Far East. The camps were surrounded by barbed wire with checkpoints and armed guards on towers set around the perimeter of the fence. The prisoners worked at a variety of business enterprises, which managed the Gulag, or the Central Office of Educational Labor Camps and Colonies criminal. Deported second category were directed to special colonies under the direct supervision of the NKVD. Depending on the location deported able to work in collective farms, construction sites or felling of trees in forests. "*

In turn, the historian, Professor. Wojciech Roszkowski convicts divided into three groups - *spiecpieriesieleńców* with limited freedom of movement, "free of exiles", which were transported in a hostile terrain and ordered to organize a new life there, and finally those who were placed in camps of the Gulag. Inside these camps, as indeed there was a kind of division. In the camp hierarchy special role played *Urcy*, or convicted of criminal offenses. They were the most dangerous and the most significant among prisoners. Often occupied responsible positions, deciding, for example, the allocation for the specific job.

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